

INSPECTION REPORT

ATHELSTAN COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Sherburn in Elmet, Leeds

LEA area: North Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 121461

Headteacher: Mrs S Welburn

Reporting inspector: Mrs E M D Mackie
23482

Dates of inspection: 8 - 11 October 2001

Inspection number: 193668

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: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Rose Avenue
Sherburn in Elmet
Leeds

Postcode: LS25 6AY

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr S Walker

Date of previous inspection: April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23482	Mrs D Mackie Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology Provision for children in the Foundation Stage English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
11358	Mrs V Lamb 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?
19916	Mrs D Kerr Team inspector	Mathematics History Religious education	
22058	Mrs C Richardson Team inspector	English Art Music Equal opportunities Special educational needs	
17857	Mr D Walters Team inspector	Science Geography Physical education	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

Athelstan Community Primary School is located in a well-established residential area of Sherburn-in-Elmet which includes owner-occupied and rented housing. The population is stable and there is a high level of employment because of the close proximity of a large factory site. About one sixth of the pupils come from other parts of the village of Sherburn. There are 269 pupils on roll, 48 of whom are in the Foundation Stage for children under six. Of these, 26 attend the nursery part-time. There is a broad range of attainment when children enter the nursery but overall, attainment is average. Less than eight per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is below the national average. About one per cent of pupils is from ethnic minority groups, but no pupils speak English as an additional language. Seventy-two pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs. This is above the national average and includes six pupils who have statements of special educational need.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school where pupils achieve well and reach standards which are above national expectations in English, mathematics and science by the time they are 11 years old. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good and their behaviour is excellent. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers provide a stimulating range of experiences which promote very good levels of learning so that pupils make good progress throughout the school. Links with parents are excellent. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and the governors manage the school very well to get the very best for the pupils. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- By the end of Year 6, standards are above national expectations in English, mathematics and science. Pupils, including those who have special educational needs, achieve well.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent and their attitudes, personal development and relationships are very good.
- The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers' excellent management of pupils, thorough planning and preparation of lessons and secure subject knowledge ensure that they bring out the best in the pupils.
- The curriculum, including provision for pupils' personal development, is broad, balanced, relevant and interesting. It is enhanced with a wide range of practical and stimulating extra-curricular activities.
- Links with parents are excellent. This has a very positive impact on their children's progress.
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is very well supported by the deputy headteacher, key staff and governors.

What could be improved

- No significant weaknesses were identified.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection in April 1997 and has the strong capacity to improve further.

In response to the key issues raised:

- teachers with curricular responsibilities now monitor teaching and learning very effectively and this has had a positive impact on standards;
- the school ensures that there are opportunities for pupils to become more independent and responsible for their own learning; and
- there is now very good provision for pupils' spiritual development.

In addition:

- standards have improved in most subjects;
- the quality of teaching has improved from good to very good;
- the management of the school has improved from good to very good, with excellent leadership.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	A	B	A	A	well above A average B above average C average D below average E well below average
mathematics	B	A	A	C	
science	B	B	A	A	

The school's performance in the National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds in 2001 was well above the national average in English, mathematics and science. Compared with schools in similar contexts, it was above average in English and science and average in mathematics. Over the past five years, the trend in the school's test results in all three subjects has been upward, in line with the national trend. Inspection findings show that standards in English, mathematics and science are above average for current pupils in Year 6. The school is committed to raising standards even further. Targets set with the local education authority were exceeded last year and the school is well set to exceed them in 2002.

In the 2001 national tests and assessments for seven-year-olds, pupils' results were well above the national average at the expected level in reading, writing and science. Compared with similar schools, Athelstan's results were well above average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics. The trend has been slightly upward over the past five years in reading and writing and strongly upward in mathematics. The successful introduction of the daily literacy hour and mathematics lessons has had a significant impact on standards. The systematic teaching of letter sounds and emphasis on mental arithmetic provide pupils with secure skills on which they build step-by-step.

Standards in religious education throughout the school are above the expectations outlined in the locally agreed syllabus. In ICT, standards are in line with expectations for Years 2 and 6, but they are rising rapidly as the school makes very effective and efficient use of new equipment. Standards in geography and physical education are above national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6. In design and technology, they are above national expectations at Year 2 and in line with expectations at Year 6. In music, standards meet expectations at Year 2 and exceed them at Year 6. In art and design, standards meet expectations for pupils at Years 2 and 6. Because very little of this year's work was seen in history, no judgement is given on current

standards, but evidence from last year shows that pupils achieved well throughout the school. The overall good standards reflect the very good attitudes and excellent behaviour of the pupils, the high quality of the teaching, the well-organised curricular provision and the greater involvement of key teachers in the monitoring of standards. Teachers provide relevant activities which stimulate pupils' interest and motivate them to learn.

When children start school, their attainment is average overall, but a significant number of them have below average skills in speaking and listening and social development. In the nursery and reception classes, children make good progress and reach the early learning goals in personal and social development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are above expectations for 11-year-olds, with very good results in national tests. This represents good achievement.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are enthusiastic and interested in school activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. This creates a pleasant ethos in the school and has a positive impact on pupils' academic progress.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils respect one another and the staff and are considerate of the views of other people.
Attendance	Good. It is above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Very good	Very good

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

The high quality of teaching is a strength of the school. There were examples of very good teaching at all of the above three stages of education, and some excellent lessons were observed in Years 1 to 6. In the nursery and reception classes, all teaching was judged to be good or better. Overall, the quality of the teaching was very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. The quality of teachers' planning and preparation is very good throughout the school. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is very good and teachers promote the use of literacy and numeracy effectively in most other subjects. Teachers' secure subject knowledge helps them to set challenging tasks for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. As a result, pupils achieve well and acquire skills, knowledge and understanding at a very good rate. They respond very well to the teachers' high expectations. Teachers make effective use of time and relate very well to the pupils. They listen well to them and help them to sort out problems and make good progress. Teachers ensure that pupils with special education needs are well supported with carefully organised work based on their individual education plans. Teachers work well as a team with the classroom assistants and nursery nurses, who play a significant role in the teaching programme as they work with groups of pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
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The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school provides a very well organised curriculum for the development of skills, knowledge and understanding in all subjects. It is enriched with stimulating activities to bring relevance to pupils' learning. Provision for extra-curricular activities is excellent.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Teachers provide very good individual education plans so that pupils learn in a step-by-step way and achieve regular success. Parents are involved appropriately in reviews.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. It is excellent for social education, which encourages pupils to behave well and be considerate for other people. It is very good for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. This aspect of school life is a strength of the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' good behaviour are excellent. The school monitors pupils' personal and academic development very carefully in order to guide and teach them at appropriate levels.

The school has excellent links with parents and provides them with a wide range of information so that they know about their children's progress and what is going on in the school, including curricular and social events.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and teachers with special responsibilities.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors use their skills very well in the service of the school. They fulfil their specific roles with high levels of commitment. They ensure that all aspects of school life are monitored and take effective action to support the school in the implementation of initiatives such as the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. All aspects of school life are evaluated. The school's open and honest evaluation of its strengths and relative weaknesses is the basis of its success. The school's performance in national tests is rigorously monitored in order to raise standards further. Teaching and curricular provision are evaluated in order to support pupils as well as possible.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school makes very good use of its resources, including specific funds for pupils who have special educational needs. The governors, headteacher and administrative staff apply efficient and economic financial controls very effectively. Financial planning is of high quality. It supports the school's priorities and is informed by up-to-date financial statements. Modern technology is used very effectively for financial planning and control and for everyday administration.

There is a sufficient number of suitably qualified and experienced teachers and support staff. The high quality of lunchtime, caretaking and administrative staff contributes well to the ethos of the school. Accommodation is adequate and outdoor provision is good. Most learning resources are good and they are well organised and stored. Resources for ICT are very good. Resources are obtained at the most competitive prices and the school uses them in the best possible way to

achieve its aims.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school, behave well and make good progress.• Teaching is good and the school has high expectations of the pupils.• The school works well with them and they feel comfortable to come with questions or problems.• Their children are encouraged to be mature and responsible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Twelve per cent of the 92 parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that their children do not get the right amount of homework.

Inspectors fully agree with the parents' positive views of the school. The 25 parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting expressed solid support for the school's provision for their children. Inspectors feel that the amount of homework set is better than seen in many primary schools. The range and quality of extra-curricular activities is outstanding.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The school is well focused on improving standards, and a clear, positive, achieving ethos pervades its work and its approach to planning. The trend in the school's results for English, mathematics and science for 11-year-olds was in line with the rising national trend from 1996 to 2000. Since the time of the last inspection in 1997, the school's performance has risen considerably in all three subjects. This reflects the school's rigorous introduction of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. In addition, staff have analysed the school's results in national tests and used the information gathered to build on strengths and overcome weaknesses in teaching, learning and curricular provision. The percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (Level 4) has risen since the last inspection:

- from 66 per cent to 95 per cent in English;
- from 61 per cent to 84 per cent in mathematics; and
- from 78 per cent to 100 per cent in science.

2. The trend upward for seven-year-olds is also very positive. The percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (Level 2) has risen in the same period:

- from 90 per cent to 100 per cent in reading, writing and mathematics.

3. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6, the school's performance in:

- English was well above average compared with all schools nationally and compared with similar schools;
- mathematics was well above average compared with all schools nationally and average compared with similar schools; and
- science was well above average compared with all schools nationally and in comparison with similar schools.

4. The school's results exceeded the national average at the higher level (Level 5) in all three subjects. Boys performed better than girls. This was expected because the performance of the particularly bright group of boys had been tracked as they moved through the school. Current standards in Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science. In its drive to raise standards, the school arranges extra classes to boost the performance of all pupils in Year 6 in English and mathematics. The challenging targets set with the local education authority for English and mathematics in 2000 were exceeded, and pupils are already on course to exceed this year's targets.

5. In the 2001 national assessments for pupils in Year 2, the school's performance in:

- reading was well above the national average compared with all schools and with similar schools;
- writing was well above the national average compared with all schools and above average in comparison with similar schools; and
- mathematics was well above the national average compared with all schools and above average in comparison with similar schools.

6. The school's results exceeded the national average at the higher level (Level 3) in all three subjects. In science, the teachers' assessments showed that pupils performed broadly in line with all schools nationally at the expected level, but none achieved the higher level. The

school has already addressed this issue.

7. Children enter the nursery with levels of attainment which are broadly in line with those expected for their age, but their attainment in speaking and listening and personal and social skills is below expectations for a significant number of children. They make good progress in the nursery and reception class and achieve the nationally agreed early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; and creative development. Good teaching is based on the teachers' secure understanding of the needs of young children. The planning of the curriculum is good and the staff create an encouraging atmosphere in which children learn systematically and happily.

8. By the end of Year 2, most pupils gain skills, knowledge and understanding of English at a good rate and achieve well. Specific subject vocabulary is taught and pupils are encouraged to use it so that they are more able to make clear what they mean, ask questions and share their thoughts with other people. All pupils develop their speaking and listening effectively and widen their vocabulary consistently in all subjects. The school emphasises the step-by-step teaching and learning of letter sounds and patterns so that pupils make good gains in reading, writing and spelling. Pupils enjoy reading and experience a wide range of texts to support all areas of the curriculum. Most pupils use capital letters and full stops confidently to demarcate sentences and develop satisfactory levels of writing to express ideas or show a sense of narrative. In mathematics, pupils acquire a range of strategies to answer brisk questions in mental arithmetic sessions. Pupils develop an increasing awareness of the use of mathematics in everyday life; for example in weighing, measuring and shopping. In science, practical investigations help pupils to gain skills of scientific enquiry and a deeper understanding of life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes. Pupils do not always use their writing well enough to record and present their findings as well as they could.

9. By the end of Year 6, pupils answer teachers' questions confidently and are keen to contribute their ideas during discussions. Pupils benefit from reading together from enlarged texts during the literacy hour. They explore spelling patterns, look for specific punctuation and consider how words are used to create a range of effects. Consistent teaching of spelling and regular practice in basic grammar give pupils a good grounding so that they achieve well in writing. They write for a good range of purposes but the use of their literacy is not developed as well as it could be in other subjects. In mathematics, pupils' positive and enthusiastic approach to mental arithmetic helps them to gain increasingly secure knowledge of the four rules of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of numbers. Pupils use this knowledge effectively to solve practical problems which are expressed in words rather than figures. In science, pupils gain knowledge and understanding at good rate because of the school's practical approach and the enrichment of the curriculum through the imaginative use of the school grounds.

10. In ICT, pupils' levels of attainment are broadly at expected levels by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, but there is some good work going on in the school since the installation of a suite of new computers a year ago. Pupils' progress is gaining momentum as they acquire skills at an increasing rate. By the end of Year 2, most pupils use ICT to organise information and present their findings in interesting ways in a range of subjects. They use graphic programs to illustrate and explain their work, and in art, they use graphic packages to draw and fill shapes and create colourful pictures. Control and monitoring are developing features in the school's provision, and pupils in Year 2 are gaining appropriate skills to give directions and control programmable toys. By the end of Year 6, pupils word process confidently, search for information in CD ROMs, send e-mail, handle data, create spreadsheets and create drawings using standard geometric shapes which they manipulate. Plans to improve pupils' competence in control and monitoring in Years 5 and 6 are in hand.

11. In religious education, pupils achieve standards above expectations outlined in the locally Agreed Syllabus. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils recognise the important role of religion in the lives of many people. Christianity is the principal religion studied, but pupils throughout the

school gain good levels of skills, knowledge and understanding which enable them to have abroad view of the range of faiths.

12. Standards in geography and physical education are above national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. In design and technology, they are above national expectations at the end of Year 2 and in line with expectations by the end of Year 6. In music, standards meet expectations by the end of Year 2 and exceed them by the end of Year 6. In art and design, standards meet expectations for pupils in Years 2 and 6. Because very little of this year's work was seen in history, no judgement is given on current standards, but evidence from last year shows that pupils achieved well throughout the school.

13. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Realistic targets are set for these pupils to achieve regular success so that their confidence and self-esteem are raised and pupils build step-by-step on what they already know and can do. The school makes very good use of assessment information for target setting on individual education plans and for the formation of groups. Teachers support pupils very well and classroom assistants help pupils to achieve well in lessons. Higher-attaining, gifted and talented pupils achieve well by the time they are 11 years old because the school takes careful consideration of their needs and ensures that appropriate programmes of work and support are provided for them.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. The high quality of pupils' attitudes, values and personal development is a strength of the school. It sets the scene for the school's success and underpins the ethos which pervades all its work. In the nursery and reception class, children become quickly accustomed to the routines of the school. They are well behaved and relate very well to other children and adults. They gradually sustain their interest for increasing periods of time so that they persevere and complete tasks. Children in the reception class demonstrate this well as they participate in the daily literacy lessons.

15. Pupils like school and demonstrate very positive attitudes to lessons and other activities. They respond well to the attitudes and values which the school promotes. Pupils chat in a friendly way with each other, their teachers and other adults. When given the opportunity, they display appropriate levels of independence and develop self-confidence and a good level of personal responsibility as they move through the school. Those chosen as monitors are proud to show that they can carry out their duties conscientiously. They are actively involved in decision-making; for example when they took part in a survey to ascertain what kind of extra-curricular activities they would like. As a result, these events are particularly well supported.

16. Pupils' personal development is very good. Staff have developed very good relationships with pupils and provide effective role models. They praise and encourage achievements and intervene quickly and constructively when pupils require guidance. Pupils feel secure with teachers and are able to approach them confidently and respectfully to exchange news, show work and ask for help without fear of failure. They show pleasure when they succeed; for example, when they bring their good work into assemblies. Pupils' awareness of how their actions may make others feel is strong. They take notice of each other, work co-operatively and are polite and responsive towards staff and visitors.

17. Pupils' behaviour throughout the school is excellent and they work and play together very well. Parents express the view that behaviour is good in the school. In lessons, boys, girls, and pupils of differing abilities work together in a co-operative and friendly way, supporting one another and sharing materials when necessary. Pupils settle to their tasks well and work at a good rate. They pay attention to teachers and concentrate effectively when they work in groups as well as when working alone. They listen well and join in when necessary, offering sensible questions and suggestions and are keen to share what they know. They persevere when work is difficult, are prepared to try out ideas and respond well to instructions and guidance. For

example, in a design and technology lesson in Year 1, pupils were keen to complete their models of houses. Some of the necessary techniques were tricky, but the pupils listened carefully and followed the teacher's instructions. As a result, they were delighted with their finished work. Pupils respond positively when staff intervene to guide them and gain more independence. During assemblies, pupils respect the nature of the occasion and join in reflectively. In an assembly about the 'harvest' of good and kind things which children can do, they cited examples which were thoughtful, helpful and considerate. Pupils are well motivated to contribute to charities and take pleasure in receiving recognition for their efforts.

18. Pupils move in an orderly way between areas of the building and grounds. During lunchtimes and playtimes they talk with each other and adults in a friendly way and keep the school routines without fuss. They organise themselves into pairs or groups to play, chat or work. No bullying was seen during the inspection. The school has excluded one pupil in the last year. The minority of pupils who need to be reminded about the expected standards of behaviour responds quickly to the guidance provided. It is a particularly positive feature of this school that pupils are self-motivated to develop ideas and diligent when carrying out responsibilities. For example, a group of pupils who wished to find out what their peers thought about the newly installed large adventure play apparatus conducted a survey at break with maturity and common sense. Pupils in the gardening club worked carefully in the grounds whilst their friends played around them. The pupils make very good use of the ample and varied leisure areas. They take care of the equipment provided and are careful to tidy away afterwards.

19. Attendance is good and the rate of unauthorised absence is below the average for similar schools nationally. Pupils arrive at school on time and go quickly to their classrooms. Registration procedures are conducted efficiently and lessons begin promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. The very good, high quality of teaching is a strength of the school. During the inspection, the quality of the teaching was good or better in more than half of the lessons. It was very good in more than a third of lessons and excellent in a tenth. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. Teaching of the children in the nursery and the reception class was consistently good or better. No judgement is given for teaching in art and music in Years 1 and 2 or for design and technology and history in Years 1 to 6 because little or no teaching was seen. In mathematics, it was very good throughout the school. Teaching was good throughout the school in all other subjects, creating a very good picture overall.

21. Teachers work hard and show enthusiasm for their work. They embrace the school's aims and values and work as a team to provide education of very good quality for the pupils. In the best lessons throughout the school, high expectations, challenging tasks and very good classroom management were significant features. Teachers ask probing questions to elicit pupils' understanding and extend their learning. Lessons move at a brisk pace and teachers expect pupils to work hard and complete tasks. In mathematics, the good pace keeps pupils involved and well motivated. In the literacy hour and the daily mathematics lessons, teachers employ effective direct teaching to inform pupils and give them clear explanations. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good in all classes and this provides an encouraging and stable environment where pupils are prepared to accept challenge.

22. The teachers' knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children are significant features in the teaching of children in the nursery and reception classes. Staff base their planning for this age group on the recently nationally introduced curriculum for the Foundation Stage of education. Teachers in both classes regularly assess children's progress and use the information gathered to inform the next stage of planning. Teachers deploy the nursery nurses well so that they are involved in the teaching process and play a significant role in assessing how well the children are getting on. Children are encouraged to be independent and to respond

appropriately to instructions and this has a positive effect on their personal and social development. Teachers place great emphasis on the establishment of clear routines and firm, well-understood classroom rules. Teachers promote good learning habits for the children which give them a good start to their schooling. In all areas of learning, the staff organise interesting activities to motivate the pupils to learn. As a result, the children achieve well.

23. In all classes, teachers' high expectations of good behaviour are reflected in the pupils' positive attitudes to getting on with independent tasks quietly and responsibly. Staff manage the pupils very well and expect them to be reflective, consider alternatives and remember facts so that they build consistently upon previous learning. This is a significant feature, which promotes good progress in mathematics, ICT and religious education. There are high but realistic expectations of pupils with special educational needs. Staff follow pupils' individual education plans well so that pupils build step by step on what they already know.

24. Teachers' planning is very good. It includes the needs of all pupils so that there is equal access to the curriculum. Skills are developed systematically, for example in history, when teachers encourage pupils to examine artefacts and acquire a secure understanding of historical enquiry. Teachers value pupils' ideas and contributions and make lessons interesting in lots of ways. The best lesson plans set out clearly what pupils are to learn and know. There is careful planning for different groups, resources are identified and assessment opportunities are noted. In the best lessons, for example in geography, teachers motivate pupils to learn because of the variety of stimulating tasks. Group work is well organised in English and mathematics, especially when pupils are grouped by ability.

25. Teachers are confident and they give pupils clear instructions on what to do and how to do it. They use specific subject vocabulary to enhance learning in all areas of the curriculum, and promote literacy and numeracy well throughout the school day. In all classes, the teachers' secure subject knowledge is linked to high quality questioning. This was noticeable in the review sessions at the end of literacy lessons, and in the teacher's development of pupils' skills in a dance lesson in Year 4. Teachers challenge higher-attaining pupils with suitably demanding tasks in most lessons. Imaginative links between subjects help to make learning more relevant for the pupils; for example, knowledge of materials in science is linked to using materials in design and technology.

26. Throughout the school, teachers keep regular records of pupils' achievements and use these very effectively to inform the planning of lessons. Within lessons, teachers encourage pupils to employ skills they have learned earlier. The teachers' marking of pupils' work is not consistent with the school's policy; as a result, the marking does not always help pupils to improve their efforts.

27. Teachers successfully promote learning for pupils with special educational needs. They work with the school's co-ordinator for special educational needs to create individual educational plans for pupils. These provide well-matched, achievable and sufficiently challenging work with carefully targeted teaching points to help these pupils to make good progress. Classroom assistants give good individual support in lessons. Teachers group pupils according to their prior attainment and particular needs in literacy and numeracy and match tasks well to their needs. Staff maintain very good records and there is regular, relevant and high quality sharing of information between all staff, who work very well together as a team.

28. The staff use learning resources very well, especially in ICT, when teachers ensure that pupils get maximum benefit from their time on the suite of computers. Teachers also use extremely simple resources very effectively, for example in mathematics. Support staff are well deployed and they are involved in planning so that objectives are met. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers use time well in most lessons. There is an effective home and school reading partnership which teachers use well to extend pupils' reading opportunities and to involve parents in their children's learning. Teachers set work well in a range

of subjects for pupils to do at home, including research to support learning in class.

29. There has been an improvement in the quality of teaching in mathematics and science in Years 1 and 2 since the last inspection. In the last report, there was a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching, but there was none during this inspection. Teachers did not always give pupils enough opportunities to choose materials or take the lead in planning their work. The school has addressed this issue and, especially in design and technology, pupils are now actively involved in organising materials for their work. The headteacher and subject co-ordinators monitor lessons and the headteacher reports regularly to the governing body on developments in teaching. Teachers reflect on their own work and want to improve their classroom performance. The 'coaching' style of the school encourages teachers to improve constantly, and this has a positive effect on the children's learning. The school has a good capacity to maintain current high standards in teaching because of the high level of self-evaluation which exists amongst teachers and the very good levels of support from the headteacher and governing body.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS

30. The school has developed a very good curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils effectively and provides a very good range of learning experiences. There has been good improvement in curricular provision since the last inspection and it now fully meets statutory requirements. The new curriculum for the Foundation Stage of education for pupils in the nursery and reception classes has been introduced very effectively and staff use the 'stepping stones' of learning well in their planning. Each of the six areas of learning is carefully planned so that, as the year progresses, activities become more demanding and the children are challenged to become increasingly independent. The curriculum includes relevant, everyday topics such as food, families and the weather so that children relate to what they are doing. There is appropriate emphasis on social development and the acquisition of language skills. In the reception class, simple recording of activities prepares children for the increasingly demanding work in Year 1. The school's response to recent changes in statutory requirements for pupils in Years 1 to 6 has been positive, and curriculum has been carefully crafted to include pupils' entitlement to the new National Curriculum and the good work which the school did previously. Provision for personal, social and health education is very good and there is good provision for the recently introduced literacy hour and daily mathematics lessons. These changes are having a good influence on raising pupils' academic standards and improving opportunities for their social development as future citizens. Excellent provision for extra-curricular activities continues as teachers give their time to a wide range of sporting and creative arts activities, as well as clubs to support improvements in pupils' work. The leadership of the school is committed to the ideals of inclusion. There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs, and school policies are being revised to ensure that equal access to all activities is assured for these pupils. Gifted and talented pupils are provided with opportunities to extend their learning, for example in music. Links with the local community are very good, as are the links with partner educational institutions.

31. Taken overall, there has been significant improvement since the previous inspection. There are well-organised nationally recommended schemes of work in place in all subjects. These provide good guidance for what has to be taught at each stage and how pupils' progress can be checked. Consequently, curriculum planning is good. The proportion of time allocated to each subject has been considered carefully and the school did not reduce the time spent on subjects such as history and geography when the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies were a priority. Instead, the leadership took the sensible decision to emphasise the teaching of skills that can be applied in many subjects. Now that the structure for teaching literacy is in place, the school is in a good position to include aspects, such as different styles of writing, into pupils' work in geography, history and religious education. Inspection evidence shows that mathematical

skills, such as graphs and tabulating data, are used regularly in science. Since the previous inspection, the school has established a suite of computers, which is gradually having an impact on improving standards in ICT throughout the school. This is evident, for example, in Year 1, where pupils enhance their map work in geography and their creative skills in art.

32. Since the school was last inspected, the arrangements for pupils with special educational needs have improved and are now very good. The very good provision for pupils featured successfully in the school's submission for the 'Charter Mark'. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all aspects of the school's life and are treated as individuals. Because teachers and support staff know their pupils very well, they make sure that individual needs are met. The caring and supportive atmosphere in the school has a major impact on the progress pupils make in lessons. They receive specific support in literacy and numeracy lessons, and carefully planned programmes support pupils with emotional and behavioural or physical needs well. Teachers and support staff work as a team and all appropriate staff are involved in the preparation and review of individual education plans. There are individually appropriate and challenging activities for higher attaining pupils. A small number of pupils have been identified as having particular talents and staff ensure that there are sufficient opportunities and programmes to meet their needs successfully. The school makes every effort to engage outside agencies and parents in this work so that pupils extend their learning and use their talents to the full.

33. There has been good progress in implementing a scheme of personal, social and health education, which includes sex education and information about the harmful effects of drugs and misuse of medicines. The governing body has approved the scheme and parents have viewed the material used in lessons. The use of 'circle time', when pupils sit quietly with their teacher and discuss a theme, is becoming the established method of dealing with sensitive issues of behaviour. Social issues, such as recycling of materials, are tackled very well in science and geography. The school uses homework effectively as a means of giving responsibility, especially when the task is to seek information required for the next lesson.

34. The provision for extra-curricular activities remains excellent. A large number of pupils participate in sporting activities such as soccer, rugby league, basketball and netball. At lunchtime, the 'performing arts' group rehearses and there are clubs which provide opportunities for pupils to extend their learning in a range of subjects. The school maintains good links with local professional sports clubs and participates in a range of competitive matches.

35. Teachers use the immediate locality of the school very well as a relevant resource in many subjects. Walking and cycle trails have been established and local expertise on environmental matters enhances pupils' knowledge and skills in gardening and about trees in the school grounds. Contacts with local services, such as police and health service personnel are having a good impact on raising pupils' awareness of what a caring community means. Pupils benefit from using the facilities at the local high school for swimming lessons. Relationships with other primary schools are very good, and curricular initiatives have often begun at the meetings with other schools.

36. There has been significant improvement in the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development since the previous inspection. This improvement originated from the school's review of its whole curricular provision. As a result, many good cross-curricular links have been established and the structures to enable pupils to develop socially have been strengthened.

37. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. This represents major improvement since the previous inspection, when it was reported as unsatisfactory. Improvement has been achieved through purposeful assemblies, religious education lessons and planned opportunities within lessons to recognise and acknowledge the mysteries and wonders of the world. There are important times for reflection in lessons and assemblies. In an assembly about sharing and ways of caring for others, pupils considered quietly the ordinary good things they

could do that day. Years 3 and 4 demonstrate thoughtfulness and sensitivity towards their parents, teachers and friends in writing about their return to school after the summer break. A very good sense of self-worth is apparent in the school, recognised in lessons when teachers praise pupils for their contributions. Most teachers use this approach carefully and make space in their classrooms to display work about pupils' special days. There are many other occasions when teachers use music, art and dance to help pupils to express personal feelings which reveal the joyful experience of something special in an otherwise normal day.

38. Moral development is very good. Staff are good role models and very good relationships are a strong, positive feature of the school. Pupils have a very good understanding of how their individual behaviour can affect the quality of life of others. Class teachers reinforce what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in sessions where pupils all sit in a circle and discuss issues raised by their teacher or themselves. The school achieves success with its behaviour programme because teachers and lunchtime staff have consistent expectations and pupils understand the ideas of responsibility and consequences, which are the basis of the scheme. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 say that they enjoy school because they have lots of friends and know that teachers and other adults in the school would help them if they were unhappy. There is now recognition for acts of kindness and good behaviour, which clearly reinforces the values expected by the school.

39. At the previous inspection, pupils' social development was considered to be sound. It is now excellent. At all stages, politeness and sensitivity are taught as an integral part of school life in classrooms, playgrounds and assemblies. Pupils are learning to take responsibility through jobs as monitors with registers, classroom routines and clearing away equipment. This is especially evident in practical lessons like art, science and physical education. Older pupils administer the school bank and staff the telephone at lunchtimes, as well as acting as road safety officers for the youngest pupils. Recognition of their ability to be responsible and the sense of trust it creates between pupils and adults are valuable in their development as young people. All pupils have opportunities to take part in assemblies as readers, musicians or singers and to initiate activities such as fund raising for charities. In the best lessons, teachers are giving pupils more opportunities to ask and answer questions and to work on their own. Time limits on tasks are helping pupils to develop self-discipline and good work practices. These aspects of teaching are proving to be effective ways of allowing pupils to be participants in their own learning and a good impact on pupils' motivation. During their time in school, pupils have several opportunities to participate in residential study visits. This helps them to become more independent as, for many, these are the first trips away from home without their parents.

40. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. Teachers plan carefully to include this in their lessons; for example, when they introduce pupils to artists such as Van Gogh. In assemblies, staff include a range of musical styles so that pupils become familiar with classical, modern, pop and folk music from a variety of cultures. A variety of cultural and educational outings take place each year, including historic houses and places such as the National Railway Museum at York. These are integral to work in the classroom and provide good opportunities for research, observation and writing. In geography, history and religious education, the school includes interesting local studies so that pupils value their own heritage. There is good work in religious education lessons on festivals and ceremonies from the main religions of the world. Good relationships with local churches have enabled the school to celebrate Christian festivals, such as harvest and Christmas, in the traditional style. In lessons and assemblies, folk tales and legends from around the world are used and pupils write different styles of poetry, such as Japanese Haiku. A local restaurateur has helped the school widen pupils' outlook on Asian food. Through careful planning, the school is providing more opportunities for pupils to experience dance and music from other cultural groups represented in contemporary British society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. The school is highly conscious of its duty of care towards pupils and has developed a wide range of appropriate policies and procedures to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety. Staff know pupils well and are sensitive to their needs. The excellent promotion of good behaviour is a strength of the school, and pupils are encouraged to take on extra responsibilities and become more independent. The school promotes good attendance very well and follows up absences promptly.

42. Arrangements for the induction of children into the nursery are very good. Home visits, short visits to the nursery and the very good build-up of links with parents ensures that children integrate quickly and happily into school life. Very good relationships are the basis for excellent links between home and school throughout the nursery and reception classes.

43. Parents are highly satisfied with day-to-day arrangements and agree that they would feel comfortable about approaching the school with any concerns about their child. Parents confirm that the school expects their child to work hard and achieve his or her best. Staff are vigilant in their care for those pupils who are known to need extra attention and look on pupils as individuals, helping them accordingly. Teachers and non-teaching staff supervise the pupils well throughout the school day. Parents are satisfied that their children like going to school.

44. The school supports pupils' personal development very well through providing a clear framework for conduct, both in respect of behaviour and attitude to work. Staff act as positive role models and are conscientious in establishing and maintaining very good relationships with pupils. They help pupils to develop in confidence through carefully balancing praise for good work and effort with guidance on what is expected in order to achieve the high standards set. Pupils' personal development is enhanced by events such as celebration assemblies, which highlight and reward significant achievements and opportunities to help in class and generally around school. Staff provide many opportunities for pupils to take special responsibility. As well as acting as monitors to help with routine tasks such as setting out and clearing away equipment, older pupils are encouraged to provide support for younger ones during breaks or for anyone feeling lonely or unhappy. The school welcomes pupils' suggestions for events and activities and takes their contributions seriously. The school takes part in local, national and international fundraising events, which helps pupils to develop responsible attitudes towards those who need particular support. Significant aspects of pupils' personal development are included in annual reports for their parents alongside areas to concentrate on for further progress. These provide a very good means of acknowledging pupils' good points and boosting their self-esteem.

45. The school has developed its own policy to manage arrangements for child protection that follows the procedures of the local education authority. Staff are aware of suitable responses should they have concerns about a child's welfare. There is a formal programme for personal, social and health education that provides a forum for pupils to express their views and feelings, such as during circle time. Participation in events supported by the emergency services and, for instance the road safety officer and school nurse, help children to learn how to look after themselves. Pupils know who to turn to for help or advice. The school maintains a good working relationship with outside agencies for additional support and advice when necessary.

46. The school has made very good arrangements to meet health and safety obligations and there are regular reviews of practice and formal risk assessments, guided by a clear and comprehensive policy. Fire drills are held each term and the fire bell is regularly tested. Staff handle accidents or illness with care and consideration and a private area is available for administering first aid and supervising pupils who are unable to return to class. There are clear procedures for administering medicines during school hours. The school is careful to record accidents or first aid and to inform parents of anything which may need further attention.

47. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour encourage pupils to be extremely well behaved at all times. No incidents of bullying were seen during the inspection. Pupils know who to turn to for help if they need it and do not feel under threat in school. The vast majority of parents are satisfied that staff manage pupils' behaviour well and

are confident that any concerns are taken seriously and resolved quickly. The school sets very high standards for behaviour during lessons, based on a system which makes expectations clear to all pupils, rewards good behaviour and sanctions any which does not meet the high standard required. The school shares its general approach to discipline with parents in the prospectus and requests support from home should a child have difficulty in achieving an expected standard in any aspect of school life. Non-teaching staff, including lunchtime supervisors, make a very significant contribution to good behaviour and standards during breaks. An excellent feature of this school is the attention paid to the quality of experiences made available to pupils during breaks and lunchtime which make a very positive contribution to pupils' personal development. As well as outdoor areas with seating, apparatus and space for active games during breaks, the school provides access to indoor areas for pupils who wish to read, play board games, draw or help staff at lunchtime. In addition, there are clubs which take place during breaks and lunchtime which add an extra dimension to pupils' experiences. This means that all pupils can pass the time happily in an activity of their choice, carefully supervised. Arrangements for pupils to eat lunch ensure a calm and friendly environment and a very positive social occasion.

48. The monitoring of pupils' attendance is very good and the school has effective procedures in place to encourage improvement. Teachers complete registers accurately and staff are conscientious in obtaining notification from parents about absences. The school contacts education welfare staff should they require further assistance. These measures ensure that reasons for absence are notified and recorded appropriately and support is provided for pupils whose attendance gives cause for concern.

49. The school has a very good range of strategies for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. These include assessments on entry to the nursery class and when children are five years old. Regular assessments throughout the school include national and non-statutory annual tests to gauge pupils' levels of attainment, measure their progress and plan future work which challenges and improves standards, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The school informs parents appropriately of their children's results in national tests. Teachers know the pupils well and use day-to-day assessments effectively in lessons to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. Assessments in all subjects are made throughout the year and these are also recorded for parents in their children's annual reports. Teachers carry out thoughtful assessments of pupils with special educational needs and those who are gifted or talented and all staff are aware of pupils' targets and programmes. The support for pupils with any additional needs is very good. Relationships between these pupils and staff are very good so that learning takes place in a purposeful and motivating atmosphere. Staff work very well together to ensure that any information about pupils' work and progress is shared effectively. The school fully complies with the Code of Practice and liaises very effectively with external agencies.

50. Systems for the early identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs are very effective. Individual education plans are clear, with targets which help pupils to overcome their weaknesses. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress have improved since the last inspection, when they were reported as satisfactory.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

51. The school has excellent links in place to enable parents to be actively involved in their children's education. Parents hold the school in high esteem. They find staff helpful and caring with a commitment to doing what they can to help pupils. The parents who expressed their views to the inspection team are unanimous in their belief that the school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. They are particularly satisfied that their children like school and that the school is well led and managed. Parents are sure that staff are approachable and feel comfortable approaching them with questions or concerns. Parents are satisfied that good standards of behaviour are maintained.

52. The school provides parents with very high quality information and seeks their views on many aspects of school life. The prospectus is clear about the attitudes and values that the school promotes and emphasises the crucial role that parents can play in helping their children to succeed. It includes clear, detailed information about school life generally with good explanations of the reasons behind the established day-to-day procedures. The prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents provide most of the information which parents are entitled to receive, but there is no mention of the school's arrangements should parents wish to withdraw their children from collective worship or religious education. There are thoughtful and sensitive procedures for inducting young children into the nursery and reception classes. A booklet gives good guidance on how parents can help prepare their children for school. Parents are welcomed into the school. Many come into the nursery at the end of the session to see what their children have done and talk to the staff. In the reception class, the teacher is always ready to see parents at the beginning or end of the day. This open and friendly approach promotes parents' confidence in the school and their early involvement in their children's education. The school provides clear information for parents on how they may gain access to documents retained in school that may be of special interest to them.

53. Throughout the school, written reports on pupils' progress are specific to individuals and include significant aspects of pupils' academic progress and personal development, particularly skills achieved in English, mathematics and science as well as specific targets to provide a focus for further progress. The school invites parents' written comments about their children's progress and provides an opportunity for parents to discuss the reports with class teachers. In addition, parent and teacher consultations are held twice each year and are very well attended. Parents receive frequent newsletters providing a wealth of additional information to keep them up to date about activities in school and the wider community as well as new initiatives. An excellent feature of this school is the way in which the headteacher maintains a strategically placed noticeboard with up to the minute information about school and local issues of interest to parents. The vast majority of parents are satisfied that the school keeps them well informed about how their children are getting on but a few would like more frequent details. Parents are consulted if problems arise concerning their child with a view to home and school working closely together to help the child. Parents are kept fully informed and have good opportunities to discuss targets and reviews with the school, which they value and appreciate.

54. The school strongly welcomes parents' involvement and provides a very wide range of opportunities for parents and staff to work in partnership. The school has drawn up an agreement of the responsibilities of staff and parents which both have entered into as a framework for working together in the best interests of the child. Teachers are available to parents on an informal basis day to day and provide useful information during formal consultation appointments. Parents are well involved through supporting their child with homework and this makes a very positive contribution to the home school partnership. Most parents tend to agree that the amount of homework set is appropriate and they make good use of the diaries and record books to pass messages to class teachers. A few parents do not agree with the amount of homework set, but inspectors feel that the provision of homework is good.

55. The school frequently invites parents to see the school in action. Several parents work in classrooms on a regular basis, listening to readers, helping teachers with a range of classroom duties and acting as additional supervisors during educational visits. There is a very active parent teacher association that meets regularly. This dedicated group organises special fundraising and social events which many staff and parents, as well as other family members and the community support. Parents and grandparents are invited to special events, such as assemblies, concerts and sports days, and many take up the invitation. In addition, opportunities are provided for parents who wish to be involved in specific areas, such as sharing lunch with their children and meeting with workers from outside school to discuss school and community developments. A particularly strong feature of this aspect of the school's work is the approach to seeking parents' views on a range of topics, such as developments in the system for behaviour and discipline.

Parents agree that the school is proactive in approaching parents and helpful in responding to suggestions or complaints.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. The headteacher provides excellent leadership for the school. Her very clear vision of the school's work promotes a productive sense of direction and purpose. In partnership with key staff and governors, the headteacher works conscientiously to meet the school's aims and raise standards of pupils' attainment further. There is also a very firm commitment to providing a broad curriculum and developing pupils' personal and social skills. The deputy headteacher has a well-defined role in the management of the school and contributes significantly to the regular meetings of the senior management team. These provide a valuable forum for discussion in which opinions are valued and often are the incentive for positive change. The leadership and management of the school are clearly driven by the shared commitment to raise standards further. Teachers with special responsibilities fulfil their duties very well. The sense of teamwork in the school is very strong because teachers have confidence in each other and all want to provide for pupils as well as they can. Leadership of each stage of education – The Foundation Stage for the nursery and reception years, Key Stage 1 for Years 1 and 2 and Key Stage 2 for Years 3 to 6 – is of a high quality. The headteacher, the deputy headteacher and subject co-ordinators monitor teaching and learning to ensure that classroom practice matches the agreed policies and schemes. Teachers evaluate their work and plan together with a strong sense of team spirit. They share the good things which are going on in the school and address any areas of relative weakness.

57. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties very effectively. Relationships between the head teacher and governing body are very good. There is a well-established system of committees which meet regularly in order to keep in regular touch with the work of the school. Governors identify clear priorities for improvement through regular self-evaluation and the school improvement plan is monitored rigorously. The plan is used increasingly as a tool which leads the school forward purposefully. The school recognises its strengths and is not afraid to face up to challenges when there are areas for development. Because priorities are well chosen, teachers and governors are able to focus on issues which make a real difference to the quality of provision and the raising of standards. For example, the school's current drive to strengthen educational inclusion for all pupils has a positive effect on the quality of teaching, the planning of work and the achievement of pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and higher-attaining pupils. The headteacher closely monitors the progress of different groups of pupils in order to address specific areas of concern. The school's robust analysis of results in school and national tests enables governors to direct resources appropriately to raise standards. Governors use their professional skills very effectively to manage the school and its finances. The governing body is kept very well informed about the work of the school by the headteacher, through discussion and written reports. All school documentation, including the school improvement plan, is thorough and extremely detailed. The school's success in listening to the community has been recognised in the award of the 'Charter Mark', awarded by the Cabinet Office, for excellence in public service.

58. The named governor for special educational needs is well informed and governors regularly discuss matters concerning special educational needs. The headteacher, who is the school's co-ordinator for special educational needs, manages the provision in an exemplary way. The school spends any additional funding for special educational needs prudently and uses money from the general budget to supplement the costs of the provision. Money has been very well spent on the appointment and training of support staff of high quality.

59. There are sufficient suitably qualified and experienced teachers to teach the National Curriculum and religious education. Support staff make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and have a clear role in the classroom, where they often teach small groups of pupils. The

school development plan clearly identifies necessary training for staff during the introduction of new initiatives and in the drive to raise pupils' achievement. A positive feature of staff training is the 'coaching ethos' promoted by the headteacher, who looks out for areas where teachers could do better and then works alongside them to effect improvement. Teachers have high expectations of themselves and are open and honest about their performance. Training for classroom support staff is equally rigorous. Support and guidance for newly qualified teachers are excellent. The governors encourage all members of staff to extend their professional expertise and gain higher qualifications. The appraisal of teachers' performance is fully in place.

60. The school accommodation, including a temporary classroom, is satisfactory for the teaching of the subjects of the National Curriculum. The main building provides enough rooms of adequate size. However, the nursery classroom is only just adequate. The library area is well organised and the hall is also well equipped for physical education. The premises are in good condition and are well maintained by the school caretaker and her staff. The grounds and well-fenced orchard and pond are used imaginatively as a resource for learning. Overall, the school has a good range of resources for the teaching of all subjects of the curriculum. In science, mathematics and ICT resources are very good. In addition, staff make very good use of the local area, visitors and educational visits to enhance provision for the pupils and bring relevance to their learning.

61. The governors have a very good understanding of the financial affairs of the school and manage them very well. The agreed budget reflects priorities in the school improvement plan, and governors look ahead and plan strategically to ensure proper provision for the pupils. The headteacher and the finance committee carefully monitor progress through the plan. Specific grants for provision for pupils who have special educational needs and for staff training are used appropriately. There is a very clear understanding of the need to ensure 'best value' in all that the school does, and governors consider the educational outcomes of all of its spending decisions. The headteacher and the school secretary carefully manage the day-to-day administration of the budget and make very good use of the school's computer system to support this work. Office routines are very well organised and appropriate financial controls are all in place. The last auditor's report showed that records and procedures were all in order. Good systems ensure that secretarial staff deal very efficiently with day-to-day administration so that teachers are not disturbed unnecessarily in the classrooms.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. There are no significant weaknesses in the school, but, in the context of its many strengths, the following minor issues for improvement should be considered as the basis for an action plan:

- The good quality and presentation of handwriting in English lessons is not always transferred to work in other subjects.
(Paragraphs 84, 93, 106, 117, 128)
- Teachers do not always expect the same depth and quality of pupils' writing in other subjects as they do in English.
(Paragraphs 9, 84, 106, 128)
- The school's policy for the marking of pupils' work is not followed consistently.
(Paragraphs 26, 86, 105)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	58
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	52

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	6	20	27	5	0	0	0
Percentage	10	34	47	9	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	13	245
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	-	19

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	5	72

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

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	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
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 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	14	23	37

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	14
	Girls	23	23	23
	Total	37	37	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (97)	100 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	13	13
	Girls	23	21	22
	Total	37	34	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	92 (100)	96 (94)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	18	19	37

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	14	18
	Girls	18	18	19
	Total	35	32	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	95 (84)	84 (84)	100 (87)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	16	18
	Girls	18	16	19
	Total	35	32	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	95 (82)	86 (87)	100 (76)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	219
Any other minority ethnic group	3

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.8
Average class size	27.2

Education support staff: YR – Y7

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	147

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	18
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	497665
Total expenditure	510392
Expenditure per pupil	1994
Balance brought forward from previous year	36827
Balance carried forward to next year	24100

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	243
Number of questionnaires returned	92

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	32	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	33	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	54	43	1	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	47	12	0	2
The teaching is good.	71	27	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	57	33	7	1	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	79	20	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	78	22	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	72	25	2	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	74	25	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	74	24	2	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	54	29	8	2	7

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

63. Children in the Foundation Stage are taught in the nursery and the reception class. Overall, their attainment is in line with expectations for their age when they start the nursery, but a significant number of children have below average speaking and listening and personal and social skills for their age. Children make good progress in the six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage of education. These are:

- personal, social and emotional development;
- communication, language and literacy;
- mathematical development;
- knowledge and understanding of the world;
- physical development; and
- creative development.

64. As a result, most children reach the expected levels in all of these areas of learning by the time they leave the reception class and higher-attaining children exceed them. Children with special educational needs are supported well as staff engage with them during activities in all areas of learning to ensure that they know what to do and make good progress. The school's co-ordinator for early years' provision has established the new curriculum for the Foundation Stage well and there has been professional training of good quality for all staff in the nursery and the reception class. Children's progress is monitored well and good records are kept and used to inform future planning and to keep parents in touch with how their children are doing. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, when it was always at least sound. It is now good, with very good features. The nursery nurses play a significant role in the teaching programme. There is appropriate emphasis on personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy.

Personal, social and emotional development

65. At the time of the inspection, children in the nursery had only been at school for three or four weeks. In the reception class, a third of the children were new to the school because they have not attended Athelstan nursery. Children make good progress in both classes because of the good teaching. They go confidently to get help from adults and make very good relationships with the staff. In the nursery, children gradually settle into the daily routines and become more confident in choosing activities independently. Staff intervene appropriately as a few newly admitted children 'flit' from one activity to another and leave a trail of untidiness behind them. When they have their morning snack, the children organise their drinks and share the food fairly. They listen for increasing periods of time when the class is taught as a whole. In the 'home corner', they learn to share, co-operate and relate happily to one another. They enjoy coming to school and become increasingly confident as they move about the classroom and the outdoor area. In the reception class, children adapt happily to the brisker pace and show increasing levels of concentration. They soon learn to identify their name labels and move them into a box to show that they are present. Children gain experience in being part of a larger group when they join the rest of the school for assemblies in the hall. They co-operate with other children and become increasingly considerate for the views of other people, leading to instances of happy, collaborative play in the playground and in the classrooms. In lessons on literacy and numeracy, most children become increasingly responsive to the teacher's questions so that they gain early skills in mental arithmetic and reading. They develop appropriate levels of independence as they help to clear up at the end of activities, use the bathroom and deal with dressing for physical education.

66. In both classes, the quality of teaching is good and, as a result, the children learn well. The staff recognise the importance of good links with parents and carers, who value the school's approach. In order to ensure that the children settle quickly in school, the staff:

- visit the children's homes in order to establish good relationships and ensure that staff are familiar to the children;
- listen to parents' views on their children's development and any concerns they have;
- inform parents regularly about what goes on in school and how their children are doing; and
- plan a school environment which is welcoming to all the children.

These strategies work very well and help the children to develop their confidence.

67. Staff in both classes have a good understanding of the needs of the age group. They recognise the need to establish routines and encourage the children to become increasingly independent so that they play their part confidently and considerately as members of the class. The management of children is very good and all staff have high expectations of good behaviour. Teachers plan their lessons well; they explain activities clearly. Teachers and nursery nurses value the children and make very good relationships with them because they listen to them and engage with them sensitively. They encourage the children to talk about their own experiences so that learning is relevant. For example, in the reception class, staff listened sensitively to the children during a walk in the school orchard. Staff and parents encouraged the children to be careful and thoughtful as they explored the undergrowth and looked for insects and frogs.

Communication, language and literacy

68. In the nursery, a significant number of children have difficulty in expressing their views and ideas orally but, with sensitive adult support, they make their needs known and become more confident as they join in 'circle time', when they take turns to tell the class about themselves and what they like and do. They become familiar with well-known rhymes, share books with adults and listen increasingly closely to stories. Children handle books with care and 'read' the stories by looking at the pictures. They ask questions about the illustrations and are keen to contribute their ideas. Children begin to recognise their names and make marks with pencils, crayons and paintbrushes. In the reception class, when 'circle time' continues to feature as a way of getting children to express their thoughts, children are more confident in contributing to discussions and explaining what they are doing. Children benefit from the early introduction of elements of the literacy hour, such as when the teacher points to the words in enlarged texts and encourages the children to read along with her. Children follow the words from left to right and higher-attaining children recognise simple commonly used words. By the time they leave the reception class, average and higher-attaining children know initial letter shapes and sounds, copy the teachers' writing accurately and can write their names. The higher attaining children begin to write simple sentences independently and illustrate their work with lively drawings.

69. The quality of teaching in communication, language and literacy is good in both classes. As a result, the children learn well. The teachers and nursery nurses in the two classes work as a team and planning is good. In the nursery, staff take part in the children's play and introduce new words in the context of the activities. Staff extend children's language and encourage them to use an increasingly wide vocabulary to express their ideas and explain their understanding in all areas of learning. In both classes, the range of opportunities for children to talk and widen their range of vocabulary is good. The teacher's solid understanding of the Foundation Stage and its links with the literacy hour contribute to the success in the teaching and learning of reading skills in the reception class, where the literacy hour is adapted well to meet the needs of the children. Lessons usually begin with teaching of the whole class together. After this, there is an appropriate balance of activities so that some are directed by the staff and others are chosen by the children. Staff relate well to children as they carry out specific tasks. They listen well to the children and help them to sort out their ideas. However, there is sometimes not enough

challenge in activities to add a stronger sense of purpose, and children's choices are not followed up to reinforce what they have learnt. When activities are well chosen, for example, when children play 'schools' and re-enact the teacher's lesson, using her book and words on cards, the children reinforce and extend their learning very well in a 'fun' way. Teaching is good in the whole-class sessions; for example, when the teacher shared the text of 'The Enormous Turnip' in an assured and enthusiastic way and encouraged the children to reflect on the characters and plot. In both classes, staff organise quiet areas of the classrooms where children can practise making marks and record their thoughts. This helps them to make good progress with their writing.

Mathematical development

70. In the nursery, children become familiar with numbers to ten through counting rhymes, singing games and practical activities with sorting and ordering objects. As a result, their mathematical vocabulary gradually increases. As they play with sand and water, children gain increasing understanding of terms, such as 'more', 'less', 'full' and 'empty'. In a cookery activity, children made good progress with their mathematical learning as they counted and measured ingredients with the teacher and talked about 'more' and 'too much'. As a significant number of children have difficulties with speaking and listening, this represents good achievement. By the time they leave the reception class, children's counting skills have developed appropriately and most children can count objects up to ten confidently and know the names of simple shapes. Average and higher attaining children know what comes after or before each number up to ten and know 'one more' or 'one less', so that they begin to understand the idea of addition and subtraction. Higher-attaining children work confidently with numbers to 20 and know about bigger numbers in everyday life. In practical activities, children show clear understanding of sharing fairly and matching objects appropriately. By the time they join Year 1, the children are able to explain how they have worked things out and show that they have a range of strategies to solve problems. Children develop appropriate recording skills; for example, when they made a 'big and small animal book'. By the time they leave the reception class, average and higher attaining children begin to record their calculations by drawing pictures and writing numbers.

71. The quality of teaching for children's mathematical development is good. Teachers involve the nursery nurses very effectively so that everyone who works with the children is clear about what is being taught. In both classes, activities are organised well to ensure that children's knowledge and understanding of mathematics are reinforced and extended in interesting ways. Resources are prepared well to stimulate children's interest and extend their understanding. In the nursery, staff create imaginative settings for children to exercise their mathematical vocabulary. For example, they sing number rhymes, play circle games or go on a 'bear hunt', so that they learn to count and progress systematically around a circle of children or follow a sequence of actions. As the children played a game which involved moving coloured wooden snails, they reinforced their knowledge of colours and moved step-by-step along a given course. As a result, children are enthusiastic and they practise their mathematical skills in engaging ways. In both classes, activities have good links with other areas of learning and mathematical language is actively promoted. As the pace of lessons increases in the reception class the teacher reinforces children's learning very effectively through repetition and by combining new learning with what children already know. By the time they leave the reception class, children to make pictures from shapes and build increasingly complex constructions from solid shapes. They order two objects by length, identifying the 'longer' and 'shorter'. In a computer game, they identify the position of items; for example, whether they are 'in', 'on' or 'next to' other items.

Knowledge and understanding of the world.

72. Children make good progress as they explore and investigate the world around them through interesting topics. In the nursery, children join and fix components appropriately to make simple shapes with construction kits. Their understanding in science and technology develops well as they make bread, watch it rise and enjoy eating it. Through stories and books, children

gain greater awareness of the world beyond their immediate environment. Children in both classes enjoy using the computer. They play simple games and gradually extend their skills in responding to signals, dragging images across the screen, matching pictures and reinforcing their learning in literacy and numeracy. In the reception class, children's scientific understanding develops further as they explore the properties of ice and watch it melt. They see how materials change when they make icing and decorate biscuits. Children become more adventurous as they design models from construction kits and develop appropriate skills for making and evaluating their work. Children's knowledge of the wider environment increases as they explore the school site and develop early geographical skills as they explore the school grounds and make simple maps. They get to know more about the various school buildings, playgrounds and the orchard. In religious education lessons, children learn about sharing as they celebrate harvest time.

73. The quality of teaching is good and children learn well. Activities are planned well to provide an interesting range of opportunities for children to practise appropriate skills and gain confidence. The teachers enhance and extend children's learning through well-planned opportunities to go for walks and hear from interesting visitors, including a poet, the lollipop lady, the vicar and members of the dental service and police force. Teachers promote skills of literacy and numeracy well as they develop children's vocabulary, help them to express their ideas and share books on a wide range of subjects. Displays are labelled well and this helps children with their reading. In the reception class, the teacher organises work carefully to lead smoothly into the National Curriculum in Year 1.

Physical development

74. In the nursery, most children move around with an awareness of space and are controlled and purposeful. They run, jump, climb and balance with confidence and develop appropriate levels of muscular control and co-ordination for physical activity and play. Children in the reception class run about the playground safely and play games confidently as they enjoy playtimes with older pupils. In the hall, the reception children used their imagination and stretched, curled and moved at different paces as they danced and responded to music with enthusiasm. In both classes, children have many opportunities to use simple craft equipment, construct models from reclaimed materials, model with dough, play with model vehicles and build with construction kits. In the nursery, children handle pencils with varying degrees of success as they make marks in the well-organised writing area. Children's manipulative control improves and, by the time they join the reception class, they demonstrate satisfactory control to make models from construction kits, use paintbrushes and scissors and practise letter shapes effectively.

75. The quality of teaching is good and children achieve well. Teachers plan well for the children to develop skills for handwriting, cutting, modelling with construction kits and painting. Although the nursery classroom is of the minimum size recommended, the teacher has organised the equipment to make effective use of the space. The use of the outdoor play area, hall, role-play areas and classrooms is effectively planned so that children have regular opportunities for physical activity. In a very good dance lesson for the reception class, the teacher built well on what children could already do, so that they extended their understanding of how movements can reflect the mood of music. There is good-sized designated outdoor space which is equipped well for purposeful play. Teachers ensure that there is a range of equipment available for children to practise balancing, climbing, sliding and riding on wheeled toys. Sometimes the activities are too spread out for the nursery children. Arrangements are in hand to reduce the area in which the children play so that staff are able to engage more fully with all the children during each session. When staff involve themselves in games with the children, learning is of good quality; for example, when the nursery nurse took the children on a 'bear hunt'. Time is planned well for the reception class to share the outdoor facilities and children also enjoy well-planned physical education and dance lessons.

Creative development

76. In the nursery, children practise making marks with thick brushes and bright colours. At the beginning of the school year, their drawings often show a lack of concentration. Few show much detail, but, by the time the children join the reception class, they confidently use a wide variety of paints, colour sticks, papers and malleable materials such as modelling dough. Children enjoy singing number and nursery rhymes tunefully and listen to music with increasing attention. They extend their imaginative skills as they pretend to keep house and be mothers and fathers in the home corner. In the reception class, children dab, swirl and stroke the paint onto paper to make bold patterns. They create bright pictures of themselves, print with a variety of objects and explore contrasting colours. They extend their skills and create pictures and collages with a wide range of materials, including fabric and pasta. Reception children join with older pupils to sing songs with more words and more complicated rhythms in the school assemblies. They use tape recorders confidently to listen to music, and they play percussion instruments to perform for one another in the music corner.

77. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Both classrooms are organised effectively to provide opportunities for children's creative development. In the nursery, activities are planned to be inviting so that children experiment with a range of materials, use their imagination and enjoy what they do. The reception class teacher plans well to ensure that children have a wide range of opportunities to exercise their imagination and benefit from creative and expressive activities. However, some of the equipment in the home corner is well worn and in need of replacement. Children are encouraged to retell stories, take on roles in the home corner and the 'office' in the classroom and play 'schools'. Children's artwork is displayed attractively to promote their self-esteem and brighten the classroom. Musical activities are linked well to other areas of learning; for example, when children sing songs about autumn as part of the harvest festival celebrations.

ENGLISH

78. Overall, there has been good improvement since the last inspection because of the high quality of the teaching and the effective implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. There has been an upward trend in standards over the past four years because the school has established a good range of strategies to raise expectations and standards in reading and writing. These include:

- very careful analysis of data to find areas of weakness;
- specific lessons with an emphasis on understanding and evaluating passages from books;
- additional time for writing in all classes;
- making pupils aware of targets and levels of their work through consistent use and reinforcement of these;
- emphasis on raising the achievement of boys through a wide range of reading materials for individual and group reading;
- provision of good quality resources; and
- support and advice from the Local Education Authority with additional training on aspects of writing.

79. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6, the school's results were well above the national average. The results were similar to those in 2000, but lower attaining pupils did better in 2001 because of the high quality of the teaching. Results are well above those typical of similar schools and there were no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls. Currently, pupils' attainment in Year 6 in writing is now typical of 11-year-olds overall because of the significant number of pupils with special educational needs in this particular year group. However, standards in speaking and listening and reading are above average and a significant number of pupils achieve well above average standards. This reflects the school's

consistent record of teaching of high quality in reading and the school's emphasis on the spoken word as the essential starting point for work in English. It also supports the school's focus on the teaching of writing.

80. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 2, the school's results were well above average in reading and above average in writing. Pupils now attain standards which are in line with expectations in Year 2 in speaking and listening and writing, but in reading they attain standards which exceed expectations. Approximately a quarter of pupils currently achieve at a well above average level for their age.

81. From current inspection, pupils achieve well. Boys and girls achieve equally well throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs work extremely hard and achieve well because of the high quality of the teaching and support they receive. As a result, pupils frequently attain the nationally agreed standards for 11-year-olds. Staff are sensitive to their needs and set them tasks which are well matched to their needs. They encourage pupils to concentrate and gain confidence. The adult support they have helps them to gain skills and to take part in lessons more confidently. Higher attaining pupils are usually well challenged because teachers have high expectations and they make sure that pupils achieve in line with their capabilities, and sometimes well above what is expected for their age.

82. By the end of Year 2, pupils listen attentively and concentrate well because teachers are careful to speak very clearly and ensure that everyone is fully involved in lessons. Pupils frequently respond to questions with very short answers because they have a very limited vocabulary. Their confidence grows as teachers choose questions carefully and use sensitive and skilful strategies to help pupils to extend their answers. For example, when pupils discussed the word 'happy' with a partner so that they were able to give a good range of suggestions when they returned to the whole group. Pupils enjoy learning new words, such as the specific mathematical vocabulary they are taught in mathematics lessons. They also become more confident in speaking to a group when they read their written work aloud at the end of lessons. By the end of Year 6, pupils enjoy talking to visitors and ask and answer questions thoughtfully. In Year 3, pupils were keen to answer questions about the poems they were reading, and recalled the word 'onomatopoeia', with relish. In religious education, after listening to stories about the creation of the world, pupils in Year 4 formulated their own questions. They asked, 'Where did the lotus flower come from?' and 'Are there other stories from countries like Afghanistan?' They read their work aloud and explained thoughtfully why they had selected specific words from magazines for their advertising display. They emphasised the impact of the sound of words upon them. Higher attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6 clearly explained their initial errors in creating complex sentences. These pupils make good progress as they start to manipulate ideas and words. The vocabulary of the lower-attaining pupils is limited when they are asked to explain their ideas and opinions or suggest adverbs or adjectives for sentences.

83. By the end of Year 2, skilled and imaginative teaching of letter sounds and patterns enables pupils of all abilities to read simple texts by themselves. Pupils respond well to the very good teaching of strategies for working out words. This enables them to gain increasing independence with their reading, to enjoy books, gain information and follow stories with increasing appreciation of the plot, the characters and the humour. Pupils in Year 1 understand the terms glossary, index, contents and blurb. In the literacy hour, pupils in Years 1 and 2 join in the reading of enlarged texts with good expression and intonation. They know how to use alphabetical order correctly to find spellings and meanings in dictionaries. They use the contents page of their book before selecting which story to read. They like to read the labels on displays and enjoy unravelling and answering the written questions placed around the room by the teachers. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading is above average, with a number of pupils with very good reading skills. In the shared reading sessions of the literacy hour, pupils use good levels of expression and intonation. Higher attaining pupils read fluently, accurately and expressively, especially when there is dialogue in the text. Pupils have a good attitude towards reading because the school has chosen books that appeal to boys and girls very carefully. Sessions when pupils read together in groups are well organised and enjoyable,

whatever the ability of the pupils. These sessions have a clear focus and are especially useful when the teacher works thoughtfully through a prepared list of questions about the book. Most pupils read regularly at home and reading records are maintained well.

84. By the time they are seven and 11 years old, pupils attain standards in writing which are typical of what is expected nationally. Standards are improving and higher attaining pupils are attaining at an above average level. Most pupils in Year 1 and 2 make good progress in writing. The use of individual targets and the consistent teaching of spelling and letter formation are helping pupils to develop confidence in their own ability to spell correctly. They know that their targets are to improve their writing and assess whether this week's writing is an improvement on previous work. Well-organised teaching ensures that pupils learn to improve the formation of letters and write legibly. However, the quality of writing and presentation in handwriting lessons is not consistently transferred to written work in other lessons and subjects as pupils move through the school. This is already identified in the school's two-year development plan for the improvement of writing. By the end of Year 2, most pupils use capital letters and full stops consistently. They appreciate any opportunities to use capital letters for emphasis and higher attaining pupils begin to use speech and exclamation marks to bring interest and vitality to their work. By the end of Year 6, pupils write for a wide range of purposes. They write letters of different kinds, using conventions correctly. Their stories include increasingly interesting vocabulary, pace and excitement, and their poems are thoughtful and sensitive. Pupils increasingly use their literacy skills to enhance work in geography and design and technology. However, in subjects such as history and religious education, writing does not always have the depth shown in literacy lessons. There is inconsistent use of skills learned in English lessons; for example, spelling is less good, titles are not always copied correctly and ideas are not always sequenced logically. In science, the presentation of diagrams and labelling is not always completed as carefully as it should be to enable pupils to see clearly what they have learned in the lesson. The school has identified this inconsistency and has plans to build on existing good practice and effect improvements in spelling, handwriting, presentation and use of a wider vocabulary in all subjects so that pupils attain higher standards in their written work.

85. Pupils' attitudes in English are good. They are keen to contribute to lessons and are able to work without direct supervision. They work well in pairs and settle to work quickly because teachers use very good strategies, such as time limits for preparation and working. The very good relationships between all adults and pupils create a pleasant atmosphere for pupils to grow in confidence and develop their skills and understanding because they are clear about what they are expected to learn in lessons. Teachers use an imaginative range of resources very effectively to motivate and interest pupils.

86. Teaching is good and, as a result, pupils learn well, and frequently very well. Good planning makes sure that lessons build effectively on previous learning and the management and organisation of lessons are very good. Lessons are planned carefully to provide specific opportunities for pupils to take turns to listen to each other. Teachers work hard to encourage pupils to respond to questions appropriately and they succeed skilfully in getting pupils to extend their simple answers. All staff promote very good relationships and a supportive atmosphere which enables pupils to make good progress and develop their confidence. In Year 1, teachers pick up pupils' interest in reading, which has been promoted in the Foundation Stage, and there is a lively interest in literature in all classrooms. Very good teaching in Year 6 helps pupils to become familiar with the work of established authors and know what is special about them. Teachers plan activities which are interesting, challenging, and enjoyable and which reinforce many reading and writing skills. They ensure that pupils have achievable tasks and plan appropriate support and guidance so that all pupils are successful. As a result, pupils make good gains in their learning in most literacy lessons. The marking of work is prompt. It usually reinforces teachers' expectations of pupils and lets them know how well they are doing against their targets. However, there is some inconsistency in the application of the school's marking policy.

87. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy conscientiously. Pupils use the library confidently and are learning to search for information on the Internet as well as in

books. ICT is included in the planning for most lessons and incidental use of numeracy occurs regularly, for example when pupils count syllables and the number of lines and verses in poems.

88. Co-ordination of the subject is very good. High quality professional training for staff and regular monitoring of teaching and learning have been significant features in the school's introduction of the National Literacy Strategy. Information obtained from assessments of pupils' attainment and progress is used very well to identify areas for improvement and inform planning. The weekly library club provides a very good opportunity for pupils to develop their interest in reading and use of the local library. Opportunities for drama and imaginative role-play are used well and pupils benefit greatly from these.

MATHEMATICS

89. There has been good improvement in this subject since the last inspection. The school has worked hard to implement the National Numeracy Strategy and standards across the school are improving steadily as a result. The quality of teaching is now very good and all pupils, including those the school has identified with particular needs, achieve very well in lessons.

90. The school's performance in national tests for 11-year-olds in 2001 was above average compared with all schools nationally and average compared with similar schools, and improvements over the past four years reflect the national trend upwards. The present Year 6 pupils are currently attaining the standards above those expected for their age, particularly in their work on number. The school's attention to relevant, practical work helps pupils to be increasingly flexible in their approach to mathematics as they look for a range of strategies to solve problems.

91. In the 2001 national tests for seven-year-olds, the school's results were better than those attained both nationally and in similar schools. The school's upward trend of results from 1996 to 2000 has been better than the national trend. Pupils in the current Year 2 are working at levels above those expected for their age. These good standards reflect the effectiveness of the very practical maths curriculum which teachers teach in the infant classes.

92. Pupils in the current Year 2 work with two digit numbers, count backwards and forwards in tens and find the coins they need to make amounts up to 50 pence. They know the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes and most can name all the common ones. They are adept at working with numbers 'in their heads'; for example, when pupils in Years 2 and 3 offered many different ways of manipulating numbers to reach the answer of 25, by adding and subtracting a range of two- and three-digit numbers. Because pupils have many opportunities to work practically, they achieve well and develop their mathematical understanding within the context of real-life situations; for example, when handling money for items on a shopping list.

93. By the end of Year 6, higher-attaining pupils work confidently with decimals to two decimal places, carry out long multiplication and division and work with fractions and ratios. Lower attaining pupils understand how to multiply two digit numbers by splitting them into manageable parts and can calculate fractions of numbers. Standards are good in mental arithmetic. Pupils in Year 6 have a very good understanding of place value and can work confidently in their heads with large numbers, write them and read them correctly. Pupils have a suitable range of opportunities to learn about shape, space and measure and handle data. They record their work in a variety of ways, using tables, graphs and spreadsheets, but do not always present their work as well as they could. Teachers recognise the importance of giving pupils opportunities to use and apply their knowledge in practical situations and investigate mathematical problems and time is allocated for this in lessons. Older pupils have regular weekly opportunities to pursue mathematical investigations. They are encouraged to make predictions about their work to help them to decide whether their results are reasonable, and present their findings in an organised way.

94. Pupils achieve well and learn at a very good rate because of the very good quality of the teaching. During the inspection, lessons were never less than good and some were excellent.

Teachers base their lessons on the national guidelines for teaching mathematics and follow the plans carefully. As a result, pupils' knowledge and understanding is developed systematically through the lesson so that they achieve at the end what they set out to learn at the beginning. The mental arithmetic sessions at the beginning of lessons are managed very well. Teachers make good use of simple resources such as fans showing an array of numbers and small boards for pupils to write quick answers so that all can participate during question and answer sessions. The pace is brisk and everyone is fully involved. Pupils try hard to work out answers mentally and make use of a wide range of strategies, tips and short cuts. When asked, they can explain their methods of calculation, using the appropriate mathematical language.

95. In the main part of lessons, teachers give clear explanations of what they want pupils to learn. In the best lessons observed, teachers involved their pupils fully in these sessions. They encouraged pupils to demonstrate teaching points, contribute answers and write them up on the board, or to explain their answers to the rest of the class. In a particularly effective lesson on percentages in Year 5, the teacher kept the pupils fully involved throughout. They played games, worked in pairs and groups, asked and answered questions and completed exercises as they were led skilfully to an understanding that percentage means the number of parts out of a hundred. Pupils were absorbed by the tasks and very enthusiastic about their learning – few wanted the lesson to finish! Pupils in the infant classes are equally enthusiastic about their mathematics lessons because teachers use many practical activities to make learning fun. In a Year 2 lesson on three-dimensional shapes, pupils worked on the mat with the teacher to sort the shapes into sets according to their attributes. When they moved into groups to construct shapes of their own, one group enjoyed using dolly mixtures and cocktail sticks to build their cubes!

96. Teachers assess pupils' work regularly to keep track of progress and group pupils by ability. In all lessons, pupils with special educational needs and those who learn at a slower rate receive good support from both the teacher and classroom assistants. Pupils who learn more quickly are usually given more challenging tasks. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they work hard at all times, even when the teacher is teaching another group. Not all pupils take the care they should with their written work and in some classes pupils' books are untidy.

97. All teachers mark work conscientiously but some teachers are better than others at setting targets so that pupils know what they should do to improve their work. In the lessons observed which were good rather than very good or excellent, this was because the teacher's explanations were not as clear as they might be; this left some pupils confused for a while. Sometimes the pace of the lesson slowed because the teacher did not set appropriate time deadlines for the task in hand.

98. The subject has been the focus for development and staff training in the past two years and this has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. The present subject co-ordinators are new to the role, but have plans in place to develop use of ICT in the subject. They also recognise that learning could be improved even further by finding ways of practising numeracy skills further in other subjects such as science and geography, and are planning to deal with this.

SCIENCE

99. Since the last inspection, standards have been maintained throughout the school. Standards are now in line with national expectations in Year 2 and above national expectations in Year 6. This represents good achievement. The school has taken a robust approach to raise pupils' achievement through:

- the enhancement of teachers' knowledge of the subject so that they are more secure with what they have to teach;
- better lesson planning and resources; and

- the increased expertise of senior members of staff who have become more adept at analysing test results and setting targets.

100. The school's performance in the 2001 national tests for pupils in Year 6 was above average compared with all schools nationally and compared with similar schools. The percentage of pupils who achieved the higher level (Level 5) was well above the national average. Pupils with special educational needs made very good progress in 2001 and achieved at levels expected for 11-year-olds. There were no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls. Over four years, there has been steady improvement in the proportion of pupils who reach the standards expected. Pupils in the current Year 6 achieve well because of the school's increased provision of relevant practical activities which stimulate their interest and get them to think deeply about what they are doing.

101. Based on the teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2001, the school's performance was close to the national average when compared with all schools, but well below average when compared with similar schools. This is because no pupils achieved the higher level (Level 3). The school has recognised the pattern of weak achievement at the higher level and measures are now in place to redress the situation. Planning includes increased in-service training for the staff and opportunities for pupils to experience all aspects of science each year, rather than spreading the curriculum over Years 1 and 2. Inspection evidence shows that higher-attaining pupils are set to achieve the higher level in 2002 because of this positive approach.

102. Pupils in Year 2 are making good progress because they build systematically on their earlier learning. As they increase their knowledge and understanding of life processes and living things, pupils know that animals produce offspring of their own kind. They explore how they themselves have grown and compare what they can do now with what they could do when they were two years old. Before watching a well-chosen video recording, pupils showed good progress in developing their skills of prediction. They talked about what the young child in the recording was likely to be able to do. Pupils gain good levels of understanding of how food affects health. They use the term 'balanced diet' and know that there might be a lot of sugar in some drinks and a lot of fat in chocolate. They know that too much of either is not healthy. Classroom assistants give very good support for pupils with special educational needs. These pupils make very good progress in recording their findings because of the opportunity to talk over their ideas with an adult.

103. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils' achievement is very good in using specific vocabulary and researching information. Investigative and experimental science is given a higher profile in Years 3 to 6 than at the time of the last inspection. As a result of this, pupils are secure with prediction and fair testing and regularly use graphs to present their data. They are making good progress using small measuring equipment, such as stopwatches. Pupils in Year 4 know why tests have to be repeated in order to validate results and understand that magnetism works through some materials, but not others. Pupils with special educational needs made very good progress in a lesson where they created a graph using data about pulse rates. They had collected the information in their games lesson earlier in the day. By the end of the lesson, they were able to identify when the activity had started and when it finished. Due to such challenging tasks and excellent teaching, some pupils with special educational needs are attaining at nationally expected levels by the end of Year 6.

104. Pupils enjoy science. They have good background knowledge of environmental issues and other social and moral aspects of the subject. The school's approach nurtures their natural curiosity about the natural world and how things work. They love the 'hands on' approach and are keen to find out what happens next. Pupils show a sensitive attitude and appropriate respect for life, living things and the environment. They appreciate the good range of opportunities for them to explore nature in the school grounds.

105. There has been a significant improvement in the effectiveness of teaching since the

previous inspection. This has been achieved through better monitoring of planning and teaching styles. Overall it is good, with a higher proportion of very good and excellent teaching than reported previously. Teachers start lessons by reviewing earlier work and setting out clear objectives for the new lesson. In almost all lessons, teachers end by asking the class if they think the objectives have been achieved. This has a positive effect on pupils' learning, as it helps them to recognise how much they have gained in lessons. Teachers plan lessons well and encourage pupils to work conscientiously and briskly within set time limits so that lessons move along at a good pace. In the best lessons, pupils are engaged in a variety of interesting scientific activities, according to their ability and level of skill. In an excellent lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, some pupils researched in books about the functions of the internal body parts. Others used a computer programme for a similar activity and the teacher focused on creating a graph with a group of pupils who have special educational needs. The very good lesson summary showed that all had been engrossed by their tasks and had made excellent progress in making predictions and understanding the functions and positions of the major internal organs of the human body. Teachers ask searching questions and sensitively extend pupils' answers by probing further, sometimes with the rest of the class, to extend their scientific understanding. This maintains the attention of the whole class and, as a result, the lesson moves along at a good pace and pupils achieve well. Most teachers are comfortable with setting targets for each pupil's improvement and this has increased pupils' knowledge of how they are progressing with their understanding of scientific ideas. However, teachers do not use the school's marking system consistently to make pupils aware of how well they are doing or what they could do better.

106. The school has developed the curriculum for science well. Within the emphasis on practical investigation, there has been keen attention to the development of specific scientific skills. However, pupils do not use their writing skills as well as they could in the subject. The depth of their writing and its presentation do not match what is seen in English lessons. As they measure, make graphs and make comparisons, pupils practise and use their mathematical skills appropriately in science. The use of ICT is growing but the school does not have appropriate equipment such as thermal sensors for pupils to gain and record information electronically. Such work with new equipment is planned for the next summer term.

107. Leadership of the subject is very good and the co-ordinator has worked well with the staff to put together a very good development plan for the subject. The co-ordinator has a secure scientific background and is established as a good role model and teacher. Action has already been taken to have pupils at the higher level by the end of Year 2. Time has also been set aside for training in areas identified as in need of development. Resources are adequate overall but are in need of enhancement for ICT. They are good for outdoor investigations in the school grounds.

ART AND DESIGN

108. By the time they are seven and 11 years old, pupils produce work that is in line with national expectations. They use a wide variety of media and techniques and develop their skills systematically as they move through the school. There has been an improvement in the amount of three-dimensional work since the last inspection, especially in workshops with the National Trust and teachers from the local high school. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well because the activities are planned thoughtfully and pupils are encouraged to develop their own ideas.

109. By the time they are seven, pupils use paint, collage, pens and pencils to create an appropriate range of imaginative and illustrative work of high quality. For example, Year 1 pupils took photographs in the orchard. They then made neat drawings of trees or painted apples on the branches with clean brush strokes. Several pupils show a good understanding of light and shade and their drawings convey the scene very effectively. In Year 2 pupils consolidate their

drawing and observational skills. The quality of learning is good because skills are taught carefully and ably, building on pupils' strengths as they grow more confident and the work is creatively challenging and satisfying. Teachers ensure that, when pupils are taught new skills, they have a chance to practise and improve them. For example, teachers use the work of other artists sensitively and effectively to show pupils examples of what others have done. Pupils in Year 2 showed great awareness of the detail in a painting by Albert Marquet. They painted their own very clear pictures with very good attention to background and detail of people on the beach and boats on the water. Pupils learn to plan their work and select their own materials; for example, when they tried to imagine what 'Wild Things' would look like. The teacher was careful not to show pictures from the storybook 'Where the Wild Things Are' so that pupils developed their ideas as their work proceeded. Pupils used skills of cutting, painting, colour mixing, rubbing pastels effectively to make interesting three-dimensional figures. When they talked about their creatures, pupils demonstrated their developing skills in planning their work before selecting the materials which they consider to be the most appropriate. For example, some folded furry material to make hats and hair, and another pupil very successfully stuck on polystyrene tubes to give the impression of staring eyes.

110. Seven to 11-year-olds are taught well and learn effectively, making good use of their sketchbooks. These contain interesting planning ideas and preparation for using certain techniques. For example, in Year 4 pupils produced careful pencil sketches to represent a dream. They used shading thoughtfully because they were asked to use only black and white in their designs. Pupils learn that only objects raised above the card will print when they are encouraged to explore and develop their own imaginative ideas to produce a printing tile that represents their dream. Year 5 pupils studied the works of several other artists before drawing a portrait of a face. They worked with different types of pencils and built well on previously learned skills and techniques. Pupils sketched with increasing accuracy, using their pencils imaginatively to provide shading which gave added form and depth to their line drawings. Pupils showed perception and a sensitive response to facial expressions to convey the mood of the person. They explored the use of colour to reflect the feelings of the subject; for example, when they suggested 'red for horror'. At the end of the lesson, pupils discussed their work confidently and expressed differing opinions about the pictures they had studied and created.

111. Teaching and learning in art and design are good and pupils enjoy their lessons. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good use of their sketchbooks. These contain interesting planning ideas and preparation for using certain techniques. For example, pupils in Year 4 produced careful pencil sketches to represent a dream, shading thoughtfully because they have to use only black and white in their design. Pupils develop effective skills for printing. They know that the image must be raised above the surface of the printing block in order to replicate the design effectively, and they explore and develop their own imaginative ideas to produce a printing tile that represents their dream.

112. Teachers suggest how pupils' work can be improved. This encourages pupils to reflect on their work and to try to improve it. Speaking and listening skills are used well as pupils participate well in discussions about their own response to famous works of art. Teachers also promote the use of sketchbooks effectively and this helps pupils realise that they can rehearse their ideas and skills before trying out a final piece of work. Art is used extensively during subjects such as history and geography. For example, pupils weave attractive patterns in red and yellow to complement their work on the Fire of London and create a collage jungle background in geography.

113. The subject is effectively co-ordinated and there are good resources for all aspects of the curriculum. There is an enthusiasm for improving standards and ensuring that pupils improve and extend their skills and understanding as they move through the school. There is well-planned use of a range of programs in ICT. Artistic experiences, including workshops, provide valuable additional opportunities for learning new techniques and working together. Pupils' work, along with that of other artists, is displayed very effectively around the school and classes have

interesting displays of two- and three-dimensional work which enhance the environment.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

114. At the last inspection, pupils' attainment throughout the school was in line with national standards. Standards have improved and are now above national expectations for seven-year-olds. They have been maintained and are in line with expectations for 11-year-olds. This is because of the school's thorough review of the curriculum. Pupils make interesting items and skills are now taught systematically. The school is well set to raise standards further.

115. By the end of Year 2, pupils develop skills for designing and making things appropriately and gain confidence in handling tools. In Year 1, systematic teaching helps pupils to gain confidence and develop new techniques. In an excellent lesson, the teacher reminded pupils of skills they had learned which would help them to cut windows in their cardboard houses. In earlier trials, pupils had tried out ideas such as making frames from strips of wood and decorating the roof with tiles. After looking at photographs, some pupils decided to fix gutters and drainpipes to the walls. Teachers promote a thoughtful approach to planning. They encourage pupils to think ahead about the sequence of their work and choose suitable materials and tools. By the end of Year 2, pupils apply their skills effectively. They make well-constructed models of vehicles. The chassis have secure corners made from cardboard triangles, and the axles are effectively attached with wooden pegs which allow the wheels to turn. The designs are innovative, with windows and roof vents in the caravans and ladders on fire engines. The quality of the decoration varies, but pupils gain a great deal from the exercise and achieve well because of the teacher's well-chosen ideas. In food technology, the teacher incorporated pupils' literacy skills well as they listed the ingredients and explained the method for making a fruit salad. Pupils use their literacy and mathematical skills well to support their work. As they learn about healthy eating, pupils draw attractive pictures of fruit and vegetables.

116. By the end of Year 6, pupils increasingly link their work with other subjects. They use their scientific skills to provide mechanisms to move model vehicles. Teachers encourage pupils to be innovative; for example, when they suggest that pupils add batteries and create simple switches to start and stop the vehicles. Pupils explore methods of propulsion and experiment with rubber bands. In order to add pace to the movement, pupils use sandpaper and other rough materials to create friction on the axles. Work is also linked well to music and history. Pupils explore the way musical instruments have developed over time. They look at how the instruments are played, what they are made of and how they are fixed together. They make detailed plans and well-labelled diagrams to create their own instruments. The finished products are evaluated carefully to see the effectiveness of the design on the sound. This is work of a good standard and pupils achieve well because of the good quality of the teachers' planning and imagination.

117. Literacy and numeracy are developed well as pupils make plans, label diagrams, write lists and instructions and evaluate their work. The quality of presentation is variable, but the purpose of the written work is clear. Mathematical skills are developed well, too, as pupils measure materials, consider shapes and use grids to record the quality and effectiveness of what they make. As pupils become more proficient with the control and monitoring aspects of ICT, they are gaining appropriate skills, for example in making plans and manipulating shapes, to link the subjects together effectively.

118. Pupils enjoy the subject. They are aware of health and safety issues and treat tools and materials with respect. They choose the things they need and remember to return tools and spare materials at the end of the lesson. Pupils with special education needs are supported sensitively so that they achieve success and raised self-esteem.

119. Too few lessons were seen to give an overall judgement on the quality of teaching, but excellent teaching was seen in Year 1. Teachers plan work well and take particular care to

ensure that pupils learn skills in a systematic way. They give them plenty of practice and encourage them to try things out. It is clear that teachers' confidence in teaching the subject has increased because of the revised and well-organised curriculum, which is based on national guidance but takes into account good ideas which teachers bring to add relevance to pupils' learning. The subject is led very well by the enthusiastic co-ordinator, who recognises that success lies in being realistic and setting plans which are achievable and interesting for the pupils. Learning resources are good. They are used efficiently and are well organised and stored.

GEOGRAPHY

120. Attainment by pupils aged seven and 11 years old has improved since the previous inspection. Standards are now above expectations at Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils make good progress, particularly when they interpret aerial photographs and give reasons for their answers. They use words such as 'coastal', 'reservoir' and 'sandstorm' correctly in discussions about natural and man made features of the landscape. By learning through the skills of the subject, such as mapping, orienteering and observation, pupils are well motivated. The way in which social responsibility issues are taught is also effective in raising the profile of geography; for example, when pupils compare both the useful and destructive impact humans are having on the landscape.

121. Pupils in Year 1 make informative plans and maps from a computer programme when they choose appropriate symbols to represent buildings and other features. On a large-scale local map they identify their house and use terms such as 'nearest' or 'furthest' accurately when discussing routes around their village. By Year 2, pupils are collecting data about their village through observation. This is used to improve their decision-making ability or to compare features in terms such as 'high', 'low', 'attractive' or 'ugly'. Teachers are good at using geography to improve vocabulary and to look for ways of teaching the techniques of other subjects. A good example is the artwork on jungles, which takes a geographical theme but teaches collage techniques in fabric and paper.

122. Work by the older pupils shows that teachers build on what pupils have learned earlier in the school. Year 5 pupils have a good appreciation of the importance of water from wide ranging points of view. Pupils use their learning about hot and cold countries, geographical features on maps and increasing knowledge of services in the community from lessons on citizenship. They demonstrate a sound knowledge of tropical and desert regions, as well as establishing how water is used and cleared in the school. In the latter activity, their skill in reading an architect's plan, collecting and sorting information into categories of disposal, is of a high order for their age. All pupils are achieving a secure understanding of the need to make the most efficient use of natural resources in developed and developing countries. In Year 6, pupils show a good understanding of the relationship between how people earn a living from natural resources and their landscape. From a visit to Derbyshire and a talk by a mountain guide from Nepal, they obtained evidence of how tourism brings employment to a region, but can also be detrimental to the landscape and quality of life of the local population. Work in ICT was developed very effectively when pupils communicated over the Internet with a school in Cumbria in order to find out about and compare environments.

123. Teaching is consistently good, and in one lesson, it was excellent. Most teachers make the work interesting because they know what they have to teach and have good lesson plans. They recall earlier work briefly and make lesson objectives clear at the start of each lesson. Consequently, pupils are quickly engaged in the substance of lessons and are able contribute their ideas as they realise what they should be learning and what is expected of them. For example, pupils in Year 5 got into groups, discussed the appearance of water in various containers and recorded their findings well in ten minutes. No time was wasted and pupils were keen to ensure that everyone 'had a say'. Management of classes is very good because

relationships between pupils and teachers promote trust and an enjoyable working environment. On a village walk, pupils in Year 2 behaved well and in the classroom, they worked together sensibly. Teachers use discussion well to help pupils to tease out their ideas. As a result, a group of pupils in Year 6 talked confidently and politely with a visitor, showing mature curiosity in the geographical issues raised. Since the previous inspection, teachers have become more aware of how literacy and numeracy skills can be used in geography lessons. Lesson plans are giving an increasingly high importance to writing in more depth, with higher expectation for written work to contain more factual details. Access to information from CD-ROM sources is not yet widely developed in lessons.

124. Geography is taken more seriously than in many primary schools due to very good support and interest from the subject leader. Since the previous inspection, monitoring of lessons has led to improvements in teaching and in the standards of pupils' work. Resources have also been improved. These include the setting up of village trails and use of the school grounds for orienteering and environmental work. There is a very good range of visits to places of interest, as well as visitors to the school, which enhance the curriculum significantly.

HISTORY

125. Too little work was seen to judge current standards but, from examination of earlier work, pupils achieve well in history, because the teaching over time is very good and pupils enjoy the work provided. No overall judgement is given on current teaching, as too few lessons were seen.

126. Teachers have worked hard to plan a programme for history that is interesting and relevant. A nationally approved scheme for the subject forms the basis of the planning, but teachers have adapted it and added to it to ensure that the rich historical heritage of the local area is fully exploited. Teachers make good use of visits to places of historical interest, such as the site of King Athelstan's palace in the village, the Ryedale Folk Museum and the York Railway Museum to bring the subject alive. Year 6 pupils recall these visits with enthusiasm. They can describe characters and lifestyles from the past and made comparisons with how we live today.

127. A strength of the teaching in history is the way in which teachers use historical sources of information, such as artefacts and old documents, to teach pupils how to discover information for themselves. All teachers give pupils the opportunity to ask questions, examine evidence and draw conclusions from a wide range of historical sources. In a very good lesson in Year 4, pupils were studying aspects of life in Ancient Egypt. The teacher showed pupils slides of artefacts on display in a museum that were evidence of Egyptian burial customs, and encouraged them to consider the similarities and differences between them. Pupils were then given time to carry out some research of their own, using the computer and a CD ROM, books from the library and pictures, books and artefacts from the school's own history resource box. By the end of the lesson these pupils had begun to understand the significance of death to the Ancient Egyptians, and how their customs reflected their beliefs. Pupils were fascinated by the pictures and approached their task with high levels of interest and enthusiasm. In this lesson a pupil support assistant gave good support to pupils working on the computer, and both the teacher and the assistant made sure that pupils with special educational needs received the help they needed.

128. Pupils' writing about what they have learnt in history is not always of the quality and depth expected for pupils of their age. One reason for this is because so much time is devoted to valuable practical activity and discussion, nevertheless, not enough is done to ensure that sufficient opportunities for writing are developed through the history syllabus. Some pupils do not take enough care with the presentation of their work.

129. The subject is well managed. Much work has been done in the past on developing a relevant history curriculum and building a bank of books and resources to support it. For example, there is a very good collection of Saxon artefacts. The school has made good use of

specialist support from the Local Education Authority to ensure that teachers are confident about the best way to teach history. Teaching in the subject has been monitored regularly in the past and the school is continually looking at ways of developing the subject further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

130. Levels of pupils' attainment have been maintained since the last inspection, when they were in line with national standards. They are now at the expected levels for their age by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, but a brighter picture emerges than in 1997 because of the wider range of pupils' work and higher expectations of what they can do. Developments in control and monitoring are set to raise standards further.

131. By the end of Year 2, most pupils use ICT to organise information and present their findings in interesting ways in a range of subjects. Lively programs stimulate pupils' interest so that they learn at a good rate. Pupils write simple text to the screen and save and print their work. They follow commands effectively and recognise the importance of giving precise instructions. They alter the font type, size and colour of print for emphasis and effect. In art, they use graphic packages and select appropriate tools to draw and fill shapes and create colourful picture with a range of textures. At the end of sessions on the computer, they close programs and shut down the machines correctly and confidently. Control and monitoring are developing features in the school's provision, and pupils are gaining the necessary skills to give a series of instructions for drawing shapes on the screen. They control programmable toys by giving directions such as 'forward, ten; right, three'. Pupils use tape recorders confidently and are aware of the use of ICT in everyday life in places such as shops, offices and banks.

132. By the end of Year 6, pupils use a wide range of skills in ICT to support their learning. They word process confidently in a range of subjects. In English, they produce well-written letters which show attention to conventional layout and include addresses, paragraphs and greetings. Pupils write interesting articles, using a range of fonts and colours to attract attention. Book reviews are well organised with a star rating system. There are good links with the community as pupils set up well-designed questionnaires; for example, when they seek residents' views on traffic-calming changes in the village. Pupils are increasingly aware of the importance of ICT in communicating rapidly with people far way; for example, in geography, when they contacted a school in Cumbria as part of a year-long link to find out about the environment. However, the use of CD ROMs is not fully exploited in geography lessons. Pupils practise and extend their learning in art and design; for example, when they create imaginative pictures from reflecting shapes. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils created drawings using standard geometric shapes which they learned to manipulate and repeat. Pupils carry out searches on websites to find information; for example when they wanted to know more about the Beatles. They search for information in CD ROMs in a range of subjects, send e-mail, handle data, create spreadsheets and gain increasing use of digital cameras. The school does not have sufficient equipment for pupils to enhance their scientific expertise and show variations in temperature, light or sound.

133. Pupils enjoy using computers and they work well together in pairs and groups. They are inquisitive and keen to learn more about the possible operations within programs. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from repetitive practice of letter sounds and spelling and from manipulating figures in simple number programs.

134. The quality of teaching is good and teachers have adapted well to the new mode of teaching in the recently completed computer suite. Because ICT is increasingly integrated into the life of the school, children develop and use it regularly. Sometimes work is done in the classroom; at others, pupils learn in the suite. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they advise, support and encourage pupils so that the subject holds no fear for them. Planning of lessons in the suite is good as pupils are introduced to new ideas and are then given time to practise what they have learned. The school has recently introduced equipment which helps

teachers to teach from a large screen. They do this very well. For example, in a Year 5 class, the teacher displayed data which the pupils had collected and organised, and then asked probing questions to tease out pupils' understanding about how mistakes in the data could affect judgements which might be made. As they teach classes and groups of pupils, teachers choose interesting programs which engage pupils' interest and extend their expertise.

135. The school has a helpful policy for the subject and the co-ordinator has adapted national guidance to form a comprehensive and helpful scheme of work. Skills are taught systematically. The co-ordinator recognises that the next stage in the development of ICT is to improve pupils' skills in control and monitoring in Years 5 and 6, and plans are already in hand. The school is devising helpful assessment procedures to take into account the new National Curriculum. The co-ordinator has opportunities to see the pupils at work in the classrooms and to monitor teachers' plans and pupils' finished work. Professional training for staff has been of high quality. It has been provided partly by the local education authority and partly by the school's co-ordinator, who leads the subject very well and is enthusiastic and knowledgeable. Although resources are very good overall, there is insufficient equipment for scientific enquiry. Parents are sensibly informed of their children's possible use of the Internet and electronic mail.

MUSIC

136. By the age of seven, pupils attain the standards expected for their age. Pupils build on the skills and knowledge gained so that by the age of 11 they attain standards that are above those expected for their age, showing maturity in performance and understanding of music. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their prior attainment because of the clear explanations and practical approach used in most music lessons.

137. In lessons and assemblies, pupils in Years 1 and 2 build up a good repertoire of songs and learn to switch their singing to different speeds and other moods because the songs are interesting and well chosen. They enhance their understanding of how some musical instruments work and sound effects are made because are given time to experiment with instruments. Pupils sing rhythmically and tunefully. Their diction is clear and they listen carefully to the music which comes between the lines and verses. Pupils concentrate well, sing tunefully and learn melodies and words quickly. The older pupils make a good contribution to the singing in assemblies and hymn practice and this helps the younger pupils learn the songs more quickly.

138. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 build well on previous learning and the teachers' correct use of musical terms. Their knowledge of the correct musical terms for changes, such as faster, loud, quiet, was enhanced in the lesson because the teacher explained carefully what they are to do and why. In one class, pupils listened to a chant on the tape with amusement and enjoyment before working in groups to produce chants based words they had chosen. As they became more aware of the effects they could achieve, they deliberately made one passage go slowly and another faster, louder or higher. At the end of the lesson pupils said, 'We worked well together, but it was hard.' They followed the teacher's instructions well. Other classes work purposefully together on chants based on the story of 'Dry Bones', following the teacher's emphasis on the need for clear enunciation and good performance. They evaluated the performance of each group at the end of the lesson and showed that they were aware of how the different parts fitted together. When discussing the score for the chant, pupils showed good understanding of different notes and their length. They concentrated hard when singing the chant in a round, counting so that they kept time very well, even when a rhythmic accompaniment on the xylophone was added. This was work of a very good standard. Pupils who play recorders and other instruments achieve well because they receive very good teaching in school and from skilled visiting teachers. They are encouraged to share their skills with the rest of the school.

139. Pupils enjoy their music making activities, especially their singing. They like listening, too, especially when 'the CD is delicious', as one pupil in Year 5 remarked! When asked about favourite lessons, pupils are quick to say 'Music' and their enthusiasm is reflected in their interest

and hard work in lessons. Pupils work sensibly together and know that it takes effort to achieve good results. Levels of concentration are very good when pupils sing in class or assemblies because the teaching and learning of music are of such high quality

140. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 5 and 6 was very good. Teachers provide a wide range of interesting opportunities and musical experiences that enable pupils to learn how to listen to music and improve their skills in playing instruments and composing. Teachers consider practical issues carefully and ensure that everyone is settled, has enough space, and can see any words or music. Teachers plan lessons effectively to include appropriate practice and extension of what pupils know and can do. There are occasions when computer programmes are used to extend the work on for example, chants and pupils write interesting accounts of their lessons and express opinions and ideas about their work. Numeracy is used frequently because counting, calculating the length of notes on a score occurs regularly. As a result, pupils see how important accuracy and timing are when composing and playing instruments.

141. Music is seen as integral to most vital elements of the school. The selection of music for assemblies is helpful in providing pupils with opportunities to listen and reflect upon the music they hear in school. Music for dance, ranging from Tudor music to Egyptian tunes, is selected very carefully. Parents give enthusiastic praise for the enjoyable productions that give pupils the opportunity to perform to a large audience. The productions include pupils' high quality contributions in acting, choral speaking, dancing, singing and the playing of musical instruments such as the flute, recorder and keyboard. The co-ordinator, who has considerable musical expertise, provides good support for other colleagues who have less experience in teaching music. The curriculum has been developed effectively so that all elements are taught well over the year. Music makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

142. Attainment by pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6 is above the national expectations for their age. Pupils make very good progress in a variety of skills. This is an improvement from the last inspection.

143. In a very good lesson in Year 1, pupils significantly increased their ability to handle a padder bat and use it to control a ball along the ground. Their keen levels of concentration and the level of skill they achieve in such activities are above average for their age. They are agile and use a good range of tactics, varying them as necessary to achieve their aims. In a gymnastics lesson in Year 2, pupils showed good control as they remembered, repeated and linked movements with precision. The teachers' good coaching, skilful intervention, and effective use of pupils as good examples have a very positive effect on pupils' learning. Pupils' work is of a good standard because they see the similarities and differences between their performance and that of others and work hard to improve.

144. In an excellent dance lesson for older pupils, the pupils showed skill and imaginative interpretation. Their performance and understanding were higher than expected for their age. They remembered what they had learned in the previous lesson and showed imagination and grace when performing the movement of wind to 'Arabian Nights' style music. Pupils extend and refine their games' skills well during extra-curricular activities. In the rugby club practice, pupils combined skills very well to travel with, receive and send a ball effectively. They were sharp and watched carefully to ensure that they kept the game going. They definitely have a competitive streak! In the basketball club, pupils used basic principles appropriate for attacking and defending as they dodged, jumped and kept an eye on the position of other players.

145. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good and the standard of dress code achieved is a tribute to the interest parents show towards the work of the school. At all ages, pupils know why

lessons always have a warm-up and a closing activity and they understand the need for safe practices when handling sports equipment. Consistency in this approach means that pupils respond well and have very good attitudes to their work.

146. The good and very good teaching in Years 1 and 2 is successful in improving pupils' skill level because teachers manage their classes well. They have clear lesson objectives and expect pupils to act responsibly when moving around. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' performance. They are sufficiently confident with the subject to demonstrate movements and skills themselves, and this acts as a good role model for their classes. All teachers are aware of how physical education lessons can extend the social development of pupils. The frequency with which they use pupils to demonstrate in their lessons and the fun and enjoyment shown by pupils, demonstrates this admirably. Skills learned in the extra-curricular activities clearly have a good impact on performance in lessons. The soccer, basketball and rugby practices indicate a high level of commitment from teachers and pupils and very good attitudes to sporting activity. There are good links with other subjects; for example, when pupils in Year 6 followed up work on pulse rates in their science lesson. They clearly understood how physical activities contribute to a healthy lifestyle.

147. Teachers have improved their subject knowledge through appropriate courses. The quality and quantity of equipment are good and teachers use it well. This has a good impact on the rate of learning and pace of lessons because pupils do not have to waste time in waiting to take turns with equipment. The school provides the full range of activities expected from a primary school. Swimming takes place at the nearby high school and most pupils achieve at least the minimum expectation by the end of Year 6. Pupils also take part in clubs or inter-school events in a range of sports, including football, rugby, basketball, netball, cricket, athletics and orienteering. This contributes well to the development of pupils' skills in physical education and to their personal and social development. In addition, the school has winter and summer sports days, when all pupils participate in a variety of activities at a personal and team level.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

148. There has been good improvement in religious education since the last inspection. This is because the co-ordinator has monitored teaching and pupils' work and identified the areas that needed attention. In Years 2 and 6, standards of work are now at least in line with the targets set by the locally Agreed Syllabus and they are higher in some aspects of the subject. The quality of teaching is good overall and pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well.

149. Pupils in Year 2 become increasingly aware of a range of faiths. They know about aspects of the Jewish faith and know the significance of books, clothes and objects which are features of Jewish life and worship. They understand why the Torah is special and how it is stored when not in use. In one lesson, they knew about a special Jewish prayer and were able to consider what is special in their own experience. They wrote their own thoughtful prayers in response. Pupils in Year 6 gain increasing understanding of the importance of religion in some people's lives. They know that the church has played a significant role in the development of their village. As part of their study about places of Christian worship, they visited the local church and learned about the special artefacts there. They stood in awe in the nave and expressed feelings of wonder at the magnificence of the building. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils understand some key features of the world's leading faiths. They recognise the importance of respecting other views and beliefs, and can respond in a personal way through writing, poetry and art.

150. Teachers plan their work in religious education carefully to ensure that lessons achieve a balance between factual teaching about religion and opportunities for pupils to make a personal response to what they have learnt. Teaching is good overall and includes some very good teaching. A feature of the very good teaching is the specialist knowledge brought to the subject by some of the teachers. One teacher's first hand experience of life in Israel, together with significant personal knowledge and understanding of Jewish customs and practices, brings the

subject alive in the school. The local parish priest has a wealth of knowledge about the church and its history that the school regularly draws on. These teachers are good at explaining religious ideas in simple ways. High quality learning occurs as a result. Teachers interest pupils and encourage them to think carefully about the importance of religion in their own and other people's lives.

151. The subject is well resourced. Money has been spent effectively on the purchase of artefacts, books and posters to support each of the topics studied and teachers use these well to illustrate their teaching and encourage pupils to find out information for themselves. They make good use of stories from major world religions as a stimulus for writing and discussion. Teachers manage class discussions well and use them very successfully to foster pupils' ability to express their ideas and views. Pupils' work in religious education is assessed both formally and informally during the year, in line with the school's assessment policy. In lessons, pupils' behaviour is consistently very good. They treat each other with courtesy and listen to the contributions of others carefully. They handle artefacts gently and treat religious objects and special books with respect.

152. The curriculum for religious education is enriched with visits to places of religious interest, such as local churches, sites of old abbeys and the Bradford Multi-faith Centre. Some pupils have the opportunity to visit mosques and synagogues when studying other faiths, and good use is made of visitors to assemblies and school acts of worship to link with class work in the subject. The subject is well managed by the co-ordinator who ensures that the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus are fully met.