

INSPECTION REPORT

**ASKRIGG VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Askrigg, Leyburn

LEA area: North Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 121602

Headteacher: Mrs Sue Sweet

Reporting inspector: Mrs Lesley Clark
25431

Dates of inspection: 5 - 7 November 2001

Inspection number: 194237

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Yorebridge Askrigg Leyburn North Yorkshire
Postcode:	DL8 3BJ
Telephone number:	01969 650331
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Kathleen Alderson
Date of previous inspection:	10 March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25431	Lesley Clark	Registered inspector	English Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Religious Education Art and Design Music Foundation Stage	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9224	Mike Vineall	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 and carers?
19117	Margaret Handsley	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Design and Technology Geography History Physical Education Equal Opportunities Special Educational Needs	How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Askrigg Voluntary Controlled Primary School is much smaller than average with 70 pupils on roll aged four to eleven taught in three mixed age classes. The school is situated in the village of Askrigg four miles east of Hawes in the Yorkshire Dales National Park and serves the local farms and nearby villages. Many of the families are long established in the area. The national outbreak of foot and mouth in April 2001 badly affected peoples' livelihoods and prosperity as well as having an emotional impact on families and the local community. Attendance at the school fell considerably during this period. Five per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is well below average when compared nationally. Thirteen per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is slightly below the national average and no pupils currently have statements of special educational needs. This is also below average. No pupils come from ethnic minorities and there are no pupils learning English as an additional language. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school varies a good deal; it is broadly average overall.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school at which pupils reach above average standards in key subjects and in the creative arts by the age of eleven. Pupils, including those with special educational needs achieve well. Gifted and talented pupils also do well, particularly in English, mathematics and music. This is largely because of the good teaching in the junior classes and the very good leadership provided by the headteacher. The support of the committed staff, governing body and parents, helps to give the school its friendly and welcoming atmosphere. During the national outbreak of foot and mouth disease, that seriously affected local farms and caused attendance at the school to fall considerably, the school gave invaluable support to the local community. The school was judged to be good at the last inspection and it has improved a good deal since then. Provision for children in the reception year is unsatisfactory, however, and the teaching does not take sufficient account of young children's needs. Even though the cost per pupil at this small school is high, it nonetheless continues to give satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- By the age of eleven years, pupils reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science and well above average standards in music. Standards in art are good throughout the school because pupils work together very well.
- Pupils want to come to school and attendance is above the national average.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils who are gifted and talented is good.
- The leadership of the headteacher is very good and has brought about many changes to improve the quality of pupils' education.
- The governors are effective and supportive of the school.
- The school has a very good partnership with parents and involves them closely in all aspects of school life. This has a good impact on pupils' learning, particularly younger pupils in the school.

What could be improved

- The quality of provision for children in the reception year.
- The balance, planning and timetabling of the curriculum especially for younger children.
- Teachers' expectations of what older, higher attaining infant pupils can achieve.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1997 and was judged to have a number of strengths and some areas of weakness. The school has made good improvement since then. The school grounds have been developed very well indeed to enhance pupils' learning in all areas of the curriculum. The recently provided computer suite has helped to raise standards in information and communication technology (ICT), particularly in the junior classes; pupils achieve well in design and technology; and standards are

well above average in music. Curricular leadership has improved and there are good systems in place to assess standards in English, mathematics and science. The monitoring of teaching and learning has developed satisfactorily but has not yet ensured that teaching and learning are of an equally good standard throughout the school. Planning, teaching and provision for children in the reception class does not take sufficient account of recent guidelines though plans are in place to remedy this. The current leadership has introduced very effective measures to raise overall standards such as analysing the results in national tests and adopting the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. The provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved, as has the provision for junior pupils with exceptional abilities.

STANDARDS

No table of national test scores is included because of the small numbers of pupils who are eligible to take the tests. The last two years' results for eleven-year-olds indicate a significant improvement on previous years and pupils now attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science. This is consistent with the overall findings of the inspection. Standards for seven-year-olds have been broadly average over a five-year period in reading, writing and mathematics. However, in the current Year 2 group standards are below average in English, particularly in reading. The school's performance has improved at a well above average rate over the past five years compared with the national trend.

Attainment by the time children leave the reception year is broadly average. They achieve well in communication, language, literacy and mathematics as they benefit from the structured teaching older pupils receive in the class. They do not achieve as well as they should in all other areas of learning because of the unsatisfactory provision made for their needs. At the age of seven, standards are below average in reading because boys in this year group do not read as well as girls and below average in writing because pupils have too few opportunities to write extensively or creatively on their own. Standards in speaking and listening, mathematics and science are about average for seven-year-olds. Too little teaching, or pupils' work, was seen to be able to make secure judgements about standards in other subjects for this age group. At the age of eleven, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science and well above average in music. Aspects of work in art and design throughout the school, and in design and technology and ICT in junior classes are also above average. Standards are in line with those expected in religious education.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good; pupils enjoy coming to school. They talk readily about what they are learning and there is a happy, family atmosphere in school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory; pupils behave responsibly round the school and in the school grounds. They can be restless, however, during assemblies and they are inclined to demand attention rather noisily during some lessons; this can slow the progress of their learning.
Personal development and relationships	Good; relationships are warm and friendly between pupils and between pupils and adults working in school. Pupils are very welcoming and delightfully straightforward in their dealings with other people.
Attendance	Good; since the local outbreak of foot and mouth disease which kept some farmers' children away for up to four weeks, attendance has already returned to above average. There has been no unauthorised absence for several years. There is also very little lateness, which is particularly praiseworthy in view of how remote some pupils' homes are.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good

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

The quality of teaching and of pupils' learning varies from class to class. Much of it is good and there was some very good and excellent teaching in the junior classes. The quality of teaching in the infant/reception class is satisfactory overall: it is good for pupils in Year 1. There are weaknesses: the teaching of English for infants, particularly literacy, is unsatisfactory as is the teaching and learning of reception children. They are taught the basic skills of language, literacy and numeracy very well by the nursery nurse in accordance with the teacher's good planning but the children miss out on learning through play and choosing their own activities. Strengths in all classes lie in the warmth and responsiveness of teachers to the personal needs of individuals. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good as is the teaching of gifted and talented pupils in the junior classes. Numeracy is well taught throughout the school. Literacy is less well taught as teachers have missed out on the initial training. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough for older and more able infants and activities are not always sufficiently challenging. There are some shortcomings in the way teachers manage behaviour and pupils' responses in Years 5 and 6. Where the quality of teaching is good, teachers guide questions and answers very well to help pupils to learn from each other. In very good lessons, the teaching interests and challenges pupils of all abilities. In excellent lessons, the fast pace and lively atmosphere really involves pupils so they confidently learn and use new skills.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and there are strengths in the long-term planning for mixed-age classes. However, the curriculum is not sufficiently well balanced for the infant class. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular activities and well planned educational visits.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils who are gifted and talented enables them to fulfil their potential. This has a good impact on the standards they achieve.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. Assemblies are used well as opportunities for appreciating the achievements of others but opportunities for reflection are less evident. Pupils are clear about the difference between right and wrong but sometimes in assembly and in lessons, pupils do not consider well enough the needs of others. Pupils are encouraged to be polite and make visitors welcome. They work together well in class when well managed by the teacher. The provision for cultural education is good and broadens pupils' outlook.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are good. The arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. All staff know the pupils very well and take a close interest in their personal and academic progress.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Very well. The links with parents are a clear strength of the school and have an undoubted impact on pupils' learning. Parents are very interested in their children's work and appreciate the approachability of staff.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The leadership provided by the headteacher is very good and is responsible for most of the changes and improvements since the last inspection. Other members of staff make good contributions to the school's very clear sense of purpose and very well chosen priorities for development.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governing body plays an active and supportive role in shaping the educational direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Whilst the leadership and management are well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school it has not fully resolved the differences in the quality of teaching and learning between each age group.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The financial planning is effective and financial control and day-to-day organisation of the school are very efficient. The school takes care to ensure that purchases are of good quality at the best available cost. Although much of the accommodation is used well, and plans are in place for further development, there is a need to rethink the accommodation for younger pupils to give them more independence in their learning.
The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	Staffing levels are good and staff who have particular subject expertise as in music, art, ICT and PE teach all age groups. Learning resources are satisfactory. The accommodation has been imaginatively developed outside to provide good facilities for outdoor play and physical education. There is ample internal accommodation not all of which is used effectively.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>The great majority of parents feel that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staff are very approachable; • The school is well led and managed; • The school helps their children to become mature and responsible; • The teaching is good and their children make good progress; • Their children like coming to school; 	<p>Parents are very satisfied with what the school offers and there is no area they would like to see improved.</p>

The parents' questionnaire, returned by the majority of parents, was overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school. The inspection team agrees with their views and the confidence they have in their school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 The numbers of pupils in each year group are too small to allow a reliable analysis to be made of the school's national test results in any one year. As might be expected with such small year groups, it is also hard to establish a reliable trend over a five-year period. However, the most recent test results in 2000 and 2001 for eleven-year-olds indicate a significant improvement on results in previous years. These results are consistent with the overall findings of the inspection that, at the age of eleven, pupils reach above standards in English, mathematics and science. Standards for seven-year-olds are broadly average over a five-year period in reading, writing and mathematics and teacher's assessments of standards in science reflect a similar trend. In the current Year 2 group, however, standards are below average in English. Over a five-year period the school's results have risen at a rate which is well above that of the national trend.

- 2 There are several reasons why standards are higher by the age of eleven than they are at the age of seven. Children enter and leave the reception year with broadly average attainment in all their areas of learning. They receive a good grounding in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy but unsatisfactory teaching and provision means they do not achieve as well as they should in knowledge and understanding of the world or in their physical, creative, personal, social and emotional development. Pupils continue to achieve satisfactorily throughout Year 1 and 2 but higher attaining pupils do not do as well as they should because the expectations of their learning are not high enough. Many reach the standards expected of their age but few exceed expected standards. This year standards are below average in reading and writing because teaching is unsatisfactory, the national literacy strategy is not implemented fully, boys do not read as well as girls and pupils have too few opportunities to write at length on their own. Pupils in the current year 1, and in the same class as the reception year and Year 2 pupils, are attaining more highly because the teaching is better situated to their age and stage of development. Pupils achieve well in the junior classes because much more is expected of them. Much of the teaching is good or better. The analysis of test results to identify weaker areas is used well to determine what pupils should learn. This means pupils are working at the right level of attainment. Pupils have challenging individual targets to meet and so have some measure of their own learning and progress. Additional 'booster' classes help pupils to improve their skills in preparation for national tests and currently pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 receive instruction twice a week in English and mathematics in groups according to their ability. The national strategy for numeracy is used well throughout the school and has a positive impact on standards. The main reason why standards are higher for juniors than infants is that older pupils have many more opportunities to make their own decisions and to learn through practical and investigative activities. This means that higher attaining pupils have the scope to fulfil their potential.

- 3 Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils because of the good provision for their needs and the good teaching they receive. Teaching and support staff are attentive to the targets clearly laid out in their individual educational plans. Pupils who have exceptional abilities in curricular areas are given good opportunities to develop their skills. Because year groups are small, there is flexibility to allow younger and talented pupils to work with older pupils. Older gifted and talented pupils are given slightly more specialised work to enable them to achieve at a higher level.

- 4 By the age of eleven, standards are well above average in music and in aspects of art and design, ICT and design and technology. Evidence of pupils' work, photographs and discussions with pupils indicate that they make good progress in history and geography and that they achieve well. Standards in religious education meet expected levels by the age of eleven. Too little teaching was seen to be able to make secure judgements about standards in other subjects for seven-year-olds. Little work is recorded in the infant classes, as much is based on discussion.
- 5 In all classes, pupils' skills in literacy are not utilised to the full. Standards in reading are lower than in writing for seven-year-olds because of this. Standards in numeracy are generally higher than they are in literacy throughout the school because teachers have benefited from recent training. ICT is not used consistently in all three classes to support learning in other subjects. Standards are above average in accessing and using information gleaned from the Internet and using e-mail as a means of communication. Computers were not used sufficiently during lessons, however, to make an accurate assessment of standards overall. There is evidence, though, that this subject is properly catered for and it is much enjoyed by pupils of all ages.
- 6 Since the last inspection standards have improved for junior pupils. Standards are similar for infant pupils to those reported in 1997 apart from in English where they are lower.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 7 Pupils have good attitudes and they want to come to school. They find many aspects of school life very interesting. Relationships are good between pupils and between pupils and adults and pupils appreciate their teachers' care, concern and good humour. Pupils speak to visitors in a mature manner and frequently with ready humour as they enjoy conversations. There is a friendly, family atmosphere in the school, which is immediately felt by a visitor. Pupils are delightfully straightforward in their dealings with other people, commenting candidly on what they like and dislike. They are particularly proud of their new ICT suite and enjoy adding to the school's web page in their spare time. When they are given the opportunity, pupils like finding out information for themselves and working independently. It is then that they are at their most responsible. This particular aspect of pupils' attitudes has improved since the last inspection.
- 8 Pupils' personal development is good. Teachers know all pupils well and set personal targets for development. Pupils help each other and grow in confidence, as they get older. Most pupils behave thoughtfully and considerately towards others. While bullying is rare, there are instances of unkindness towards others. Behaviour generally, around the school, is satisfactory. It is often noisy and boisterous but rarely threatening and pupils appear aware of what is and is not permissible. However, in lessons, sometimes teachers have to step aside from teaching to correct inappropriate behaviour such as excessive fidgeting, shouting out answers and spontaneous comments. Even well up the school, pupils do not seem to have internalised the required good habits of whole class behaviour and are inclined to demand immediate attention. This slows the pace of lessons. There have been no exclusions, and the school publicly rewards good behaviour. Pupils show initiative but younger pupils in particular do not have many opportunities to demonstrate responsibility.
- 9 Attendance is good and over the past five years rose to run steadily at a level of at least 95 per cent. In 2000/01 it dropped to 92.5 per cent, but this was due to the local outbreak of foot and mouth disease, which kept some farmers' children away for up to four weeks. Significantly, attendance has already returned to over 95 per cent this term,

thus demonstrating the culture of attendance that has been created. There has been no unauthorised absence for several years. There is also very little lateness, which is particularly praiseworthy in view of how far away and remote some pupils' homes are.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

- 10 The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching was good or better in half the lessons observed. In one tenth of lessons, teaching was excellent. Unsatisfactory teaching was observed in a small number of lessons. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, with a higher level of very good and excellent teaching. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy, together with the adoption of good quality schemes of work in all subjects, have made a positive contribution to this aspect of the school's provision. The monitoring of teaching and learning in numeracy has resulted in good quality provision. There are weaknesses in the teaching of literacy throughout the school because teachers have missed out on the initial training. This adversely affects the teaching of reading and of writing in the infant class.
- 11 Inspection findings support parents' positive view of teaching. However, within this judgement, there are considerable variations. The quality of provision for children in the reception year is unsatisfactory. Whilst there are strengths in some of the teaching of reception children, much of it is unsatisfactory due to weaknesses in planning for children to work independently and to choose their own activities. The children have some good quality learning sessions with the nursery nurse, but they do not have the range of experiences usually provided for children of this age, which provide the foundation of their education. The quality of teaching and learning of five to seven-year-olds is satisfactory. Although the lessons are planned appropriately for most pupils, the higher attaining pupils are not challenged enough for them to reach the standards of which they are capable. The quality of teaching and learning of seven to eleven-year-olds is good overall, with some excellent lessons observed.
- 12 Teaching is good overall in mathematics, science and English. The recent provision of good quality resources for ICT has not yet had an impact on the quality of teaching and learning which is still not good enough. Teachers do not give enough time to teaching the subject and do not make enough use of computers in their lessons. ICT is not used as well as it could be to support learning in mathematics but is beginning to be used imaginatively to teach art and as a tool to word-process and draft work in English. Not enough lessons were seen to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching and learning in other subjects. Nevertheless, evidence of pupils' progress indicates a good level of teaching overall. The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good as is the teaching of gifted and talented pupils. Teachers make sure pupils are fully involved in the lesson and their individual needs are met. Good quality relationships promote pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
- 13 The strengths in teaching and learning are seen when lessons are based on teachers' very secure knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. This leads to well thought out lessons and good quality discussions that hold pupils' interest. Most teachers expect appropriate standards of work. They use time and resources well and most lessons have a good pace, keeping pupils fully involved and thinking hard. Teachers' explanations are clear and effective and their good questioning techniques help pupils to learn. This is a strong feature of teaching in numeracy lessons. Strengths in the teaching of infants lie in the warmth and responsiveness of the teaching to individual pupils' needs, the good-humoured relationships and the expressiveness of the teacher's reading. When activities are carefully timed and planned to suit the different age groups,

lessons move at a pace. Pupils commented with evident relish as they rapidly wrote down words in a game to distinguish spellings and sounds, 'This is fast!' In the junior classes, strengths lie in encouraging pupils to think for themselves and in the preparations to ensure that pupils learn through practical and enjoyable activities. Where the quality of teaching is good, teachers create a stimulating learning atmosphere, guiding questions and answers very well to help pupils to learn from each other. In very good lessons, the teaching covers a great deal in a short time in such a way as to interest and challenge pupils of all abilities. This is because it is meticulously planned and timed so that pupils do not become restless or lose concentration. What distinguishes the excellent from the very good teaching is the variety of teaching methods used within the lesson, the liveliness and challenging pace, and close involvement of all pupils so there is an exciting 'buzz' as pupils grow in confidence as they learn and use new skills.

- 14 When time and resources are not managed well, and pupils are not expected to work at a high enough level, unsatisfactory teaching results. Not enough work is planned to help the younger higher attaining pupils to learn and therefore they are unused to working on their own for any length of time without disturbing the teacher. Most teachers have good management skills and pupils behave well in lessons but when this is not the case, pupils' behaviour deteriorates and time is wasted as lessons are constantly interrupted by pupils' comments. Teachers do not make enough use of ICT or writing in lessons and both these sets of skills are underdeveloped. Teachers identify in their planning what they want the pupils to learn but do not consistently share these objectives with pupils to help them assess what they have learnt.
- 15 The nursery nurse and learning support assistants are trained to a good standard and make a good contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. However, there are times in lessons when their help and that of parents is not utilised as fully as it might be. Opportunities are missed, for example, to note pupils' responses in lessons or to check that different groups of pupils are working as well as they should.

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

- 16 Although the curriculum meets statutory requirements, and there are strengths in the provision for pupils with special educational needs, for gifted and talented pupils and in the long-term planning for mixed-age classes, the curriculum is not sufficiently well balanced for infant and reception pupils. A large proportion of time is devoted to literacy and numeracy, not all of which is used as well as it should be, particularly in the infant class. The amount of time allocated to swimming is high because of geographical problems. Not all pupils go swimming and for ten weeks those pupils who remain in school have more opportunities to develop their skills in other subjects but no opportunities for physical education during this time. The weekly timetable does not allow enough variety of experiences for reception and infant pupils, nor does it make the most efficient use of the time available for each subject throughout the school. Cross-curricular links are not well enough developed to enable learning in one subject to support learning in other subjects. Provision for ICT was held back by lack of resources until recently, resulting in a weakness in the use of it for real, practical purposes in other subjects. The school has made a good level of improvements in structuring the curriculum since the last inspection but the allocation of time to different subjects during the day needs closer attention so pupils receive a well balanced curriculum.
- 17 The school is reviewing policy in all subjects and aspects of its curricular provision. Good quality schemes of work have been put in place for all subjects, including personal,

social, health and citizenship education. Long-term planning is clear, following national frameworks for literacy and numeracy, nationally recommended schemes of work for other subjects and the local Agreed Syllabus for religious education. However, the medium-term planning is carried out in individual classes, rather than across the school. This results in inconsistent provision that sometimes prevents pupils transferring smoothly from one class to the next. The curriculum for children in the reception year is not planned well enough to meet the Early Learning Goals for children in the foundation stage of their education. The quality of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and for those with exceptional ability is good. All aspects of the provision are effectively organised and co-ordinated. The policy for pupils with special educational needs meets statutory requirements and provides the basis for good quality provision in this area of the school's work. The national numeracy strategy is well developed in the school and teachers use this successfully to meet the needs of individual pupils. Some aspects of the national literacy strategy are less well developed and it is not used as much as it could be to help pupils learn in other subjects.

- 18 The provision for extra-curricular activities is good. The fact that many pupils travel by school bus places restrictions on the time available for activities outside the school day. Nevertheless teachers and parents offer sessions in netball, football and basketball. Pupils have the opportunity of professional football coaching sessions. The curriculum is enriched by events such as joining with nearby schools to work with a professional artist. Music is a well-established tradition in the school. Pupils sing very well, many play instruments, and all take part in the local music festival. Some pupils belong to the junior section of a well-known silver band. Out of school visits, to the Millennium Dome, or outdoor pursuits centres, for example, enhance pupils' learning. The school is very much part of the local community, which make a good contribution to pupils' learning. Good links are established with the local Secondary school. Teachers pass on information about the pupils to ensure a smooth transfer.
- 19 Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils reflect on their own feelings and values in religious education and in personal, health and social education. Assemblies are not used sufficiently well to develop pupils' capacity for reflection but they are used well as opportunities for appreciating the achievements of others. For example, pupils appreciated a performance by three pupils who are junior members of a local silver band. Opportunities to appreciate music, art and literature are provided in the school's curriculum but those for reflection are less evident. The provision for moral development is satisfactory. Daily assemblies contribute well to pupils' personal development by considering moral themes, such as friendship. Adults provide good role models and pupils are clear about the difference between right and wrong. Pupils understand the rules for behaviour and consider them to be fair. However, inappropriate behaviour is sometimes seen in assembly and in lessons, when some pupils do not consider well enough the needs of others. The provision for social education is satisfactory. Pupils are encouraged to be polite and make visitors welcome. They work together well in class when well managed by the teacher. Following the very good example set by the staff; pupils' relationships with adults and each other are good. Pupils take care of each other.
- 20 Provision for cultural development is good. Pupils have opportunities in English, art and music to develop their appreciation of literature, works of art and music. They can join the school choir or learn a musical instrument and take part in a music festival. Events such as an art workshop enable pupils to join with other schools to experience working with a professional artist – with spectacular results. Geography and history help pupils to develop a sense of their own cultural background as well as gaining insight into the lives of people of other times and places. A visiting African poet led pupils to investigate

aspects of another culture. Religious education allows insight into the values and beliefs of people of other faiths. The provision for developing an understanding of the cultural diversity of British society is less well developed. The content of the curriculum and learning resources, such as books, reflect cultural diversity and present positive role models. However, this needs to be built upon in some areas.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 21 Children in this school are well cared for. There are good systems to ensure health and safety; welfare and child protection issues are speedily and effectively tackled. The governing body is closely involved in reviewing the systems for care, and recently a new health and safety governor made an objective inspection of the school premises. Procedures for dealing with care issues are well set out and well understood by staff and pupils. In one lesson, reception children were quick to point out that the fire blanket could be used if the porridge caught fire. Safety issues were frequently mentioned in class.
- 22 Procedures for monitoring pupils' behaviour, academic performance and personal development are satisfactory. Attendance is efficiently monitored and encouraged and the speedy return to a high level of attendance, this year, attests to the effectiveness of these measures. The procedures designed to eliminate oppressive behaviour are satisfactory and because it is a small school staff can often quickly apply them.
- 23 In the past two years, the school has substantially improved its assessment procedures for monitoring attainment and progress and parents and pupils are much more closely involved. This is one of the main reasons why standards have improved. Assessments are made of children's attainment when they enter school and the results of these and end of year informal tests are used to forecast results in national tests and to check that pupils are doing as well as they can. Test results are examined in detail to highlight individual and general areas of weakness. Pupils are also involved in this process and from their individual targets gain an understanding of what they need to know in order to progress. There is thus an impressive infrastructure for tracking pupils' work and progress. The use of this information for guiding planning is less good, though nonetheless satisfactory and staff are working toward linking this high quality data to determine what is taught in the classroom. This is clearly having an impact in raising pupils' achievements. The monitoring of personal development is a much more informal and subjective process but in a small school where the staff meets to discuss such matters very frequently, this is not a problem.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 24 Parents are extremely supportive of the school and are very satisfied with the education and care it gives to their children. Indeed, in the questionnaire, returned by nearly all parents, every question was answered positively by at least 95 per cent of parents. The parents' meeting was equally positive and several questionnaires included notes or letters that praised the school – especially for its sensitivity and support to families during the outbreak of foot and mouth. Parents were united in agreeing that the staff are very approachable and that they feel welcome to discuss any problems.
- 25 The links with parents are a clear strength of the school and have an undoubted impact on learning. Parents take a keen interest in their children's work and are very concerned that their children learn to read and write as well as they can. They help in school and assist with extra-curricular activities, educational visits (including the weekly swimming)

and with projects to improve the environment of the school. This clearly benefits pupils' education. An active association of parents is involved in fundraising for both educational and social purposes. Much of this is linked to fundraising in the village, which also holds events in aid of the school.

- 26 The school communicates regularly through a good weekly newsletter, which covers a wide range of topics. Parents' evenings are held in October when targets are set for the year and discussed, and again in March and, if desired, in July after parents receive their children's reports. They are very well attended and parents value the information they receive. The reports are very good – full, descriptive, diagnostic, setting targets and giving a clear view of pupils' progress in relation to national norms. Parents fill in reading record books conscientiously when they oversee the reading their children do at home and many parents offer comments. These form, therefore, a very useful link between home and school.
- 27 This school benefits substantially through the involvement of the parents with the school. In particular, a significant proportion of the governing body are now parents, including the chair, and they work closely with the headteacher to the very considerable benefit of the school and to pupils' learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 28 Under the very effective leadership provided by the headteacher, all other members of staff make a good contribution to the school's very clear sense of purpose and therefore to the achievements of pupils. Governors play an active and supportive role. They are well informed about the school's many strengths and the areas of weaknesses so that they are able to help in shaping the overall direction of the school. The governing body meets all of its statutory duties. The school's aims are clearly set out and embrace the importance of working in partnership with parents and the wider community. In this it is very successful. The school's aim to develop pupils' confidence and self-discipline within a caring environment where individual needs are respected clearly provides the framework within which all decisions are taken and within which teaching and learning take place.
- 29 The headteacher monitors the work of the pupils and staff effectively, largely by working alongside them. This has given a clear picture of strengths and weaknesses across the school and plans are in place to improve the teaching and provision for children in the reception year. As a result of monitoring and evaluating the work in school, the organisation of teaching has taken into account teachers' subject expertise so that physical education, art, music and ICT are taught by the appropriate expert throughout the school rather than by class teachers. This gives good variety in a small school. The observations of teaching and learning are informal rather than formal but are nonetheless extensive so that most staff have a good understanding of work undertaken in all three classes. The management has not yet fully resolved, however, the disparities in teaching and learning for different age groups. Within the two years of leading the school, the headteacher has accomplished a great deal to bring about extensive improvements with measures such as introducing the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, improving the provisions and teaching of ICT, introducing the analysis of national tests and improving curricular leadership. These have had significant impact on overall standards. Several steps have been taken to broaden the outlook of the school community. The introduction of residential visits for older pupils, visits far afield and links with other students in the Dales are beneficial to pupils' cultural education. Through ICT and networked links with other primary and the local secondary schools, pupils have gained access to a wider community. These measures have transformed a small

village school into an up to date and outward looking community.

- 30 School administration is unobtrusive and effective, allowing the headteacher to concentrate largely on teaching and on her leadership and management roles. The day-to-day organisation of the school is very efficient and the services of a local education authority bursar greatly assist in its effective management. ICT is used satisfactorily to assist with the school's financial planning. The school manages its strategic resources well and relates its spending well to the educational priorities that are clearly set in the school improvement plan. The headteacher and governing body take care to ensure that money is spent wisely in ways that enhance pupils' learning. The school ensures that all purchases represent good quality at the best available cost. A large surplus, accumulated over several years, has systematically been reduced over two years to improve the accommodation and learning resources. Plans are at an early stage to re-develop the internal accommodation to make more effective use of available space, particularly for reception children. Learning resources are satisfactory both in quality and in quantity. The last financial audit was some 18 months ago and raised no issues for the school to address.
- 31 Since the last inspection there have been several improvements in the school's leadership and management, notably in the very good direction provided by the headteacher and the increased awareness of the governing body of the importance of measuring pupils' achievement so that pupils learn as well as they can. Strategic planning is well supported by the school's improvement plan. The school was judged to be a good school at the last inspection and it has improved a good deal since then. However, there is some unsatisfactory teaching and unsatisfactory provision for reception children. Even though the cost per pupil at this small school is high the school nonetheless continues to give satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

32 In order to improve the school further, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- ◆ improve the quality of provision for children in the reception year;
- ◆ plan the curriculum so that it provides a balanced timetable for all pupils and makes efficient use of the available time for each subject in the school, including the areas of learning for reception children;
- ◆ raise teachers' expectations of what older, higher attaining infant pupils can achieve.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	20
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	2	6	7	3		
Percentage	10	10	30	35	15		

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 five percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR - Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	70
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR - Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	9

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.2
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

NB The tables indicating attainment at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 have not been included as the year groups were less than 10

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	70
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR - Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.9
Average class size	20.3

Education support staff: YR - Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	15

Financial information

Financial year	2001
	£
Total income	183688
Total expenditure	191166
Expenditure per pupil	2656
Balance brought forward from previous year	17950
Balance carried forward to next year	10472

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.4
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	70
Number of questionnaires returned	59

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	40	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	45	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	60	38	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	50	3	0	7
The teaching is good.	68	32	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	44	2	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	88	12	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	38	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	69	29	2	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	74	26	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	72	28	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	47	47	3	2	2

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

The parents' questionnaire, returned by the majority of parents, was overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school. The inspection team agrees with their views and the confidence they have in their school.

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

- 33 Standards are broadly average on entry to the school. Children achieve well in formal aspects of their learning – that is, in communication, language and literacy and in mathematics. They do not achieve as well as they should in all other areas of their learning because of the unsatisfactory provision made for their needs. The resources for learning are uninviting and children do not have a special area of their own within the classroom. The children benefit from very good support and good teaching of basic skills from the nursery nurse. Much of their learning, however, is fragmented because they spend too much time moving from the classroom, to the hall, to the sand and water area and taking out resources only to tidy them away again shortly afterwards. This means that children have little independence, little free choice of activities and restricted opportunities to learn through play. The quality of teaching and of children's learning is unsatisfactory overall largely because of this. The provision is unsatisfactory because it is peripheral to that for pupils in Years 1 and 2, who are in the same class, and is not planned in sufficient detail to take account of the children's age and requirements.

Personal, social and emotional development

- 34 Children come eagerly to school. They join the older pupils in the class for registration and for the initial part of literacy and numeracy lessons. They are attentive but very eager to move to the hall after 20 minutes to join the nursery nurse for their own special activities. They have quite mature skills in personal and social development when they enter school and quickly learn to play together in a group. They are confident and organise games together. For example, two boys enjoyed making their papier-mâché fish jump into the make-believe river exclaiming, "I'm a shark jumping fish". The nursery nurse is skilled at gauging when pupils lose concentration and readily agrees when children ask, "Now can we have a little play?"
- 35 Children have too few occasions to select activities for themselves and to complete tasks, which they have devised, for any length of time on their own. The space in the sand and water area is very restricted and activities do not vary very much. Children are very keen to share what they have learnt when they rejoin the older pupils though this is not specifically planned for. No area in the classroom is specially designated for reception children and the display space for their work is restricted to two small areas in the hall and a windowsill in the classroom. The result of this unsatisfactory provision is to limit children's emotional and personal development as their achievements appear to be undervalued. The class teacher has just started to set aside time for the children to talk with her about what they have done and to turn milk-time into a more social occasion. This is working well.

Communication, language and literacy

- 36 Children achieve well in this area of learning because the work is well planned by the class teacher and very well carried out by the nursery nurse. Children quickly begin to recognise letters and delight in acting out the appropriate sounds such as beating a drum for 'd'. Higher attaining children can work out how to write simple words like 'mat' and 'hat' and two-thirds of children succeed in writing 'hen'. The quality of questioning is good and challenges children of all levels of attainment. All children are very enthusiastic and keen to succeed. However, these activities take place in the hall on a carpeted area

and the children lie down to write on their wipe-clean boards. Although they do this quite happily, it does not help their skills in writing to develop as well as they should.

- 37 The children communicate well and enjoy constructing a house for greedy baby bear, leaving a very small opening for him to squeeze through. They re-enact the story well with the nursery nurse's guidance. Because they are in the hall for such a short time, though, the house has to be quickly dismantled and so the children have no chance to play act on their own later. Within the classroom a small table is set-aside as a writing area. The range of paper and writing implements are not as exciting or as enticing as they could be and although a bag is hung on the nearby door as a post-bag there is no attempt to transform this area into a post-office, for example, where children might learn through different types of play, returning to it out of free choice.

Mathematical development

- 38 Children's achievement is good overall as early numerical skills are well taught by the nursery nurse in accordance with the teacher's careful planning. Children learn to count and to recognise numbers up to six and simple shapes. They sing number rhymes and songs and express preferences. Within the limited provision in the sand and water area, children paint numbers from memory and group similar shapes together. They comment on each other's success: 'You're very quick' said one to another and immediately tried to do the same with his puzzle. Higher attaining children set their own challenges, completing a simple number puzzle involving numbers from nought to ten in descending rather than ascending order, saying each number out loud. This illustrates that children would achieve even more if they had access to a wider range of resources designed to both challenge and interest them. Because of the lack of space, everything has to be tidied away after a very short time and there is no table, for example, within the classroom where mathematical activities are left out so that children can learn independently at other times. The teaching does not usually provide a time when children can show the rest of the class what they have learnt or talk to their teacher about what they have done. Overall, therefore, this provision is unsatisfactory.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 39 Again a similar pattern of teaching and learning takes place. Children learn well from observing older pupils and from discussing or carrying out activities with the nursery nurse. For example, they learn that some materials are hard and others soft. This particular activity was imaginatively conceived as children stuffed either hard or soft objects into paper pillow slips bearing the outline of a bear's face. One child explained that he had put in 'hard bricks' and so that was why he had drawn a sad face on his bear. The children enjoyed making porridge with the nursery nurse and were very conscious of safety features such as the fire blanket. The teacher set aside some time to talk to the group about what they had learnt and was good at reinforcing children's understanding and use of language as they set off with great eagerness to bring back hard and soft items from different parts of the classroom. Much of the children's knowledge and understanding develops incidentally rather than through planned activities or through activities which they themselves choose to do. This limits their potential and means that they rarely have times when they can learn through finding out for themselves.

Physical development

- 40 Children have no opportunities to develop their skills apart from in formal lessons, shared by older pupils. There is no play area especially for them and so they miss out

on opportunities to ride large wheeled toys or to collaborate in outside play. They do, however, benefit equally with other pupils, at playtimes, from the well thought out adventure playground and they enjoy physical education lessons in the hall. Much of pupils' learning in this area is fragmented by the way the use of rooms is organised. Often, when pupils go into the hall for their special activity, they want to charge around at speed, enjoying the space and freedom. Their activities frequently involve them physically, as when standing on specified mathematical shapes spread throughout the hall. They enjoy playing with large equipment and two children worked together well, for instance, to make a lawn mower using wheels and different joints to achieve a good symmetrical construction. However, this had to be dismantled shortly after it was made and the learning was not celebrated or shared so as to develop all children's skills.

Creative development

- 41 Opportunities for children to learn through creative play of their own initiating are rare. The role-play area is uninspiring and children greeted the house for the three bears made in the hall out of physical education apparatus as a great novelty. They have access to paints but not to a wide variety of materials from which they can choose to make something of their own. They work very well with other children and enjoy collaborative tasks. They make as good models out of papier-mâché as do older pupils but these are not displayed and celebrated. Children have satisfactory opportunities to sing songs and rhymes but these are not as fully planned as they should be and often fill in a gap at the end of lessons. This means that children do not achieve as well as they could.

ENGLISH

- 42 Standards are above average in speaking and listening, reading and writing by the age of eleven. This is the result of the specialist support given to lower attaining pupils to improve their individual performance and the successful use of learning targets to encourage pupils to improve their individual performance. Standards are below average for the current group of Year 2 pupils. Standards for this age group are higher in writing than they are in reading. Boys in this year group do not read as well as girls. Standards in speaking and listening for seven-year-olds are broadly average. These judgements are consistent with the results in the most recent national tests for seven and eleven-year-olds. Overall standards are an improvement on those reported in the last inspection.
- 43 The quality of teaching and of pupils' learning in the infant and junior classes is distinctly different and reflects, in part, the standards pupils achieve. The quality of teaching in the infant class is unsatisfactory overall. Strengths lie in the teachers' lively and sensitive reading and ability to bring words alive. There are, however, considerable weaknesses, particularly in teachers' expectations of higher attaining and older pupils, the planning and structuring of activities and repeating material for pupils in Year 2. The teaching of pupils in Year 1 is better than of those in Year 2 and is often good. The quality of teaching and learning in the junior classes is good overall and although there are some weaker elements in a small amount of teaching, much of the teaching is very good and as a result pupils achieve high standards. In all three classes, the national strategy for literacy is not used as well as it could be. This adversely affects pupils' reading in the infant class. The curriculum is not planned in sufficient detail to ensure that pupils cover a wide range of reading material each year without, for example, studying the same literacy text twice.

- 44 By the age of seven, standards in speaking and listening are broadly average. Pupils listen well and answer questions. They enjoy contributing their ideas commenting that the greedy bear in the story “won’t be able to fit through the door”. Opportunities are missed to develop pupils’ skills by including them fully in the closing sessions of lessons to explain what they have learnt or to read out their own work to the rest of the class. Questions are not sufficiently challenging for the higher attaining or older pupils and generally the teacher talks far more than the pupils. This leads to restlessness and inattention. By the age of eleven, standards in speaking and listening are above average. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to discuss in groups and to learn through talking to each other. Older pupils become adept at speaking to an audience through giving formal talks on a topic that interests them. As a result, pupils learn to listen attentively and to ask pertinent questions. They enjoy sharing ideas and learn to be sensitive to each other. Teachers are good at letting pupils manage discussions and this helps to develop pupils’ confidence as well as providing a real opportunity for pupils to speak in an interesting and informative way.
- 45 In reading, standards are below average by the age of seven. While higher attaining girls happily discuss the books they are reading, and gigglingly admit they are “little read it worms”, average and lower attaining boys and girls read reluctantly and prefer to comment on the picture rather than read the words. The teaching of reading does not utilise to the full the range of strategies offered in the national strategy for literacy. For example, sometimes pupils share reading the text with their teacher. When this happens pupils are very pleased to take part in telling the story and do so well, varying their voices for the different characters. They have few opportunities, however, to read texts in this way which they have not read before and so they miss out on learning strategies for reading unfamiliar words through reading out loud together. Currently an extra twenty minutes at the end of the literacy lesson is used as a time when pupils can look at books, drink milk, or listen to a story read by an adult. Often songs and rhymes are sung at this time. Whilst this is suitable for younger pupils, there is no structured planning to develop pupils reading skills at this time. Opportunities for pupils of a similar level of attainment to share books in a group are infrequent and so pupils miss out on developing their reading skills in this way too.
- 46 Standards in reading are above average by the age of eleven. Pupils read a wide range of books on their own. Higher attaining pupils read fluently and expressively and lower attaining pupils read with a sharp sense of characterisation and enjoyment of words. Pupils in Year 6 very happily talk about books and several pupils enjoy reading books in a series such as the Narnia Books or Horribly History, geography or science books. At the back of their individual Reading Record Books, pupils write about aspects that they have liked and disliked about each book they have read. The teaching encourages this individual response and lessons where groups of pupils of similar attainment share books are used well to guide their reading and response. Teachers could provide a wider variety of texts for pupils to study together. This term, for example, much of the work in Years 5 and 6 is based on *The Secret Garden*. While this is valuable it does limit the range of genres studied by older pupils.
- 47 Standards in writing are below average for seven-year-olds. Much of the teaching concentrates on getting pupils to write simple sentences accurately. This successfully enables most pupils to reach the standard expected of their age but does not challenge higher attaining pupils to write more extensively. Within literacy lessons, pupils are unused to working on their own for 20 minutes while the teacher concentrates attention on a specific group of pupils. Sometimes the tasks are too easy and so do not take very long to complete. The planning is not sufficiently detailed and the work does not always match pupils’ skills and needs. The standard of pupils’ spelling is below average and

although teaching encourages pupils to read and check their own work many lack the skills to do so effectively. The marking of pupils' work is conscientious and pupils are given much praise but opportunities are missed for pupils to share their work with others. Comments such as 'Well done', while the teacher looks at their books in front of the rest of the class do not help them to learn. In response to poetry and the teachers careful consideration of language, pupils write some effective poems with lines such as "I can make rainbows with the sun" to describe 'what the rain said'. Much of the writing, however, is very similar and pupils write within a restricted range of vocabulary and sentence construction. Very little work is dated and set out with a title.

- 48 Standards in writing are above average for eleven-year-olds and reflect the lively and often very good teaching pupils receive. The teaching in the Year 3/4 class expects high standards. Lessons move at a fast pace. Pupils study a wide range of texts and so their written vocabulary increases dramatically. The very good practice of planning and redrafting work results in very effective and accurate writing as in these vivid openings to pirate stories by higher attaining pupils: 'One hot steamy summer's day in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, on board a battered galleon..' or 'One dark stormy night when the waves are against a big black ship'. For two lessons each week, lower attaining pupils in Year 5 and 6 are taught in a special literacy group. They receive very good teaching and this enables them to achieve very well. The teaching of the average and higher attaining pupils at this time however, has some weaknesses. These lessons lack pace because pupils tend to speak their thoughts and ask questions in a rather immature way regardless of the context. The teaching does not have strategies to cope with this adequately. Lessons lack a clear sense of structure to help all pupils to learn. In some respects, expectations of pupils' learning are too high: pupils are expected to develop ideas without receiving sufficient guidance to help them to do so. As a result, lower attaining pupils on this occasion produced more evocative, original writing as in 'the surprise of the garden bursting from the ground' compared with higher attaining pupils' 'the wind howling round the moors'.
- 49 The school has only recently adopted the national strategy for literacy and there are inconsistencies in the way it is applied. Not all the time devoted to teaching English is used productively. Lessons lack the pace, direction and challenge that are provided by the national strategy for literacy. This is why pupils' achievements vary so widely through the school. Opportunities are missed to teach the skills of literacy in other subjects.

MATHEMATICS

- 50 Standards in the present Year 6 are above those expected for their age at this point in the year. Pupils' work shows that all aspects of the curriculum are well represented and they achieve well during their time in school. Standards are broadly average by the age of seven. The attainment of the small number of pupils in the present Year 2 is in line with the required level for their age.
- 51 The successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has done much to improve the subject provision since the last inspection. The curriculum is full and varied and pupils gain from a variety of activities, including practical tasks. Planning is well constructed to make sure all pupils' needs are met in mixed-age teaching groups. Assessment of pupils' attainment is thorough so teachers know exactly what stage each pupil has reached in their learning. Test results are carefully analysed to identify weaker areas of learning so that the teachers can alter their planning accordingly. This means that most pupils are working at the right level of attainment. Teachers have received training in teaching the national numeracy strategy which has led to good quality

teaching. Additional 'booster' lessons are provided for pupils to improve their skills in preparation for the National Curriculum assessment tests. All these factors have had a positive impact on learning. Compared with their previous attainment, pupils now achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2; they achieve well in Years 3 to 6.

- 52 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory for five to seven-year-olds; teaching in Years 1 and 2 does not always challenge more able pupils at a high enough level. By the age of seven, most pupils recognise two digit numbers, and add in tens up to a hundred. They enjoy their teacher's good-humoured approach in initial mental mathematics sessions and delight in correcting the mistakes that 'Silly Snake' the puppet makes. The teaching, however, misses opportunities to extend the learning of higher attaining pupils by asking them more difficult questions and instead concentrates on practising through repetition and singing songs such as 'We've all got calculators in our heads'. Much of this work is based on very small numbers and while this successfully reinforces the methods of calculation it does take away some of the excitement of large numbers for more able pupils. By the age of seven, most pupils recognise and name common two-dimensional shapes, such as square, circle, triangle, and some three-dimensional shapes, such as sphere and cuboid. Most pupils tell the time and solve simple money problems. Higher attaining pupils work with numbers to 30 to solve problems involving the written language of addition. They find this interesting and absorbing and very quickly move on to working out their own problems, which indicates that they could work at a higher level. Other pupils do not do as well in tasks that involve reading and writing.
- 53 The quality of teaching and learning is good for seven to eleven-year-olds. By the age of eleven most pupils deal with numbers up to five digits, rounding to the nearest ten, or nearest hundred. They know the times tables up to ten times and confidently multiply and divide large numbers. Pupils get to grips with fractions and decimals as well as expressing proportions in percentages. Higher attaining pupils work confidently with fractions and multiply and divide decimals to two places. Lessons move at a good pace and pupils find the initial mental mathematics sessions challenging and fun. In a very good lesson, the teaching asked questions of varying difficulty for pupils of different ages and abilities. Teachers are very good at creating a reassuring climate for learning and urge pupils to 'be honest, if you don't understand, say no.' This helps to develop pupils' confidence as well as improving their attainment and knowledge of their own learning. Pupils are kept interested by skilled teaching and challenging activities. As a result, most pupils, for example, measure accurately, draw complex diagrams and understand how to measure areas and perimeters. The higher attaining pupils draw and measure angles accurately. Pupils solve mathematical problems but test results show they need more practice in this. Teachers make clear to pupils what they are learning, provide interesting and varied activities for pupils of different ages and abilities, and make good use of the concluding part of the lesson to reinforce the learning. This enables pupils to work with a degree of independence and is effective in promoting good progress. However, teachers do not always use this part of the lesson to encourage pupils to evaluate what they have learned.
- 54 Throughout the school, teachers are knowledgeable and competent in the subject. Teachers plan lessons well to meet the needs of all pupils in mixed-age teaching groups, including those with special educational needs. They work closely with support assistants to make sure that pupils' special needs are catered for and that they make good progress. Most teachers are skilled in managing pupils' behaviour so that they work hard and concentrate on their lessons. Teachers make good use of questioning to make lessons lively and challenging but many lessons are too long to make the best use of the time – pupils' attention begins to wander and their progress slows. Teachers do

not make enough use of information and communication technology to reinforce or extend learning in mathematics.

- 55 A strength of the provision is that lessons are based on lively discussion and interesting practical activities that engender an enthusiasm for the subject. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support to help them to learn as well as others. Lessons are timetabled to run at the same time in each class so that younger gifted and talented pupils can follow the curriculum suited to their ability. These pupils do well. Older gifted and talented pupils do more specialised work, which is suited to their needs.

SCIENCE

- 56 Standards are above average by the age of eleven. Teacher assessment for seven-year-olds shows pupils gain the expected level for their age, but few gain a higher level. Inspection evidence shows pupils' attainment is in line with that expected for their age.
- 57 The school has improved the provision since the last inspection by adopting the nationally recommended scheme of work and adapting it to meet the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes. The school was successful in attracting a grant to develop an environmental area that greatly enriched opportunities for pupils to learn about living things. At the present time, this facility is not in use because of foot and mouth disease. The quality of teaching and learning for seven to eleven-year-olds is good. No lessons were seen in the five to seven age ranges. The strengths in teaching are apparent when teachers have good subject knowledge and provide interesting activities that help the pupils understand the lesson. Pupils respond well, showing interest and involvement so that, by the age of eleven, they have a good understanding of the importance of fair testing and the effects of variables on an investigation.
- 58 Pupils' achievement, compared to their prior attainment, is good throughout. They build on their knowledge of living things and their understanding of life processes within plants and animals. Their understanding of materials and their ability to observe changes develops and they are able to use a broader range of vocabulary. Pupils' understanding of the world develops as they build on their knowledge of physical processes such as heat and sound. Pupils make good progress in developing the skills of scientific investigation and drawing conclusions based on scientific knowledge and their experience of the world.
- 59 Pupils in Years 5 and 6 thoroughly enjoyed planning and carrying out successfully an investigation into reflecting light, recording their findings and trying to make sense of them. They worked well together in small groups, conducting lively if somewhat argumentative discussions that clearly promoted their learning. Pupils are not always as well mannered as they should be in these lessons and have a tendency to talk over others. Teachers plan work to build on pupils' existing knowledge and understanding so they make sensible predictions about the outcomes of their investigations, and make sense of their findings by relating them to their existing scientific knowledge. For example, pupils in the Year 3/4 class know that light travels in straight lines and, in the course of their lesson, some pupils worked out that shadows are caused when the light is interrupted by an opaque object. Similarly, pupils in Years 5 and 6 use their knowledge of reflection to make optical instruments such as periscopes and kaleidoscopes. Teachers' probing questions make pupils think and help them make good progress in understanding, developing pupils' responses well to help everyone to learn. This enabled pupils in Years 3 and 4, for example, to make sensible and thoughtful contributions when investigating a range of sources of light. Such active

learning through investigation and discussion helps pupils to remember what they have been taught.

- 60 The relationship between teachers and pupils is good, encouraging pupils to work hard. When lessons are well managed and have a brisk pace pupils remain interested and involved. For example, in Year 3 and 4, pupils carry out investigations within a structure given by the teacher. They make their own decisions, make observations then record and discuss their findings. This contributes well to their attainment in scientific thinking. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 become adept in carrying out investigations but need more practice in recording their findings on tables and charts and in interpreting these to draw valid conclusions. Less satisfactory elements of teaching are seen when lessons are not well managed. Calling out and chattering interrupts the lesson, slowing the pace of learning. Teachers support pupils with special educational needs well. They have a close knowledge of individual pupil's learning. Support assistants provide valuable help and encouragement, particularly in practical lessons, simplifying difficult concepts by explaining, for example, that 'shadows are only where the light's been blocked away'.

OTHER SUBJECTS

Introduction

- 61 At the time of the inspection it was possible to see only one lesson in each of art and design, design and technology, and physical education. No lessons were seen in geography, history or ICT. Nevertheless, evidence of pupils' work, photographs and conversations with pupils indicate they make good progress during their time in school and achieve well. Pupils have good attitudes towards their work and are usually keen to talk about their ideas. Pupils with special educational needs receive good quality support and also make good progress.
- 62 Since the last inspection, a good level of improvement has been made in the provision for these subjects. The school has put in place a nationally recommended scheme of work for each subject, organised so that pupils cover all the required work appropriate for their age in mixed-age classes. This allows for pupils to build up knowledge and skills in a systematic way, forming a secure foundation for future learning. Teachers' planning shows the schemes of work are implemented in each class.

ART AND DESIGN

- 63 Some of the art displayed throughout the school is very effective and indicated there is some good imaginative teaching and that pupils explore and use a range of media with confidence. Several pieces are group projects, sometimes combining individual pieces as in a composite panel painted or printed to show meadow flowers in the school field. The quality of observational painting here is above average. One collaborative piece uses a number of different ICT techniques including photocopying, digital photographs and pictures downloaded from the Internet to produce an effective collage. Through art, pupils clearly learn something of other cultures as their very effective representation of their own area in aboriginal style – 'Bush Potato Dreaming' - shows.
- 64 The range of art is good and some of the collaborative work is above average. The teaching clearly helps pupils of all ages to appreciate texture, line and tone as well as colour. Pupils throughout the school benefit from specialist teaching. An area for improvement is to give pupils more independence to choose their own materials.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 65 Pupils in Years 5 and 6 work to a good standard. They work with a good range of materials, including card, plastic, fabric, food and wood. Pupils' musical instruments are carefully designed, showing a good level of understanding of materials and structures. Pupils successfully apply their knowledge of sound to their designs so that they can be successful. They work with a good level of skill; thoughtfully solving problems, such as finding a way to strengthen the casing for a drum, and finish their work nicely with a variety of attractive finishes. Photographic evidence shows pupils working on a range of tasks, such as making 'red nose' biscuits. The recipes include interesting variations in the ingredients and the results look very attractive.
- 66 In the one lesson seen, teaching was good, with a high level of expectation and challenge, and an appropriate emphasis on working safely. Pupils worked busily and co-operatively, developing their ideas as they went along. They were very interested and happy to talk about their work.

GEOGRAPHY

- 67 This subject had been compromised by the outbreak of foot and mouth disease in the area. A strength of the provision is that pupils spend time outdoors and develop a good level of awareness of the geographical features of their own locality. However, this has not been possible for a significant period of time. As other schools sometimes study Askrigg as a contrasting location to their own, pupils are called upon to use their knowledge of the area to answer questionnaires sent by pupils from other parts of the country, and as a result consider the geography of their own area in some depth.
- 68 As no geography lessons were seen, it is not possible to make a judgement about teaching and learning. The evidence available indicates that, by the time they leave the school, pupils have an appropriate understanding of maps and plans and the use of keys. Pupils aged five to seven follow the progress of Barnaby Bear who accompanies pupils on their visits to other locations, such as Devon. Through resources such as photographs and videos they learn about contrasting locations, such as the seashore. Through their study of India, older pupils understand the climatic differences between countries in different parts of the world and how this affects peoples' lives.
- 69 Pupils develop a sense of responsibility for the environment, reinforced by their experience of the measures taken to halt the spread of Foot and Mouth Disease. When possible, pupils' learning is enhanced by field studies, doing a river study, for example.

HISTORY

- 70 As no history lessons were seen, it is not possible to make a judgement about teaching and learning. The available evidence indicates that by the time they leave the school, pupils know about the lives of famous people in the past, such as Henry VIII, sequencing the main events in their lives. They know that historical information can be found from a variety of sources, such as books, CDROM and things that people left behind. Pupils carry out local history studies and have a well-developed sense of their personal history in the local community. They know from their study of the ancient Egyptians and the Romans that people and places change over time. Pupils have a well-established understanding of chronology and learn to sequence events in the past, such as changes that took place in society since the Second World War. A strength of the provision is

that pupils are encouraged and enabled to carry out their own research from a variety of sources.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 71 Pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy working in the recently established ICT suite. The teaching encourages pupils to work independently and to save their work using their 'user name'. Each class has its own e-mail address and pupils correspond with each other and with their teachers in this way. Junior pupils are adept at accessing information from the Internet and enjoyed, for example, devising a quiz to test other pupils' knowledge of capital cities throughout the world. Pupils are encouraged to work in the ICT suite in their own time and to display on the nearby notice board internet sites they recommend, giving reasons such as "it's got great games and good education (but don't be put off by that!)" Pupils contribute to the school's website and some of their accounts about how the outbreak of foot and mouth affected their families and friends are very moving. Pupils are proud of their contributions and talk eagerly about interviewing the staff at school; they print off information with great ease, understanding the vagaries of the system.
- 72 Infant and junior classes receive specialist teaching each week. Not enough was seen, however, to be able to judge standards in all aspects of ICT. Clearly, though, pupils' competence is above average by the age of eleven. Although pupils do word process writing, there was little evidence of computers being used in classrooms to help them to learn in other subjects. Pupils who do not go swimming have more opportunities than others to use the computer suite. They do not, however, follow individually planned programmes of work and so there is no way of measuring what they have learnt and to ensure that everyone receives an equal amount of time.

MUSIC

- 73 Standards are well above average overall. In singing, playing, listening to and appraising music they are well above average as a result of the excellent teaching pupils receive. Standards in composing and using conventional notation are broadly average at the age of eleven; they are above average in the current Year 3/4 class. This is because pupils have only recently begun to record their work systematically so they build on what they know and understand. A specialist teacher teaches pupils throughout the school. In addition, well attended lunchtime clubs for choirs and orchestra for pupils of any age and ability, supplemented by opportunities for music making and music appreciation in assemblies give pupils daily practice to develop their skills.
- 74 The quality of teaching and of pupils' learning is excellent and many pupils say it is their favourite subject. Boys as well as girls are equally enthusiastic and this is because the teacher recognises that pupils like to respond physically to music. At the end of an assembly, older boys and girls danced 'the monkey dance' quite unselfconsciously as a spontaneous response to music, delighting the younger pupils. Lessons are extremely well planned, including exercises to warm up the facial, shoulder and vocal muscles and games to sharpen the pupils' skills in listening. The teaching varies the difficulty of these to suit the different abilities within the class. The pace is snappy. As well as clapping different rhythmic patterns, small groups of pupils walk, run and skip to a pulse, accurately. This greatly benefits pupils with special education needs and younger pupils who find sitting still for a long time difficult, as well as giving the teacher a very clear idea as to pupils rhythmic ability. Perhaps the chief quality which raises this teaching out of the ordinary is the high degree of fun generated by the quick responses and rapid progress in learning. Thus three groups of pupils sing and maintain three different

rhythms very well involving different pitch as they move up and down the melodic scale. Pupils are able to recognise a piece of music from just a few introductory notes. Gifted and talented pupils are given opportunities to perform on their own all within a varied pattern of formal teaching and group response. This develops pupils' confidence and expertise. Within a 45 minute lesson pupils cover all aspects of music, including formal notation for a composition to be written later, ending with listening to and appraising a piece of music. Pupils are given just enough information to direct their listening without pre-empting their response. As a result, higher attaining pupils immediately pick out the cock crowing in Saint-Saens' Danse Macabre. Such first class direction elicits the highest standards of listening, response and participation.

- 75 There is a good range of opportunities offered to pupils to develop their skills in music, which pupils clearly appreciate. Most pupils learn to play an instrument and a large number sing in the choir. They comment "It's kind of the teacher to give up her lunch hours to play music with them". The school contributes to local music festivals, which further raises the profile of music both within the school and the local community.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 76 Pupils have swimming lessons for ten weeks a year from the age of seven. Whilst standards in swimming benefit, for example, every pupil who goes learns to swim at least 25 metres, the time spent on this is a significant proportion of the available teaching time. During this time, no other physical education takes place, so pupils who, for various reasons, do not go swimming miss a significant amount of physical education. As only one lesson was seen it is not possible to make a judgement about pupils' overall attainment in all aspects of physical education. Nevertheless, pupils in Year 1 demonstrate a good level of skill in movement. Most have a good level of body awareness and work creatively. They co-operate with partners well, evaluate their own work and are beginning to evaluate that of others. Teaching and learning in the lesson were good, with a good balance of instruction and activity leading to a busy and enjoyable lesson. Pupils benefit from a programme of professional football coaching each year. Teachers and parents offer extra-curricular sessions in games, such as netball. Pupils benefit from visits to outdoor pursuit centres where they experience activities such as abseiling and canoeing. This makes a good contribution to their personal development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 77 Not enough teaching was seen to make a judgement on its quality. However, it is clear that pupils learn and achieve better standards in the junior classes where teachers' planning is more precise and the activities well suited to pupils' ages and levels of attainment. Too long a time is allowed in the infant class for a lesson in religious education. The time is not planned well enough or used constructively to develop the understanding of higher attaining and Year 2 pupils. By contrast, the work undertaken by junior pupils is very challenging and covers many aspects of different religions as well. In all three classes much discussion takes place. Artefacts are used well in junior classes to help pupils to understand different faiths. There is some disparity, however, in the amount of work produced by different pupils and in teachers' expectations of what they should achieve. Junior pupils cover a very wide range of work in some considerable detail. Some of their responses are thoughtful as in their retelling of the parable of the sower and some of their illustrations to show the journey of life are very good indeed. Little work is recorded in the infant class and in an unsatisfactory lesson pupils had few ideas of what to write to show 'how people help us' and their drawings were completed too hastily. There is some inconsistency in the demands made of

different groups of pupils and a tendency to overuse photocopied material. In all three classes, pupils' skills in literacy are not used as fully as they might be.