

INSPECTION REPORT

MOORSIDE INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL

Ripon

LEA area: North Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 121426

Headteacher: Mrs Ann Rooke

Reporting inspector: Mrs J. Ann Sharpe
18101

Dates of inspection: 17th –19th September 2001

Inspection number: 194139

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 nursery

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 7

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Harrogate Road
Ripon
North Yorkshire

Postcode: HG4 1SU

Telephone number: 01765 - 604208

Fax number: -

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Ann Gordon

Date of previous inspection: 21st April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|--------------|----------------|----------------------|---|--|
| 18101 | J. Ann Sharpe | Registered inspector | English Art and design Music Religious education Foundation Stage Equality of opportunity English as an additional language | What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further? |
| 14404 | Alan Rolfe | 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? |
| 4303 | Simon Reynolds | Team inspector | Mathematics and Design technology Geography History | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? |
| 3533 | Alan McGregor | Team inspector | Science Information and communication technology Physical education Special educational needs | |

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REPORT CONTENTS

| | Page |
|---|-----------|
| PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT | 7 |
| Information about the school | |
| How good the school is | |
| What the school does well | |
| What could be improved? | |
| How the school has improved since its last inspection | |
| Standards | |
| Pupils' attitudes and values | |
| Teaching and learning | |
| Other aspects of the school | |
| How well the school is led and managed | |
| Parents' and carers' views of the school | |
| | |
| PART B: COMMENTARY | |
| | |
| HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS? | 13 |
| The school's results and pupils' achievements | |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development | |
| | |
| HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT? | 15 |
| | |
| HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS? | 17 |
| | |
| HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS? | 19 |
| | |
| HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS? | 20 |
| | |
| HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED? | 21 |
| | |
| WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER? | 23 |
| | |
| PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS | 24 |
| | |
| PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES | 28 |

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This small infant and nursery school has 112 children (56 boys and 56 girls) on the registers, and a further 52 attend the nursery part-time. The number of children in the school can change suddenly due to the movement of families in the armed forces. Most children come from white families and six are from minority ethnic groups. Occasionally, children attend who are learning to speak English. The proportion of children with special educational needs is below average, and during the inspection, none had statements. The proportion of children on free school meals fluctuates, but it is broadly average. The school shares the site with Moorside Junior School, and until 1999, there was a joint governing body. Most governors are fairly new to their responsibilities and did not experience the last inspection. There has also been a change of headteacher and senior teacher since the last report. When children start nursery, their attainment is average. The inspection took place during the third week of a new school year, and for some children in the reception class, this was their first week of full-time school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Children make a good start to their education because everyone puts a lot of effort into settling them into school life and to teaching the basic skills of reading, writing and number work. Most children achieve well overall due to the amount of good or very good teaching in the school. They could sometimes do even better, especially in mathematics. Children come to school happily, behave well and enjoy their lessons. The headteacher is a good leader who successfully encourages everyone to work well together as a team for the benefit of the children. She is keen that teaching and standards in the school should continue to improve. The school provides a sound quality of education, and gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are improving and children achieve well in English, science and information and communication technology (ICT).
- Children's enthusiasm for school and their good behaviour help them to do well.
- Teaching of the basic skills of reading, writing and number work is good.
- The headteacher and senior teacher give a strong and positive lead to staff and governors.
- The school makes good provision for children's spiritual, moral and social development.

What could be improved

- Standards in mathematics could be higher.
- At times, not all children's work is closely matched to their learning needs.
- The school does not yet make fullest use of some of its data to find out and plan for what needs to be improved next.
- There needs to be more checking to make certain that practice reflects the school's intentions.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

After the last inspection in April 1997, national test results dipped and did not improve sufficiently until 2000. In 2000, there was a significant improvement, especially in mathematics, with some further improvements in 2001. The standard of work seen in English and science has improved, but there has been little overall improvement in children's work in mathematics. Governors at the time tackled the previous key issues well, and new governors have made a good start with finding out what they need to do and with meeting their growing responsibilities. Standards have improved in ICT because the school has addressed the key issue about provision very well. The school has kept up to date with introducing many national initiatives successfully, despite staffing changes. Overall, the rate of improvement is satisfactory, but there has been a good amount of improvement in the last two years. The school is now well placed to continue to move forward successfully.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

| Performance in: | Compared with | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | All schools | | | Similar schools |
| | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2001 |
| Reading | C | B | B | A |
| Writing | C | A | A | A |
| Mathematics | E | B | C | D |

| Key | |
|--------------------|---|
| Well above average | A |
| Above average | B |
| Average | C |
| Below average | D |
| Well below average | E |

The results of national tests are improving over time. Children achieve well in reading and writing, where their work is well above average, and where their test results are much better than those of similar schools. Although test results in mathematics have also improved, they were average in 2001 and below similar schools. Children's work in mathematics is average, and their achievement is satisfactory. They are not as good at practical work and solving problems as they are at calculating with numbers on paper. Some children, particularly the brighter ones, could do even better. Work seen in science, ICT and design and technology is good, and work in the few lessons seen in geography, history and physical education is satisfactory. There was too little evidence to make judgements about work in other subjects. By the end of the reception year, children achieve well overall in all areas of their learning, although they make better progress in the nursery than in the reception classes. Children with special educational needs and those who are learning to speak English make good progress. Overall, standards in the school are above average and children achieve well from their starting points in the nursery.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Good. Children are willing learners who come to school happily, concentrate in lessons and try hard to please their teachers. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Good. Children know what is expected of them and rarely let their teachers and other adults who work with them down. |
| Personal development and relationships | Relationships are good and personal development is sound. Children enjoy doing jobs around the school, but at this early stage in the school year, they are not seen taking initiative in lessons. |
| Attendance | Satisfactory. The attendance figures have fallen since the last inspection, due to the poor attendance of a few children and to the increase in families taking holidays in school time. |

Children's good and sometimes very good attitudes and behaviour contribute well to their achievement in lessons and to the friendly and happy atmosphere of the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils in: | Nursery and Reception | Years 1 – 2 |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Quality of teaching | Good | Good |

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

Good teaching and learning in most basic skills help children to achieve well by the age of seven. Teaching and learning in English, including literacy lessons, are good overall. In mathematics, including numeracy lessons, teaching and learning are satisfactory. The difference in provision between English and mathematics occurs because teachers are not yet as good at teaching practical mathematics and problem solving as they are at teaching children to calculate with numbers on paper. In some lessons, teachers do not challenge children's thinking sufficiently, especially the brighter children. Teachers are good at questioning children and helping them to learn new words in all subjects. They have positive relationships with the children and rarely have any discipline problems to deal with. Teaching is consistently good and sometimes very good for children in the nursery and for the higher and average attaining children in Year 2, and it is never less than satisfactory in other classes. Teachers take good advantage of the extra adult help they have to give children regular attention in lessons, and they vary their teaching methods to keep children attentive. Consequently, children often learn a lot in a single lesson. Teachers could do more to involve children in their own learning and progress. Children with special educational needs and those who are learning to speak English have the support they need to make good progress. Good teaching and learning in science and ICT result in

above average standards. Too few lessons were seen to make judgements in other subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | The cycle of topics provides a broad and interesting curriculum. The very good links with other educational institutions, especially the junior school, have helped to make ICT a strength of the school's provision. The school devotes a lot of time to teaching English with very good results. The time for teaching mathematics needs to be reviewed in the light of the weaker test results in the subject. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Good. Teachers quickly notice when children need more help, and the school ensures that this is available. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | Good. Teachers improve children's communication skills well, and seek specialist advice when necessary. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development | The good provision enhances the curriculum and the life of the school well. It broadens children's education and prepares them well for the junior school. Children respond positively to opportunities to think deeply about their own lives and the lives of others, and teachers are extending opportunities for them to learn about other cultures. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | The school keeps a watchful eye on children's progress so that they can benefit from their education. Sometimes, information about what children can already do could be better used to plan their next work. |

Teachers collect a lot of data that shows how well children are doing. The school does not always use this as well as it could to plan where the curriculum needs to develop and what children need to learn next if they are to achieve their fullest potential. A new system is in place to guide governors and staff with setting targets for improving standards in the future. Parents' views of the school are good, and the partnership with parents makes a sound contribution to children's progress at school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Good. The headteacher works very hard and gives strong leadership to staff and governors. She successfully encourages a sense of 'teamwork' in continuing to improve the school and in raising standards. The senior teacher gives effective support, and is a very good role model teacher. Other teachers have management responsibilities, although some have not had as much chance as others to influence teaching and standards. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Governors are quickly learning about their new responsibilities, and finding out how well their school is doing. They support staff, parents and children in tackling any problems, and work well as a team, with guidance from the headteacher. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | The headteacher and senior teacher know where the school's main strengths and weaknesses lie, and they keep governors well informed. Written plans for improving the school are good, but they do not always specify clearly what is to be done and how everyone will know if the school has been successful or not. |
| The strategic use of resources | Governors ensure that the school has the resources it needs, and are keen for all the money to be spent on the children's education. They know that the budget can be 'tight', and have still to agree a longer-term financial plan to cater for unexpected shortfalls or allocations of extra funding. |

In the last two years, the school has become much more involved in finding out how well it is doing. There is still room for improvement, however, to make certain that shortcomings are not overlooked as well as to celebrate achievements. The good levels of staffing and resources support children's education well. Good quality support staff make a strong contribution to children's achievement. The indoor and outdoor premises provide plenty of attractive and carefully maintained space that encourages children to do their best. Governors apply satisfactory 'best value principles' to managing the school.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children come to school happily, behave well and make good progress. • Teaching is good and children are expected to do their best. • Everyone is friendly and this helps children to become mature and responsible. • The school is well led and managed. • They can come to the school at any time and find out about their children's progress. • Links with the junior school have improved the teaching of ICT since the last inspection. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no extra-curricular activities. • A few parents think that there is not enough homework. |

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views of the school. The curriculum is already broad and interesting, and like many other infant schools, there are no extra-curricular activities. The homework offered is appropriate for the age of the children, and there are examples of homework that further children's learning well. Very few parents attended a recent meeting about homework. Teachers encourage all children to read at home with adults regularly, and some parents take up this opportunity.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. National test results in reading, writing and mathematics have fluctuated since the last inspection. It is only since 2000 that test results have improved enough; from 1997 to 1999, there was too little improvement. Pupils did much better in the 2000 tests, especially in mathematics. The results were particularly pleasing because the year group tested included a higher proportion than usual of pupils with special educational needs. This improvement followed a change in the way that the school looked at test results in order to find out how pupils could do better. The 2001 results show further improvement in reading and writing, with more pupils gaining an average or good grade within the level expected for seven year olds. Pupils' performance in the 2001 reading and writing tests was much better than similar schools. The continued improvement is not as evident in mathematics, however, but in all the three areas of reading, writing and mathematics, the school sustained the proportion of higher attaining pupils. Girls in the school perform better than boys in the tests and teacher assessments in science, sometimes to a greater extent than the national trend. The school is now aware of the variations in the results for girls and boys. The school improvement action plan (SIAP) shows that everyone understands the need to do something about them. The plan does not outline the problem clearly, however, or define the action to be taken.

2. Most children start nursery with average attainment and achieve well overall by the time they are seven. They do well in the nursery in all areas of learning due to good teaching and to the strong emphasis on learning through talking and playing. Children's progress in the reception class is satisfactory overall. Although staff continue to give a lot of attention to asking questions and talking with children, the work does not always give them enough opportunities to build on what they learned in the nursery; brighter children especially are currently held back by this. Nevertheless, by the end of the reception year, children attain above average standards in all areas of learning and make a good start with their work in the National Curriculum.

3. When taking account of all the inspection evidence, including national test results in reading, writing and mathematics, and teacher assessment results in science, pupils attain above average standards overall by the age of seven. Pupils' achievement, although sometimes variable, is good overall during their time at the school. This supports the views of parents who think that their children make good progress. The school gives a lot of time and attention to teaching English, and teachers are good at teaching the basic skills that enable pupils to get off to a good start with reading and writing. Pupils' speaking, listening, reading and writing skills are well above average by the age of seven, and the very good teaching of the higher attaining and average Year 2 pupils ensures that they make a 'spurt' with their learning whilst in this class. In mathematics, pupils do better in calculating with numbers than they do in using and applying mathematics, solving problems and presenting their work carefully. Whilst standards in mathematics are average by the age of seven, they should be higher than this; the 2001 test results were below similar schools. The school is well aware that it needs to aim for even more higher attaining pupils in all the tests, but the SIAP does not make it clear enough what everyone has to do to make this happen.

4. Pupils achieve well in science, ICT and design and technology, and standards are better than expected nationally by the age of seven in each of these subjects. The results

of teachers' assessments in science improved in both 2000 and 2001. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, attained the level expected for seven year olds, and the school managed to increase the proportion of higher attaining pupils a little in 2001. Standards in ICT have improved too because the previous key issue asking for improved provision has been tackled well and because the subject leader has strong expertise. In the designing and making aspects of design and technology, standards have improved, although, due to the time of the year and to the fact that no lessons were seen, there was little evidence of how well pupils evaluate their finished items. The specialist teaching of the subject leader contributes well to raising standards in music, but too few lessons were seen to make overall judgements. It was not possible to make judgements about standards and pupils' achievement in art and design, religious education and physical education due to the limited amount of evidence currently available. Standards in geography and history are about in line with the national expectation, although pupils achieve better in geography than they do in history due to more challenging teaching.

5. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall, but especially in English, mathematics, science and ICT. This is due to the good knowledge and understanding of the co-ordinator and to the mainly good quality teaching that pupils receive. Whilst higher attaining pupils often attain above or well above average standards, they could sometimes achieve more than is expected of them by their teachers. Pupils who are still learning to speak English make good progress because the school is aware of the need to seek specialist help and to give a strong focus in their teaching to using talking and playing as a main source of learning.

6. Since the last inspection, standards have improved in English, design and technology, ICT and science, but there has not been as much improvement yet in mathematics; this gives an overall picture of satisfactory improvement. Governors and staff do not currently set themselves overall targets for the national test results, and they could challenge themselves more by doing so. They have started to do this, however, for individual pupils, and expect to extend the practice into whole-school targets by using a new system for tracking pupils' progress. This is intended to enable the school to make clearer plans for improving results and to gauge its own ongoing success.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Pupils like coming to school and their good attitudes help them to achieve well. Most pupils enjoy their lessons and try hard to please their teachers. They listen carefully to teachers and to one another in class discussions, and make positive contributions. Pupils concentrate for appropriate periods of time, and persevere with tasks, even when they find them difficult. Almost all pupils co-operate well with others when asked to work in pairs or small groups. They readily help one another and spontaneously applaud the efforts and good work of other pupils. During the inspection, pupils were happy to talk about their work with inspectors and discussed how well they were doing. Pupils with special educational needs respond well to the extra help they receive; for example, they enjoy learning about how to use the new school library.

8. Inspectors agree with parents that pupils' behaviour is good, and in many lessons during the inspection, it was very good. Pupils are aware of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and they behave well around the school at play times and dinner times. They mix well and enjoy playing together. They are friendly and polite, and enjoy talking about their interests and favourite subjects at school. Pupils show respect towards the school building and the property of other pupils, and there is little sign of litter around

the school. Bullying is rare, and the school has procedures to deal with this if it does occur. There have been no exclusions in the last twelve months.

9. Pupils make sound progress in their personal development. Relationships between staff and pupils and between the pupils themselves are good. Pupils' knowledge of their own culture is developing well, although their knowledge and understanding of other cultures is not yet very strong. Pupils are willing to take on responsibilities, such as taking registers to the office and tidying up after lessons. The inspection took place early in the new school year and opportunities for pupils to learn to show initiative and take responsibility for their own learning were limited. In an art and design lesson, for example, adults did too much for the pupils when they were capable of developing their own ideas and clearing away after themselves.

10. Attendance is satisfactory. Last year, both authorised and unauthorised absences were below national average. The most recent figures show an increase in both kinds of absence; authorised absences are slightly below national averages, and unauthorised absences are now slightly above average. A few pupils arrive late on a regular basis. Attendance has declined since the last inspection due to a small number of pupils with poor attendance and to an increase in the number of families taking holidays in school time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

11. The last inspection reported teaching as a strength of the school. This inspection took place under revised inspection guidance, and there was a slightly smaller proportion of excellent or very good lessons than in the last inspection. There were no unsatisfactory lessons during this inspection, however, and 17 percent of lessons were very good, 43 percent good and the remaining 40 percent were satisfactory. These figures reflect the view of parents who responded to the questionnaire that teaching is good. When taking account of all the other evidence, teaching and learning are good overall. Although there are some clear areas of strength in the teaching of subjects and teaching in some classes, there are also a few inconsistencies that are unrelated to the fact that the inspection took place so early in a new school year.

12. Teaching in the nursery is good in all areas of learning. This is due to the teamwork of all the adults who work with children, to the continual emphasis that they all place upon talking with children and asking them questions, and to the close attention to encouraging children's personal and social development. In the reception class, these strengths are often just as evident, but during the inspection, the teacher did not take full account of what children have learned previously in the nursery in order to plan what they need to learn next. This meant that some children, particularly the brighter ones, were not challenged sufficiently with new work. Also, opportunities for children to learn in their 'free choice' play activities were often missed. This was because there was too little planned intervention by adults.

13. Teaching and learning in the school are strongest in English, science and ICT. In English, the good teaching is due to the successful teaching of basic skills as part of the national programme for teaching literacy and to the strong lead given to teachers by the subject leader. Teaching and learning in mathematics are satisfactory, although the teaching of basic number work as part of numeracy lessons is better than satisfactory. Teachers do not do as well with teaching practical mathematics and problem-solving skills, and this limits pupils' attainment in mathematics. In science, teaching is good because there is a lot of strong expertise amongst teachers. In ICT good teaching is due to the very

good quality leadership that has increased teachers' knowledge and confidence to try things out. It was not possible to make overall judgements in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music, physical education or religious education. The one lesson seen in music, however, was very good because the teacher used every minute to enthuse and motivate pupils to want to learn more.

14. Teachers in all classes are good at managing their pupils' behaviour. They do this by their positive relationships with pupils as well as by their high expectations about how pupils should react to lessons and towards one another. Pupils know what is expected of them, try hard and rarely let their teachers down. Teachers almost always use the available assistance from support staff, students or voluntary helpers in ways that help pupils to make further progress. Consequently, pupils are used to co-operating with many different adults, and often get a lot more opportunities for talking about their work than they otherwise would have. This furthers their speaking and listening skills well. The close attention to questioning pupils skilfully is a positive feature of many lessons across the subjects; consequently, pupils learn to use new words and to express their ideas confidently.

15. Another strong point in teaching is that teachers vary their teaching methods and keep pupils interested, concentrating and trying hard. The teaching methods include very good use of direct teaching, as seen in an ICT lesson in Year 1, when the teacher taught the whole class together to show them how to use a new computer program. Similarly, a music lesson for some pupils in Year 2 was very successful when the whole class learned together about changes in musical pitch. They thoroughly enjoyed the full 30 minutes, kept their eyes on the teacher and welcomed the continual challenges she was able to provide through this method of teaching.

16. Lesson plans during the inspection show that teachers are clear what pupils are intended to learn by the end of the lesson. Teachers do not always involve the pupils themselves in this, nor do they make sure that pupils know how they are expected to improve. This reduces the overall impact of some lessons on pupils' personal development.

17. Almost all classes have mixed ages of pupils, and many lesson plans show that teachers are aware that some pupils need different work to others. There are some occasions, however, when all pupils have exactly the same work, regardless of the National Curriculum level they have already attained. This means that brighter pupils, particularly, do not always have work to take them forward to the next level, and their progress is not as good as it could be. Teachers spend a lot of time recording pupils' attainment, but do not make fullest use of this information when planning their lessons. A new system has been introduced to overcome this, however, but it has not yet had time to influence fully the work of teachers.

18. Teaching of the higher and average attaining pupils in Year 2 is consistently good or very good, and much of the teaching is very good. Pupils in this class make a good 'spurt' in their education that makes a strong contribution to standards in the school. The teacher has strong expertise in many subjects and knows how to motivate pupils so that they do their best at all times.

19. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught and learn at a good pace due to the additional support they receive – sometimes on an individual basis. The school organises teaching, support staff and pupils so as to minimise the effects of large year groups with a wide range of attainment. The contribution of the part-time teacher to pupils'

learning in English and mathematics is crucial to the continued success of these grouping arrangements. Teachers seek specialist help and guidance in teaching any pupils who speak English as an additional language, because this is a fairly new experience for them. They, rightly, focus strongly on helping the pupils to learn the vocabulary they need to begin to communicate with others through talking. Teachers are keen to involve parents in their children's work at home, and set some very suitable tasks. An example is when a Year 2 teacher asks pupils to work at home to find three examples of the kinds of words they are learning about. Teachers encourage pupils to take their reading books home and read with other adults on a daily basis, but not all pupils do so, and homework is not a strong feature of teaching and learning overall in the school.

20. Differences in the quality of teaching and learning between English and mathematics are evident in pupils' achievement. The new policy for teaching and learning has not had much time to become embedded fully into all the school's practice, and more checking is needed to make sure that any differences between classes and subjects are dealt with quickly.

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

21. The curriculum is systematically organised to cover the requirements of the National Curriculum and new recommendations for the Foundation Curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes. Detailed programmes of work have been agreed over a two-year cycle of topics. This is intended to ensure that pupils do not repeat or miss key areas of the work planned for their age group. The curriculum meets legal requirements, including the provision of religious education in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus. A clear timetable is in place for reviewing the curriculum, ensuring that it is working as intended and successfully incorporating new initiatives. Weaknesses in the provision for ICT, identified in the previous inspection, have been fully addressed and this is now a strength of the school.

22. A planned programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) enhances the curriculum. Health and safety have high priority, both within topics, such as healthy eating or improving road safety, and through the wider school life, such as the emphasis on children bringing fruit for their break time snacks. Policies for sex and drugs education as part of the curriculum have been agreed, although the latter does not identify what pupils will be taught about the use and misuse of drugs.

23. The curriculum is broad and worthwhile, but the balance of time spent on different subjects is not planned carefully or checked rigorously. In the infant classes, some subjects, such as mathematics and history, do not always have enough time to cover the agreed programmes in sufficient depth, whilst the time allocated to different elements of the English programme is greater than in most schools.

24. Detailed planning for units of work and daily lesson plans, when used, do not always identify what different groups of pupils will be learning. This is noticeable in the nursery and reception classes, where the objectives of lessons are often pitched at the same level for all children. In the nursery, however, staff organise some opportunities to direct their teaching towards individuals and sometimes groups of children who are ready for the next stage of their learning.

25. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school identifies pupils for inclusion on the special educational needs register effectively. Where individual education plans are needed, reasonably precise targets are set that are followed closely by class teachers and other adults, including external agencies, who provide support. The school has an appropriate policy for high attaining pupils, but provision and monitoring of this is not yet very systematic. Pupils who speak English as an additional language have the same curriculum with a strong focus on increasing their understanding and use of vocabulary by having lots of opportunities to interact with adults and other pupils.

26. The school's strategy for teaching the basic skills of literacy is good. It is effective because teachers give a lot of attention to teaching pupils to look closely at the sounds that individual letters and groups of letters represent in words. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully introduced, providing a sound basis for raising standards. It has not yet had an equal impact on improving pupils' skills in using and applying mathematics or problem solving. Provision for mental mathematics is not yet always as strong as it could be.

27. Arrangements to ensure equal access for all pupils are satisfactory overall. Pupils are withdrawn from lessons only in exceptional and suitable circumstances. A small number of pupils may join or leave the school unexpectedly because their families work for the armed services. Staff support their integration into school life well, for example by encouraging them to share their personal experiences of different schools and communities. The school's arrangements to deal with awkward year group numbers are necessarily complex. Staff and governors take a pragmatic approach and the system for allocating pupils to classes has the support of staff and parents. At the time of the inspection, arrangements for literacy, numeracy and ICT were working well, with good account being taken of pupils' age and ability in making up teaching groups and in the planning. Arrangements for other subjects are not always as successful, however, and the Year 2 pupils who are taught in a mainly Year 1 class do not always receive the same curriculum as other Year 2 pupils. Expectations for what they are capable of are, therefore, sometimes lower. For example a high quality music lesson for the majority of Year 2 pupils could have been extended to include the full year group. Similarly, the experience of history and geography in the Year 2 class, where they are taught largely as discrete subjects, is not replicated in the mixed age class, which adopts a more integrated approach for all pupils.

28. Regular visits and visitors enhance pupils' experience, for example by including members of the local community. Pupils remember with enthusiasm their visits to Scarborough and two local places of worship. There is scope to integrate these important experiences more fully into the total learning programme. Very good links have been forged with partner institutions, such as the shared use of the computer suite in the junior school, and work placements for older students, trainee teachers and classroom assistants.

29. The school does not provide a programme of extra-curricular activities. In the context of the broad curriculum on offer and in common with most infant schools, this is not unusual and does not detract significantly from the overall opportunities offered to pupils.

30. Good provision is made for spiritual, moral and social development. This maintains the position reported in the last inspection. Daily assemblies provide for the required act of worship with brief opportunities for pupils, including the nursery children once a week, to reflect and think about special aspects of their lives. The religious education syllabus provides some good opportunities for considering matters of faith and belief at an

appropriate level. Some lessons, such as the examination of a range of fruits, lead children to consider the wonder of the natural world.

31. The school has a clear moral code and pupils are aware of the difference between right and wrong. Parents are very supportive of this aspect of the school's work. PSHE lessons reinforce the codes of behaviour and staff do not need to rely on an elaborate system of rewards and sanctions to reinforce the standards expected. Provision for social development is good. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to work and play together, for example in sharing a wheeled vehicle in the nursery, or in working with a partner during a successful religious education lesson in Year 2. Pupils show sensitivity and consideration when helping each other informally. Pupils begin to learn about the wider society, for example through visits from the fire and nursing services and from occasional charity collections.

32. Cultural development is sound. Planned work, such as finding out about different artists or studies of the Victorians or local churches, provides pupils with a good framework for understanding their own culture. Nursery staff imaginatively extend this to embrace other cultures. The school recognises the need to go further in the context of their own locality. The choice of texts bought for the literacy hour and the content of the religious education syllabus contribute to a wider view of a multicultural and mixed faith society, but current planning and displays around school could celebrate the diversity of modern Britain more clearly.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to provide a caring environment with a warm and friendly atmosphere that helps pupils to feel safe and secure and encourages them to learn. Teachers know their pupils well and respond quickly to their needs both inside and outside classrooms. Good relationships between staff and pupils encourage pupils to do their best. Pupils say that they would tell teachers about any problems they may have, and that teachers would deal with their worries. Supervision for pupils before school, at play times and after school is good. In particular, staff are keen to make sure that pupils do not leave the school unless a known adult collects them.

34. Procedures for child protection are satisfactory. The headteacher is the designated teacher who has received training in child protection matters; she has a good understanding of proper procedures to follow. The written guidance for others to follow, however, does not yet provide all the specific information it needs to. The school is keen to provide a safe working environment for staff and pupils and its written policy meets requirements. A few potential health and safety matters were drawn to the attention of the headteacher during the inspection, and these were quickly looked into.

35. Arrangements for encouraging good behaviour and keeping a close eye on this are satisfactory. The written policy and the systems in place for giving rewards for good behaviour or dealing with unacceptable behaviour make everyone clear about what is expected. A previous concern about the behaviour of some lower attaining boys was taken seriously and plans to tackle it were put into place. Pupils value the 'star pupil' assemblies, which help them to understand what acceptable behaviour is. The school has yet to add to its written procedures and receive training, however, in responding to more challenging behaviour, if this were ever to become necessary.

36. Procedures for encouraging good attendance and keeping a watchful eye out for problems are mainly sound. The school tells parents that good attendance and punctuality are expected, and they know that they must inform the school of reasons for absences. The school knows that the poor attendance of a small number of pupils, and the absence of pupils whose parents take family holidays during school time, have an adverse effect on attendance levels. Consequently, staff are seeking the support of the parents concerned to improve pupils' attendance. There are inconsistencies in attendance registers with recording unauthorised absences that have not yet been picked up by the school's current methods for checking attendance.

37. The school has a comprehensive system for recording pupils' achievement and progress. Teaching and support staff know the pupils in their care well. Records are appropriately linked to the curriculum, for example the small steps in the Foundation Curriculum in the nursery or the objectives set out in the schemes of work in the infants. The pupil profiles, started in the reception year, keep a track of all subjects, including personal and social education, to be passed on to the next teacher. It covers the full curriculum better than in most schools, maintaining the positive picture reported in the previous inspection.

38. Assessment procedures are monitored well by the co-ordinator, who in a short time has built a very good understanding of what the school is doing and how it needs to move forward. For example, in reviewing possible improvements to pupils' profiles, the co-ordinator plans to discuss their usefulness with the receiving teacher at the junior school, in addition to internal discussions. The assessment of literacy and numeracy is particularly thorough, with relevant new procedures in writing and mathematics being tried this term. Individual action plans are in place for pupils with special educational needs, mostly giving clear and precise targets for action.

39. The school makes increasing use of the information gleaned through assessment, for example when placing pupils in classes or groups, comparing the performance of boys and girls and in identifying pupils' special educational needs. However, the use of assessment to guide planning and curriculum changes is not always fully effective. This is because information about what pupils already know, understand and can do is not always used rigorously to plan the best match of work for them. In some lessons, teachers state their uncertainty about the strengths and weaknesses in their new pupils' attainment, even though they have access to detailed assessment information from previous teachers.

40. The school has recently set up a promising system for setting individual targets for pupils that are shared with their parents. Staff are cautious about identifying targets in terms of National Curriculum levels for individuals and groups. Their concern, rightly, reflects sensitivity about crude measures of young pupils' learning, but the lack of such targets in mathematics, for example, inhibits the school's efforts to identify more precisely the needs of different groups of pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to encourage parents to become involved in their children's education, including keeping them informed about national educational initiatives and how these affect their children's education. Although only 22 percent of parents returned the questionnaire and only five parents attended the meeting, parents' views of the school seem to be positive overall. Most parents are pleased about almost all areas in which they were consulted, and inspectors largely agree with their views.

The only notable concern raised by some parents is the lack of activities outside lessons. Inspectors consider that the school's regular and varied programme of visits and visitors to the school, along with the good range of special events, enhance the curriculum well. What the school provides to further pupils' education beyond normal lesson time is similar to provision in most infant schools nationally.

42. Overall, the involvement of parents in their children's learning is satisfactory. Only a very small number of parents help in classrooms, but many help teachers on educational visits. Teachers urge pupils to take their reading books home every evening, and invite parents to communicate with teachers about their children's progress through the home and school reading diaries. There are not many entries, however, although many pupils say that they do read at home from their school books with adults. The active Friends of the School Association depends on a very small number of parents to organise social and fund-raising events, but other parents support these very well. Last school year, parents raised significant funds to help to provide the new school library.

43. The information given to parents is satisfactory. The school brochure and governors' annual report are very informative, although not all the required information is given in the governors' report. Newsletters and letters about specific events keep parents in touch with what is happening at school. Pupils' annual reports give good quality information about things that pupils can do or do well, but they do not always give enough information about where pupils could do better and need to improve in the future. Parents are pleased with the arrangements to discuss their children's progress with teachers, and a recent concern about provision for January starters to school is being addressed. Arrangements to involve parents of pupils with special educational needs are good.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44. The last inspection found the school to be well led, but two of the three key issues were related to its management. At that time, there was a joint governing body with Moorside Junior School, but in 1999, the two schools became required to have separate governors. Evidence indicates that the key issues were tackled at the time. The current governors are almost all fairly new to the school and to their individual and collective responsibilities. This means that some ground has had to be covered again in terms of introducing more structured arrangements for governors to contribute to the evaluation of trends in pupils' attainment, and in terms of the effectiveness of its policies and practices.

45. New governors are very supportive of their school and keen for it to do well. They have accepted their responsibilities positively, such as overseeing the subjects of the curriculum, and have made a good start with working closely with the headteacher and staff to ensure that the school improves. They feel well informed by the headteacher and are very pleased with the training and help she provides to enable them to meet their responsibilities as well as they can. Governors have a growing knowledge of important matters, such as standards in the school and test results, but know that they still have more to learn, for example about managing the school's budget.

46. There has also been a change of headteacher and other key staff since the last inspection, and the school recently underwent a lengthy and difficult period of staffing uncertainties. The current headteacher gives good direction to the work of the school. She has been successful in encouraging a strong sense of teamwork amongst governors and staff. She has a good understanding of what the school needs to do next to improve and where standards need to be higher. She works very hard to improve the quality of

education for the pupils and to increase the amount of parental involvement in the life of the school. The headteacher has appointed a senior teacher who gives a good level of support to the whole school, and who is a very good role model teacher. Together, the headteacher and senior teacher are gradually getting to grips with the many recent national initiatives, and the school is now improving at a good pace.

47. All teachers have accepted additional management responsibilities positively, and in English, science, ICT and design and technology, this has a good effect on teaching and standards. The SIAP shows that there are plans to increase the amount of time and opportunities that subject leaders have for finding out how well the school is doing in their subject. The management initiative to include specialist music teaching for a period of time in each class, with class teachers observing, is a very good staff development opportunity that is having a strong impact on raising standards.

48. The SIAP is an organised, carefully presented and detailed document showing that the school knows what it wants to achieve in general terms over a period of time in all aspects of its work. It records particular issues to be addressed, such as the differences in attainment of girls and boys and the need to get more higher attaining pupils in the national tests. It is not always as specific as it could be about these matters, however, for example in saying exactly what is to be done and what proportion of higher attaining pupils to aim for each year. Although there is a clear intention to improve the school through the SIAP, staff and governors do not focus as much as they need to on what the school's assessment information is telling them about its strengths and areas for improvement. In recent years there has been a lot more checking to find out how well the school is doing in terms of standards, teaching and putting policies into practice fully. There is room for improvement with this, however, to avoid any inconsistencies in teaching and learning and to identify potential problems in other areas of the work of the school.

49. Financial planning is satisfactory. Governors do not yet have a linked written long-term financial plan that shows how they will manage the budget if difficulties arise, or what will be the next priority for spending if unexpected funds become available. Governors are accustomed to finding the best quotes for the purchase of resources and maintenance work, and they apply 'best value principles' in their wider context soundly.

50. The school has introduced the national system for managing the performance of the headteacher and teaching staff. The headteacher and local education authority check the quality of teaching and provide support for teachers to keep on improving their work. The headteacher is aware of where the strengths in teaching and learning lie, and expects to continue to monitor in the future to ensure that all pupils benefit from consistently good teaching across the subjects and classes. A policy for teaching and learning has been agreed recently, but this is not always seen fully in practice, and has yet to be followed up formally.

51. There are plenty of teaching staff and good quality support staff who are carefully deployed and used well to further pupils' education. The administrative support assistant helps the school to run smoothly so that teachers can concentrate on their teaching duties. There is a good amount of bright, cheerful and well-maintained space indoors and outdoors, and this provides a good environment for pupils to learn. The school is well resourced, with no important shortages, and grants are used for the intended purposes. Resources for ICT are used well for a wide variety of purposes, including lessons and administration. The resource at the local junior school is used very well in order to raise standards in ICT. The library is a new resource that has yet to be used fully, but everyone

has shown a great sense of shared commitment to raising the necessary funding and to getting the project completed.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

52. In order for standards to continue to rise, governors and staff now need to:

(1) Raise standards in mathematics by:

improving teaching in using and applying mathematics and problem solving;

ensuring that mental mathematics is included more effectively in the curriculum;

improving pupils' presentation of work and teachers' marking and storing of work;

making certain that there is enough lesson time for mathematics within the whole curriculum.

See paragraphs 1,3,6,13,23,26,71-81.

(2) Ensure that there is always a correct match of work for pupils of differing levels of prior attainment by:

making full use of the assessment information gathered to plan what pupils need to learn next;

putting into full practice the existing plans to set targets for individual pupils and groups of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics;

checking the organisation of the curriculum to make sure that pupils have the same opportunities and expectations, regardless of which mixed age class they are in.
See paragraphs 2,5,12,17,24,27,39,57,63,69,70,76,96,98,99,106.

- (3) Look more closely at assessment information in order to pinpoint clearly what the school needs to do next in order to improve, and setting tighter and more precise targets in the school improvement action plan.
See paragraphs 1,6,40,48,65,81.

- (4) Keep a closer eye on how well the school's practices and policies are being put into place.
See paragraphs 20,23,36,48,50,55,74,81,87,100,102.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

31

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

18

NB. One lesson was not graded.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number | 0 | 5 | 13 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Percentage | 0 | 17 | 43 | 40 | 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 three percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

| | Nursery | YR – Y2 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | 26 | 112 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | N/a | 19 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

| | Nursery | YR – Y2 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 0 | 0 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 1 | 13 |

English as an additional language

| | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 1 |

Pupil mobility in the last school year

| | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 13 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 15 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 3.4 |
| National comparative data | 5.2 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.3 |
| 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)

| | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | 2001 | 19 | 21 | 40 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 14 | 17 | 16 |
| | Girls | 21 | 21 | 20 |
| | Total | 35 | 38 | 36 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 88 (97) | 95 (97) | 90 (97) |
| | National | 84 (83) | 86 (84) | 91 (90) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|----------|-------------|-----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 18 | 16 | 19 |
| | Girls | 21 | 21 | 21 |
| | Total | 39 | 37 | 40 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 98 (100) | 93 (95) | 100 (100) |
| | National | 85 (84) | 89 (88) | 89 (88) |

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 | 106 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 6 |

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

| | |
|--|-----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 5.5 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 20 |
| Average class size | 28 |

Education support staff: YR – Y2

| | |
|---|------|
| Total number of education support staff | 2 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 57.5 |

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

| | |
|--|----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 1 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 26 |
| Total number of education support staff | 1 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 25 |
| Number of pupils per FTE adult | 13 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|--|-----|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 1 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 1.5 |
| | |
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE) | 1 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 0 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|--|------------|
| Financial year | 2000 –2001 |
| | |
| | £ |
| Total income | 321,344 |
| Total expenditure | 322,320 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2,388 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 20,401 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 19,425 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 164 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 36 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 69 | 31 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 72 | 25 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 44 | 53 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 42 | 42 | 8 | 3 | 0 |
| The teaching is good. | 56 | 44 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 56 | 39 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 64 | 33 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 69 | 31 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 50 | 47 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 58 | 36 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 58 | 42 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 36 | 22 | 25 | 6 | 11 |

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

53. The inspection took place under revised arrangements for judging the quality of provision and standards for the younger children in the school. It was not possible, therefore, to make direct comparisons with the last inspection or to judge the overall improvement since the last report.

54. Children attend the nursery part-time from the age of three and, depending on when their birthdays fall, spend between three and five school terms there before transferring to one of the two full-time reception classes. When they start nursery, their attainment is about average, but their speech is sometimes immature for their ages. The assessments made at the start of the reception year indicate that they start school with above average attainment in those areas assessed. Children achieve well and make good progress in the nursery in all six areas of learning. In the reception classes, they make steady progress and transfer to the infants with above average attainment in each of the areas of learning reported below. Children with special educational needs and those who need extra help to learn to speak English also make good progress. This is due to the caring and sensitive approach of adults who know how to help children to overcome their difficulties.

55. Teaching and learning, although good overall as well as in the individual areas of learning, are more effective in the nursery than in the reception classes. This is partly due to the nursery teacher's experience of working with children who have not yet started the National Curriculum, and partly due to the good quality curriculum that the nursery provides. Recent national changes to the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage have still to be adjusted to fully in the reception classes, where there has been less time for the changes of the last few years to become embedded into the practice. The leader of the school's provision has not yet had an opportunity to work directly with other teachers and to spot any areas of strength and areas for further development. The SIAP shows that the school knows that there needs to be greater consistency in provision for children in all three classes.

Personal, social and emotional development

56. Teaching and learning are good overall because teachers put a lot of emphasis upon helping children to become happily settled into their new surroundings. Teachers involve other supporting adults well in order to encourage children to find nursery and school an enjoyable, welcoming and relaxed place to learn. Adults manage these younger children very well, whilst maintaining positive and encouraging relationships with them. As a result, children work with several different adults and with each other with confidence and eagerness. Children in the nursery follow established routines, behave very well and learn to take responsibility for their own belongings and actions. Children in the reception class have only very recently transferred to school, and for some, the inspection week was their very first experience of full-time school. The teacher and supporting adults are settling the children in successfully. Children already come happily to school and get along well with everyone else. Most children are confident to take part in the range of activities that the school offers, including going to assemblies. Most children sit and listen to adults for an appropriate length of time, and are already learning to take their turn and put their hands up to answer in class discussions. They go to the hall for formal physical education lessons, where most children behave safely and sensibly. By the end of the reception year,

standards are above average, and this gives children a good start to their work in the subjects of the National Curriculum.

Communication, language and literacy

57. Teaching and learning are good overall because teachers in the nursery and reception class understand the importance of talking with children and of asking questions and introducing new words. They involve supporting adults very well in this task, and they too ask probing questions at every opportunity. When baking scones in the nursery the teacher asks, 'What has happened to the flour now?' ; this aspect of teaching encourages children to talk and helps them to make good progress with listening and speaking in each area of learning. In the nursery, most children know that print has meaning in books and labels and they try to write letters and words by themselves as part of their play. Children in the reception class are starting to learn to read and write more formally through modified literacy lessons. They learn about the sounds that letters represent and how to write these correctly and hold their pencils properly. They all learn about the same letters, however, regardless of what they have already grasped in the nursery. Work from children in last year's reception classes shows that some get into incorrect habits with writing their letters and that reception teachers do not always tackle this as well as they should. During the inspection, whilst adults in the reception class gave a strong focus to talking to children in literacy and numeracy work, most play activities had very little input from adults. Consequently, there were missed opportunities for children to extend their talking skills through play. Nevertheless, by the end of the reception year, most children have started to read simple books and can name the features of books, such as 'title' and 'illustrations'. The brighter ones follow the text of a familiar story in a large book and try to join in reading aloud together with expression. Most children write a few words or several simple sentences by themselves. Children's speaking and listening skills are above average.

Mathematical development

58. Children in the nursery make good progress with their understanding of mathematical ideas because teaching and learning are good. Adults promote learning continually through talking and through many different kinds of play activities. When groups of children play counting and number games with the nursery nurse or with a voluntary helper, for example, adults seize every opportunity to help children to learn to solve simple number problems in meaningful ways. In the reception class, children take part in modified numeracy lessons. They recite number rhymes and count aloud together at least to ten. About half the children recognise and name a few numbers correctly. They enjoy predicting which number the teacher gradually reveals from behind a card, and are beginning to understand that we can make 'sets' of things that are the same.

59. The strong emphasis on questioning children and encouraging them to answer is just as evident in the reception class as it is in the nursery, and the reception teacher is careful not to expect children to sit still and listen for too long. When children have choice of other activities, however, there are fewer opportunities for them to interact with adults, and lesson planning does not make it clear what they are intended to learn during these sessions. Opportunities for further mathematical learning through day-to-day play are sometimes missed. The work of children who have just transferred to the infants shows that by the end of the reception year almost all can recognise and work with numbers to ten. They can add two smaller numbers together, sometimes from memory and sometimes using their fingers to help them. As with writing, however, some have difficulty writing numbers correctly. The brighter children work with numbers up to 20, can name simple

two-dimensional shapes and use the words associated with shapes when talking about their work.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

60. Children benefit from a wide experience that extends their knowledge and understanding of the world and people around them well. The topic about food, for example, provides opportunities for children in the nursery to look closely at unusual fruit and talk about it. During the inspection, the teacher brought in a variety of fruits and questioned children skilfully to encourage them to find out things for themselves and to express their own ideas. Staff are careful to find natural ways to help children to find out more about people around the world. They read a story about Africa, for example, that brings the fruit and animals that children are learning about 'to life'. Children follow the story with interest and predict what might happen next. Similarly, in the reception class, the topic about food extends to vegetables, and children talk about these with adults and later make soup to eat together. Such lessons show that the teacher recognises the need for children to learn by exploring things with all their senses and by talking about them. Consequently, by the end of the reception year, children have a sense of curiosity and want to find out more about how and why things happen. Computers are almost always in use in the nursery and reception class, and children come to them with interest and confidence. When children choose to work on computers in the reception class, however, there are few opportunities for them to improve their skills with help from adults. Teaching and learning are good overall, however, and children achieve well.

Physical development

61. By the end of the reception year, standards are better than expected nationally for children of this age. Activities in the nursery provide opportunities for children to practise and improve their physical skills, and they make good progress. They learn to move around indoors, and sometimes outdoors, safely and sensibly, to use both small and large equipment and to handle tools, such as scissors, brushes and glue spreaders with growing control. They enjoy trying out new actions, such as rubbing fat into the flour when baking. In the reception class, children build on their previous skills, such as when they work with adults learning to cut the vegetables for making soup. Most children already move around the school, for example when going to the hall for physical education lessons, in a safe and orderly manner. In their lesson, they try out the bodily movements suggested by their teacher, such as 'curling and stretching', and almost all have the confidence to do so. The teacher plans, rightly, for the children to learn to dress and undress by themselves as an important part of their progress in physical development. Physical education lessons are still a new experience for the children, however, and not all yet pay close attention to the teacher, who does not put enough emphasis on encouraging children to improve their movements.

Creative development

62. Children in the nursery enjoy making up their own stories, as when they play in the pretend house and chip shop. They work with a range of creative materials to make pictures, for example when a group make collage pictures and select from the materials set out for them. In the reception class, children continue to make up stories by themselves. They enjoy singing together and mixing powder paints to experiment with finding new colours. Teachers provide a lot of opportunities for children to make progress with their creative skills, but adults sometimes give too much help and direction to the children. Evidence of previous work and from photographs shows that, at times, children produce the

same pictures or models. This was seen during the inspection in the reception class when children made individual pictures of vegetables; adults told children what to do, what materials to use and they did too much for the children.

63. Adults in the nursery make regular and helpful observations of children's attainment in each area of learning. They observe children all the time, although they do not plan all their observations systematically. They use the information they collect to build up a picture of each child's attainment. They sometimes select children to take part in activities that are planned to take them on to the next stage of their learning. Lesson plans, however, do not specify what individuals or groups of children should learn next in order for teachers to make certain that children achieve their fullest potential in each area of learning. The reception class teacher has access to a lot of assessment information, but, at the time of the inspection, had not taken full advantage of this to push children on from where they already are. Although children make good progress overall, they could make even better progress with greater attention to planning assessments and using information to 'target' what they are going to learn next. The nursery has access to an outdoor area and equipment, although this is not always used as fully as it could be. Children in the reception classes do not benefit from a planned outdoor curriculum.

ENGLISH

64. At the time of the last inspection in 1997, the standard of work was above average. In 1998, however, national test results in reading and writing dipped, and they did not begin to recover fully until the 2000 results. Although there was no improvement in the proportion of higher attaining pupils in 2001, these results continued the upward trend overall, with a 'pushing up' of pupils from the lower and average grades within the level of attainment expected for seven year olds. There was no improvement in the proportion of higher attaining pupils in 2001, however, and overall, standards did not rise. During the four years from 1998 to 2000, girls did better in reading tests than boys, and to a greater extent than the national trend. This gender difference is also noticeable in the 2001 results. The inspection finds, nevertheless, that by the age of seven, standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are well above average and most pupils achieve well from their starting points; this includes comparing test results with those of schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.

65. Pupils in Year 2 listen well to teachers and to one another in most subjects. Although they have not been in their new classes very long, many are confident to offer answers to questions in class discussions, and to talk with partners on a given subject when asked to. They express their ideas clearly, using correct grammar and vocabulary. Teachers put a lot of emphasis on asking questions in lessons in many subjects, and this encourages pupils to think and to talk. Teachers are careful to introduce pupils to new words associated with subjects, as in a history lesson when describing the actions of Florence Nightingale. In the teacher assessments in 2001, however, girls did significantly better than boys in speaking and listening, and the subject leader for English explains that boys did worse than girls in reading due to their hesitance to talk about the books they have enjoyed reading. The SIAP covers gender issues, but it does not include this point specifically as a priority for improvement.

66. Most pupils in Year 2 can read different kinds of simple books and texts. They use a range of ways of reading new and harder words. They are particularly good at looking closely at the sounds that individual letters and groups of letters represent, and they apply this skill to their writing too. Teachers give a lot of attention in lessons to work of this kind;

consequently, the standard of spelling has improved significantly. All but the lower attaining pupils have a good knowledge of the terminology of books, such as 'contents' and 'index', but they do not display much knowledge of children's authors or poets. Most have a good knowledge of using alphabetical order to find words in dictionaries. Many pupils take their reading books home regularly, and read with other adults at least sometimes, but there is not a strong shared approach between teachers and parents to help with raising standards. The new school library is the result of a great deal of planning and hard work, and teachers now use this resource well in order to further pupils' learning.

67. Pupils in Year 2 write in a wide variety of situations and styles, including writing in most subjects of the curriculum. In science, for example, they write to describe what has happened in their experiments about pushing and pulling. Pupils also write using computers; for example, their anthology of poems on display in the entrance is presented in many different print styles. Teachers do not always expect enough of pupils to form their letters correctly and to present work neatly, and marking does not always help them much. There are times when pupils' handwriting difficulties are not tackled quickly, thoroughly and systematically enough, and they get into bad habits.

68. Teaching and learning are good overall, although not consistently so in every class. Teachers always manage pupils' behaviour well by having high expectations and by the positive relationships they build with their pupils. Consequently, pupils behave well in lessons and try hard. Teachers' explanations and questioning are clear and they know at the start of lessons what they want pupils to learn by the end of each lesson. They do not always discuss the purpose of lessons with pupils, however, and this limits pupils' understanding of their own learning and progress. Although teachers have set targets for their pupils, the pupils do not yet know how they are expected to improve.

69. Teachers have introduced successfully the national programme for teaching literacy, and they use it well to guide their lesson planning. This means that their teaching methods are appropriate, and enable them to make good use of any additional adult support they may have to assist pupils' learning. The extra teaching support provided for pupils with special educational needs helps them to make good progress over time. There is no unsatisfactory teaching, but teachers could sometimes make better use of the teaching and learning time available in literacy lessons when groups have different work. During this time, they do not always focus closely enough on a particular group of pupils in order to use their time for pushing pupils on and assessing what they need to learn in their next lesson. In recent times, there has been an increased amount of observing teachers at work and 'pinpointing' areas for improvement. There is a need to continue this, especially to address variations in teaching for pupils in the same year group but in different classes.

70. The new subject leader is quickly getting to grips with what needs to be done to raise standards in English, and improving the library has been the priority this year. She knows that, in order to raise standards still further, teachers need to make sure that the work planned for pupils always matches closely the targets for improvement. The school is putting into place a new system for tracking pupils' progress and setting targets for individuals, groups and the whole school. There are still lessons, however, when some pupils, particularly the brighter ones, could do even better if teachers used the assessment information they have to plan what they need to learn next. The SIAP shows that the school knows in general terms what needs to be done, for example raising the attainment of boys, but it is not always specific enough about this or about how much improvement is expected. Standards are now better than at the time of the last inspection and improvement since the last inspection has been good overall. The school is well placed to

continue to improve in the future under the guidance of the new subject leader who has a firm grasp of what is needed next.

MATHEMATICS

71. By the end of Year 2, standards are broadly average. Following a period of falling and unsatisfactory results since the last inspection, a substantial improvement in the tests for seven year olds was achieved in 2000, with almost all pupils reaching the expected level. This coincided with the introduction of the National Strategy for teaching numeracy. The test results for 2001 show a slight fall overall and, consequently, results are now similar to most schools and to those reported in 1997. The 2001 results are, however, below similar schools, and this indicates that pupils could still do better. The results for boys and girls generally reflect the national picture, although in 2001, girls did significantly better than boys, an unusual proportion of whom had special educational needs.

72. Baseline assessments completed when pupils were five indicate that, while most seven year olds have made satisfactory progress since then, some, including a number of the brighter pupils, should be doing better. Significantly, attainment in mathematics is weaker than in both English and science. In the past, there has been insufficient clear focus on finding out why, or taking effective action to improve matters. Pupils who have difficulties with mathematics, including those with special educational needs, are identified well. Due to the good support they receive, they make good progress, often reaching the expected level before transferring to the junior school.

73. Pupils' current and past work shows that, although many in the younger classes have problems in writing their numerals correctly, they develop basic number skills well. They can count forwards and backwards, add and subtract using different practical apparatus such as fingers, objects or number lines. The work in Year 1 gives proper emphasis to learning a wide and varied vocabulary to describe operations such as addition. Supported by the recently introduced homework scheme, older pupils are beginning to remember basic number facts by heart. Higher attaining pupils enjoy trying harder numbers, as seen in a successful Year 2 lesson, where they rose to the challenge of making the number 16 with answers such as "21 minus 5" and "16 minus zero". By the end of Year 2, most pupils can calculate using numbers up to 100, with higher attaining pupils using larger numbers and beginning to multiply and divide. Money calculations are good for this age of pupils.

74. Pupils make satisfactory progress in learning about measures and shapes, although some have difficulty in reading an analogue clock. They learn to collect information for a simple block graph and a few can use the graph to interpret the data. Some of this work is sensibly linked to topic work, for example collecting traffic information as part of a study on making local roads safer. Generally, though, opportunities to use numeracy skills in other subjects are incidental rather than planned and monitored.

75. The weakest area in the teaching of mathematics lies in using and applying mathematics and in solving problems. This is recognised by the school, although clearly specified action has yet to be taken. Many pupils find it difficult to estimate or check their answers and to explain their methods. This is because it is not always expected of them and teachers sometimes require only one right answer, so that pupils feel insecure when faced with an unfamiliar or open-ended problem. Whilst this weakness affects the progress made by all pupils, it is particularly holding back the brightest, who often complete their

work quickly and correctly without having to think very hard. In the past, teachers have allowed poor presentation to persist for too many pupils.

76. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are positive. They concentrate well in the opening part of those numeracy lessons when the pace is fast. Behaviour is good and almost all pupils stick to the tasks set. Some of the lower attaining pupils find it hard to concentrate for long, and this is recognised well by the part-time teacher, for example when she has a good range of different activities for the pupils she teaches. In some lessons, pupils do not work particularly well on their own, especially if the work is not interesting enough or pitched at the right level. At this time of the school year, teachers provide few opportunities for pupils to show initiative or make their own decisions in mathematics lessons.

77. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, and the teaching of basic number work is often better than that. The situation appears to be similar to that reported in the previous inspection. The numeracy strategy is followed precisely in all classes with interesting resources available to support the learning. In some cases, staff themselves have worked extremely hard to produce high quality, stimulating resources and interactive displays. These promote pupils' participation in lessons, as when they eagerly hold up printed numbers to show their answers. Good relationships and routines have been quickly established with the new classes, so that pupils feel secure and little time is wasted. Staffing is used effectively to reduce group sizes and to teach pupils within year and ability groups. In the best lessons, subtle questioning by teachers supports and challenges all pupils, although this is not always the case.

78. The opening part of some numeracy lessons lacks pace, reducing productivity and effort in the learning. This was particularly evident when the opening was planned as an introduction to the day's work, rather than a mental warm-up in its own right. Lessons keep very strictly to the allocated 45 minutes, reflecting the demands of the timetable. However, there were occasions, as seen in the work from the previous year, when this resulted in tasks being unfinished. Marking rarely gives written feedback about the pupils' mathematical learning and does not help them to present their work to a high enough standard. The school has not found an effective way of dating and keeping the pupils' worksheets. As a result, some pupils do not always show care or pride in their efforts.

79. A promising system for setting individual targets has recently been introduced and shared with parents. Although this had not been finalised for the new school year, it is designed to help to focus the efforts of pupils, parents, teachers and support staff. A relevant homework system has recently been introduced with the intention of lifting pupils' confidence and skills in mental mathematics through the greater involvement of parents. In some lessons, it is not clear to the pupils what they are expected to learn. As a result, they are not as aware of their own strengths and weaknesses as they might be.

80. The subject has been a continuing focus of development since the National Strategy for Numeracy was introduced. Work has included staff training and a programme of monitoring, well supported by the local education authority's numeracy consultant. Whilst this has led to improvements in provision, monitoring has not been followed through rigorously enough in identifying strengths and weaknesses in the teaching and learning. Consequently the good practice in some classes is not being spread across the school and some weaknesses are allowed to persist. The mathematical curriculum is not yet well balanced in the area of using and applying mathematics. A time audit is needed to find out whether provision within the numeracy lessons and through other subjects is sufficient to cover the programme of work and raise standards.

81. Good and improving assessment arrangements are in place, but the information is not always used systematically to identify how standards can be raised for individuals and groups. The school is too cautious about setting targets in terms of pupils reaching different levels of the National Curriculum. Consequently development is not as focused as it needs to be if standards are to be raised to those already being achieved in English and science.

SCIENCE

82. By the end of Year 2, pupils achieve well and attain above average standards. This matches the position at the time of the last inspection. In 2000 and 2001, however, there was a significant increase in the proportion of pupils attaining Level 2, the level expected for seven year olds, in the teacher assessments at the end of Year 2. All the pupils attained this level and about a third attained a level higher than expected for their age. These results were in the top five percent nationally for pupils attaining Level 2, and above the national average for higher attaining pupils; they were also better than results in similar schools. The results are particularly pleasing because pupils with special educational needs reached the standard expected for their age. In 2001, pupils did not do as well in scientific enquiry, however, as they did in other areas of science. Boys did not do as well as girls in any area, but their performance was notably weaker in scientific enquiry. The school has plans in the SIAP to tackle the poorer attainment of boys, but these plans are not yet specific enough about what teachers are going to do to improve matters, and the SIAP does not currently focus on science as a subject. Although teachers give increasing attention to trying to stretch the brighter pupils, there is still room for further improvement.

83. Only one lesson was seen, and this was for some of the pupils in Year 2. The previous work for pupils in each class in their books and on display was also looked at. By the age of seven, pupils have good enquiry skills. They can investigate scientific ideas, such as finding out about how far cars will travel along different slopes, and put forward their own ideas to support their predictions and results. They apply their mathematical skills well when they measure the distances, and use their writing skills when they record their results. They understand how important it is to make their tests 'fair'. Such work makes a good contribution to pupils' ability to apply the skills of scientific enquiry. Pupils can use equipment, such as when they plant and grow seeds, and they watch what happens closely in order to predict what might happen next. They have a good knowledge and understanding about light and electrical circuits. They know the differences between living and non-living things and know that plants need water, light and warmth to help them grow.

84. In their lesson, the higher and average attaining pupils found out what is the favourite flavour of crisps amongst class members, and recorded their findings in graphs, sometimes using computers to support this work. They showed a growing understanding of what is meant by 'healthy eating' and by 'eating a balanced diet'. The teacher successfully linked the work to the need to take exercise by referring to their physical education lesson. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs in Year 2 work with pupils in Year 1, and their curriculum is more closely matched to that of the younger pupils. The school does not check carefully to make sure that pupils' progress is not hindered by not having the same curriculum as others in their year group.

85. Evidence from the one lesson seen and from pupils' previous work and discussion shows that teaching and learning are good. This is partly due to the fact that teachers plan lessons together and make sure that they identify clearly what they want pupils to learn. In the lesson seen, the teacher used a story very well to introduce the idea of healthy eating,

and pupils listened with rapt attention. The discussion and direct teaching that followed included skilful probing questioning of pupils that made them think hard and respond with enthusiasm to the challenge. As a result, pupils compiled a lot of information about foods in different categories, and they went on to compare this with the school meals menu. By the end of this lesson, all pupils had made good progress with recognising that a balanced and adequate diet, linked with physical exercise, is vital for good health. This work made a very good contribution to pupils' personal, social and health education. The teacher deployed a support assistant carefully to make sure that pupils learned to use their ICT skills in another subject.

86. The good teaching and learning in the school are linked to the strong expertise generally amongst teachers. This helps them to plan a good range of interesting work that motivates and excites pupils to become actively involved. The cycle of topics for pupils in Years 1 and 2, for example, provides opportunities for pupils to learn about a wide range of scientific ideas, such as bodily senses, foods, the wild area, the seashore and much more. The work takes proper account of the National Curriculum and enables pupils to make good progress over time. It also makes meaningful links with other subjects and provides good opportunities for educational visits and for using the environment as a starting point. Consequently, pupils have good attitudes towards their work in science and do well.

87. The subject leader makes a strong contribution to raising standards. She has a lot of influence on the curriculum and teaching, although the school accepts that more work remains to be done in order to provide even more precise information to guide planning and provision.

ART AND DESIGN

88. Art was a strength of the school in the last report, but this is no longer the case. A teacher with strong interest and expertise has left, and the school has felt a need to focus more time and effort on introducing a wide range of national educational initiatives, especially the programmes for teaching literacy and numeracy. There was too little evidence to make overall judgements about standards, teaching and learning, but the standard of previous work on display and in folders is in line with national expectations for pupils in Year 2.

89. Only one lesson was seen, and it was part of a 'topic' that included geography and some design and technology. The lesson, for pupils in Years 1 and a few in Year 2, was satisfactory overall, but the art and design aspects of it had weaknesses. This was because the teacher did not give enough attention to making sure that pupils furthered their knowledge, understanding and skills of art and design. The two supporting adults in the lesson who worked with pupils were helpful and encouraging, but they either did too much for the pupils or did not have enough guidance from the teacher about what the pupils were expected to learn. The tasks for pupils were either too difficult to enable them to feel pleased with their own efforts, or they did not have enough opportunities to experiment with their own creative ideas and take responsibility for their own materials. Nevertheless, pupils tried hard and worked sensibly in potentially 'messy' situations. They showed that they could look closely at an arrangement of objects and mix powder paints in order to attempt to paint what they see.

90. Previous work on display indicates that by the age of seven, pupils work in a satisfactory range of art materials. Their pastel pictures of a bowl of bulbs are delightful, including the efforts of a pupil with special educational needs. Some pupils in last year's

Year 2 painted local churches and religious artefacts as part of their topic about churches. The pictures are of the standard expected for their age. When asked about their previous work, pupils who have recently moved into Year 2 discuss how to mix colours from powders and explain how to select the right brush for the job. They have a little knowledge of working with clay, but do not remember looking at any pictures painted by well-known artists. Pupils have some opportunities to express their own creative ideas through using information and communication technology, but this is not yet a strong feature of their attainment.

91. The subject leader is still in the process of planning a new scheme of work to reflect the further national guidance about the curriculum, and this will be the next priority for the school in art and design. The school does not yet have a clear picture of how the topic approach to planning for mixed age classes will ensure that teaching and learning gives a strong focus to developing skills in a systematic way, and how enough time for this will be set aside. The SIAP details the work that the school expects to do by April 2002 in order to improve standards further.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

92. Standards and achievement in those aspects of the work seen in design and technology are higher than in most schools. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, reflecting good subject leadership and well-planned projects. Pupils learn and apply good skills in designing and making a balanced range of products. At the same time, their individual ideas are valued and celebrated, as in the different expressive faces the pupils create on their masks, puppets and pirates.

93. Only one lesson was seen, but the school has kept a variety of displays from the previous year, that show the value placed upon the subject and the standards expected. Planning indicates a good balance in the curriculum, including provision for food technology as well as assembling and making with a good range of materials. Younger pupils demonstrate good cutting and attaching skills when making glove puppets. These textile skills are enhanced when pupils design and make exciting multi-coloured coats in association with the Joseph story. They learn how to make and use a paper pattern before applying neat sewing techniques to finish the coat. As in the other work, many pupils show good imaginative skills in the way that they create patterns and effects on the coats. Other materials include papier mâché in making masks, and card and split pins in making pirate characters with moving parts. Most work shows care in the decorating and finishing processes, and pupils can feel justifiably proud of their efforts. Insufficient evidence was seen to judge how well pupils evaluate their finished items.

94. In the lesson seen, pupils prepared a fruit salad using a wide range of fruits brought in by the teacher. They were curious and excited by the activity, which included a brief consideration of the tools they would need to prepare the fruit and how they might select the fruits they would use. The teacher included some unfamiliar fruits in the bag, but opportunities were missed to use these to extend pupils' understanding of foods from different cultures. Teachers make good use of additional adult help in supervising and supporting such practical work, although, on occasions, better briefing is needed to ensure that helpers do not dominate and stifle the pupils' own creativity. Too few lessons were seen to make an overall judgement about teaching and learning or about the achievement of different groups of pupils.

95. The management of the subject is good and contributes well to the standards being achieved. Following one year's experience with a nationally recognised scheme of work, the school has agreed an amended version to increase the focus now on the skills to be covered each year, whilst leaving staff more flexibility in the content of the work. Assessment and monitoring are still underdeveloped, although this is identified in the SIAP for the coming year.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

96. Standards in geography and history are similar to the national expectations, maintaining the position reported in the previous inspection. Most pupils achieve appropriately, although some higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are capable of making even greater progress. Placing Year 2 lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs in a predominantly Year 1 class limits their access to the curriculum enjoyed by the others in their year group. Standards in geography are more secure than in history.

97. By the age of seven, most pupils have an appropriate knowledge of some important people and events from the past such as Florence Nightingale or the Fire of London. Starting in Year 1, they begin to make comparisons between the past and present; for example, by looking at old and new toys, they are able to talk about changing styles and materials. By Year 2, some pupils, including those who find reading and writing difficult, can explain why change has happened, for instance the improving conditions in hospitals. Most pupils do not currently show a clear sense of chronology, tending to see all past events as 'the olden days'. In their lesson, they show limited understanding of how they might find out about the past, mainly because they have to rely on the teacher or a video as the main sources of historical evidence.

98. In contrast, some well-planned geographical work based around the school, gives good opportunity for pupils to use observation and early fieldwork skills to find out about their locality. A study of a busy local road enables them to gain knowledge and understanding about traffic and road safety, culminating in writing letters to seek safety improvement such as a footbridge. This work contributes well to pupils' numeracy skills as they complete graphs based on a traffic survey. Most pupils are beginning to show awareness of localities further away, such as the seaside town of Scarborough. Generally, few pupils reach above average levels in history or geography, partly because, in the time available, they are unable to work in sufficient depth, and all pupils are usually expected to complete exactly the same work.

99. Too little teaching was seen to judge teaching and learning overall. The use of nationally recognised schemes of work provides a sound balance, but planning is sometimes unclear about the skills to be taught and practised in each year group, for example work arising from educational visits. This particularly affects the progress of the few Year 2 pupils who are taught in a mainly Year 1 class because they miss work on some themes, such as learning about different countries. Teachers use educational visits and visitors well to offer first-hand experience and bring life to the subjects. Pupils are enthusiastic about both subjects.

100. The subjects have not been a focus for recent development and the monitoring of planning, teaching and standards is underdeveloped. The SIAP includes proposals to provide time for the subject manager to find out more about the strengths and weaknesses in lessons in other classrooms.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

101. At the time of the last report, standards were in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2, but the school's resources were poor, and pupils did not have a full range of opportunities within the National Curriculum. This became a key issue for the school that governors and staff have now addressed very well. The school now has enough computer equipment in classrooms, augmented very well by using the excellent resources in the computer suite at the neighbouring junior school. Pupils in Year 2 have weekly lessons in the suite and pupils in Year 1 have fortnightly lessons. This has several positive effects for the pupils; it makes transition to junior school easier, it prepares them well for the expectations of their next school and it builds their confidence to use new technology away from the security of their familiar surroundings.

102. The school's focus on developing ICT in the school in recent years has had a lot of benefits. There has been a great deal of training for teachers and support staff, both by school-based events and by individuals taking responsibility for learning in their own time outside the school. Further training is planned as part of the SIAP, in order to ensure that the school keeps up to date with national and local developments in the teaching of ICT. Staff now have strong expertise, and make good use of ICT as an aid to their teaching, for example by making worksheets for pupils and by preparing labels for their displays and classrooms. This gives pupils positive attitudes towards ICT and helps them to see the potential of the use of new technology in everyday life. Time in the curriculum allocated to teaching ICT, however, is considerably greater than the low official figures given, and the school needs to check more carefully in order to guarantee that the situation is as the school thinks it should be.

103. As a result of the school's efforts, standards have risen since the last inspection. Both girls and boys, including those with special education needs, now achieve well and the standard of pupils' work in Year 2 is above national expectation. Higher and average attaining pupils can work independently to open computer programs, use keys appropriately to complete them and change fonts when word processing; only one or two pupils need a little help to do this. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs work in pairs, sometimes needing support and encouragement, to word process correctly the words of a well-known rhyme. They know how to use keys, such as space bar and backspace, to make additions and changes to their texts. All pupils sometimes use ICT as part of their work in other subjects, for example when they use computers to design covers for books and when they record their findings of a survey about favourite sandwich fillings in science.

104. All pupils in Year 2 make good or very good progress when working at the junior school. They show very good attitudes towards computers and their behaviour at the junior school is very good. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from high quality individual support to enable them to do well, and brighter pupils have harder work to challenge them further. Progress in other lessons back at school is more variable. Pupils in Year 1 learn a lot when their teacher plans a very good class lesson to teach them how to use a new program. Another Year 1 teacher, however, misses opportunities to use computers and sometimes sets work that has no bearing on the lesson being taught. Nevertheless, teaching and learning are good overall, largely due to the school's well-managed approach, good use of direct teaching, very strong expertise and leadership of the subject leader, and teachers' determination to improve their teaching. ICT is now one of the school's main strengths.

MUSIC

105. As in the last inspection, inspectors saw too few lessons to make overall judgements about teaching, learning or standards. Since the last report, the school has responded to further national guidance about the curriculum, and staff are still at the stage of working through how they can best organise this around the specialist teaching that they have introduced in the mixed age classes. The subject leader works with classes in turn, teaching weekly lessons that each class teacher observes when their turn comes around. This is a very successful way of increasing the confidence of other teachers to teach music themselves, and its benefits are already becoming obvious.

106. The one lesson seen was very good because the subject leader planned the kinds of activities that increase pupils' musical knowledge, understanding and skills. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed the lesson, listened intently throughout and tried very hard to respond to the continual challenges that the teacher set for them. Their understanding of pitch, for example, increased at a good pace because the teacher set them harder and harder tasks. They attained standards above the national expectation for pupils in Year 2. It is regrettable, however, that the few Year 2 pupils in a mixed Year 1 and Year 2 class, that includes some with special educational needs, did not also benefit from this very good teaching and learning for pupils of their own age. They will, nevertheless, have an opportunity to work with the subject leader next half term when she works with a predominantly Year 1 class.

107. Pupils sing together in assemblies regularly, and their singing is of the standard expected by the end of Year 2. They join in familiar songs and listen well to learn new ones, showing a good sense of pitch and rhythm. When discussing their previous work, pupils in Year 2 talk about when they listened to 'Sleeping Beauty' and to other pupils playing their recorders. They can name many percussion instruments, and talk about the ones they have played from China and Africa; the school has a good collection of instruments from around the world. All pupils in Year 2 will have the opportunity to learn to play the recorder in school time, but being so early in the school year; this has not yet been organised to begin. The subject leader makes a good contribution to taking the school forward, and the next step for the school is to develop the subject through the school development action plan.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

108. Only one lesson was seen and this was gymnastics for pupils in Year 2. The subject manager is currently revising the curriculum for the school, following more recent national guidance. She has not yet had an opportunity to find out directly how good teaching, learning and standards are in physical education. It was not possible to see her teaching a lesson.

109. Teaching in the one lesson seen was good because the teacher used direct teaching and demonstrations well to push pupils to keep on trying harder. She used all the lesson time watching out for opportunities to show pupils what they could do to improve their performances, for example in how they could use their feet in new and different ways. She showed very good control of the pupils, even when a few became over-excited and she had to check their behaviour. Nevertheless, most pupils worked hard and enjoyed the

lesson. They worked with partners co-operatively, sometimes girls and boys together, to plan and perform short sequences of movements.

110. Pupils in Year 2 use space well to travel around the hall in different ways. They experiment with bodily movements and practise to improve them, although some can do this better than others. When they move to the beat and speed of music, they show good control and co-ordination of their bodies, although the higher attaining pupils are more imaginative about their actions when they represent shapes in the playground.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

111. Only one lesson was seen and there was little previous work available from which to make overall judgements about standards, teaching and pupils' learning. The school uses the local education authority agreed syllabus as a basis for planning lessons, and this makes provision for pupils to reach the required standard by the end of Year 2. The lesson seen for pupils in Year 2 was good, because the teacher used a class discussion and discussions between paired pupils well to encourage them to think carefully about how religious ideas affect their own day-to-day family lives. The lesson promoted good attitudes towards others and made a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual and social development. It also provided an opportunity for pupils to practise their listening and talking skills through work in religious education. Pupils were interested and gave sensible and thoughtful answers to questions. They worked with partners without any fuss; sometimes girls and boys selected each other as partners.

112. In a discussion, some of the oldest pupils in the school gave several reasons why some people go to church. They talked about previous work using words, such as 'special people', and they knew that the Bible is a special book to some people. When asked about stories from the Bible, they recalled only the Christmas story. The work of pupils who recently left the school shows that they visited local churches and recorded their observations carefully through writing, drawing and painting, often using computers to do so.

113. The school follows the new programmes of study relating to the local education authority agreed syllabus. The subject leader is exploring different ways of putting this into practice, but there are still uncertainties to resolve about the curriculum. Teachers use an existing published scheme and build this around the school's long-term plan of topics. This method ensures that religions other than Christianity are also a focus for learning, and funds have been set aside to buy more books to help with teaching about other faiths. Representatives from local churches visit, but the school does not distinguish clearly between worship and religious education. There are plans to find out directly about the quality of teaching in the future, but this is not yet a strong feature of the work of the subject leader. The SIAP details the work that the school expects to do in the near future in order to teach religious education in a more systematic way than currently happens.