INSPECTION REPORT

ASH GROVE JUNIOR AND INFANT SCHOOL

South Elmsall

LEA area: Wakefield

Unique reference number: 130858

Headteacher: Mrs Julie Davis

Reporting inspector: Mr A J Dobell
10373

Dates of inspection: 2nd - 5th July 2001

Inspection number: 197527

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Karen Kitney
Date of previous inspection:	September 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
10373	Mr A J Dobell	Registered inspector	Music Physical education	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9511	Mrs E A Longfield	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23319	Mr V J Leary	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Geography History	
7958	Mrs G Lewis	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language English Religious education	How well does the school care for its pupils?
20086	Mr D Speakman	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Mathematics Science	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in South Elmsall, about ten miles south east of Wakefield. It serves an area of mostly council housing with some privately owned houses. Virtually all pupils come from the immediate locality. Since the closure of the mining industry, the area has experienced considerable socio-economic disadvantage with above average levels of unemployment. Children's attainment when they enter the Nursery is well below that normally found and lower than that found when the school was last inspected.

There are 319 pupils on roll, including a full-time equivalent of 26 children in the Nursery, all of whom attend part-time. This means that the school is bigger than most primary schools. The numbers of boys and girls on roll are very similar. All pupils come from white Western European cultural backgrounds and none speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (21.2 per cent) is about average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (26.3 per cent) is above average, but the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs (1.7 per cent) is broadly in line with the national average. Pupils on the register of special educational needs have a range of learning difficulties including dyslexia, moderate learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties, speech and communication difficulties and physical difficulties. About five per cent of pupils join or leave the school part way through the school year and this can have a significant effect on particular year groups, for example, the current Year 6.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school in the context in which it is working. It has significant strengths and is improving well. At Key Stage 1, attainment is higher than was the case when the school was first inspected. At Key Stage 2, attainment has improved since 1999, but after a marked decline from 1997 to 1999. Attainment in science is broadly at the level being achieved at the last inspection, but attainment in English and mathematics is below the level being achieved then.

The strengths found in the report of the previous inspection have been maintained. The quality of teaching is good, overall, and most pupils work hard and are keen to do their best. Most pupils make good progress in their learning and develop well as individuals. The leadership of the headteacher is a major strength of the school and, as a result, the school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is good throughout the school, so that pupils achieve well for their capabilities.
- Most pupils have positive attitudes to school, helping them to learn effectively.
- Relationships are good and have a positive effect on pupils' personal development.
- The quality and range of learning opportunities is good, so that pupils find lessons interesting.
- The school provides well for pupils' moral, social and cultural development.
- There is good provision for children in the Foundation Stage and they make good progress, overall.
- The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs; as a result, they make very good progress, overall, in relation to their capabilities.
- Parents have positive views of the school and appreciate the high standards of care that it provides for their children.
- The headteacher provides very effective leadership, so that there is a very clear sense of unity and purpose in the school.

What could be improved

- Pupils' skills in presenting their work and in managing their own learning.
- Consistency in the level of challenge for higher attaining pupils.
- The consistency of marking across the key stages which does not always conform to the school's marking policy.
- The level of attendance.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has improved well since its first inspection. It has created a very impressive ethos which seeks to enable pupils to attain their potential both academically and personally within a secure and stimulating learning environment. To this end, an impressive unity of purpose has been developed among all adults in the school and there is a very strong commitment to continuing improvement.

The school reacted positively to the report from its first inspection. Good progress has been made in addressing the key issues from that inspection. For example, one key issue was to improve investigative work in science and this is now a strength of the subject. Less progress has been made in improving teachers' knowledge and understanding in religious education, but this is identified as a priority in the school development plan for next year. Higher attaining pupils have a greater degree of challenge overall, but this is not yet consistent.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	D	E	E	E
Mathematics	C	E	E	D
Science	C	E	C	B

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

After the school's first inspection in 1997, attainment declined to a low point in 1999. It then improved in all subjects in 2000 and markedly so in science. In 2001, attainment improved well in English, but has remained similar to 2000 in mathematics and worsened slightly in science. National comparisons are not yet available. At Key Stage 1, attainment in the National Curriculum tests has improved steadily since the school was first inspected and now matches the average attained in similar schools in reading, writing and mathematics.

Evidence from this inspection is that, by the age of seven, pupils' attainment is above average in reading and mathematics and at the expected level in speaking and listening, writing and science. In information and communication technology, attainment is at the level expected nationally and, in religious education, at the level expected for pupils following the locally agreed syllabus. At the age of 11, pupils' attainment is in line with expectations in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. In religious education, it matches the standards expected for pupils following the locally agreed syllabus.

By the end of their Reception Year, children are attaining the early learning goals, overall, and have made very good progress. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their capabilities. Overall, pupils achieve well in the school. Progress is held back, particularly at Key Stage 2, because pupils' skills as independent learners are not developed consistently across the key stages and teachers' marking does not routinely show how pupils can make further progress. The school did not attain its agreed targets for English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000 or 2001. However, pupils who spent the whole of the key stage in the school almost all achieved the level expected for them. Overall, attainment in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils have good attitudes to school. They are enthusiastic in lessons and keen to do their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Overall, behaviour is satisfactory. Most pupils behave well in and out of class, but a minority of older pupils in Key Stage 2 do not behave well in class.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are good, overall, and most pupils develop well as individuals.
Attendance	Attendance in the last school year was well below the national average.

Most pupils have a sensible approach to work and play and are co-operative in all that they do. A small but significant minority of pupils in Years 5 and 6 behave less well and their poor concentration adversely affects the learning of others. Pupils' development is inhibited by the large number of holidays taken in term time and by their slow development as independent learners because of the large number of worksheets used in lessons. In the last full school year, there were seven temporary exclusions involving five boys.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

The quality of teaching is good, overall, and the strengths found when the school was inspected previously have been maintained. During the inspection, only two per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory; 38 per cent was satisfactory, 46 per cent good, eight per cent very good, and six per cent excellent. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good in both Key Stages 1 and 2 and the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well. The school meets the needs of most of its pupils well.

Overall, teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of the subjects they are teaching. They manage pupils well and plan thoroughly. They are supported well by classroom assistants and use homework satisfactorily to support learning. Learning is enriched by real life examples, such as recycling in science and the hatching of butterflies in the Foundation Stage. The development of pupils' skills as independent learners is hindered by an excessive use of worksheets in some classes, and by the unco-operative behaviour of a minority of pupils particularly in Years 5 and 6.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of learning opportunities are good and the curriculum meets statutory requirements. There is equality of access to the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs and they make good progress in relation to their capabilities.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	No pupils speak English as an additional language.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Procedures for promoting pupils' personal development are good. The school promotes pupils' moral, social and cultural development well. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are cared for well as individuals. All adults in the school know their pupils well and are concerned for them to develop to their

	potential. Procedures for encouraging good attendance are unsatisfactory.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and is relevant to the needs of the school's pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support. Parents appreciate the quality of the care provided by the school, and the school has good links with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher gives very good leadership and has developed a strong ethos based on high standards of behaviour and effort. She has created a unified staff team who give her good support.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its statutory duties. There are a number of new governors who are undertaking training so that they will be able to play a full role in managing the school. Overall, governors have a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has very effective procedures for evaluating its performance and for establishing new priorities for its further development.
The strategic use of resources	The school deploys its human and physical resources effectively and has good systems in place to ensure that it gets best value from its expenditure.

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and is well supported by her colleagues, enabling the school to offer a good education to its pupils. Systems are in place to raise attainment further. There is a very strong commitment to improve and the capacity to succeed. The school is well staffed to teach the National Curriculum and religious education and resources for learning are adequate, overall. However, the present accommodation is inadequate, and many classrooms are too small for the numbers and ages of the pupils using them.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
▪ Children make good progress. ▪ Behaviour is good. ▪ Teaching is good. ▪ Parents are kept well informed about progress. ▪ Parents feel comfortable when approaching the school with concerns or suggestions. ▪ Children are expected to work hard and become more mature. ▪ The school is well led and managed and works closely with parents. ▪ Children like school.	Of those who responded to the questionnaire: ▪ 19 per cent do not think that children get the right amount of homework. ▪ 29 per cent do not believe that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

The school distributed 345 questionnaires and 58 were returned (16.8 per cent). The meeting held before the inspection was attended by 14 parents. These views represent just under one fifth of all parents and carers.

Inspectors support the positive views held by parents. Overall, inspectors believe that the school makes satisfactory use of homework to support learning. The school offers a typical range of activities outside lessons, although, as is the case in most schools, these are for older pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000, in English, 55 per cent of the school's pupils attained at least the national expectation of level 4, with seven per cent attaining the higher level 5. This was well below both the national average and the average attained in schools which draw their pupils from similar backgrounds, but was an improvement on the standards attained in 1999. In the National Curriculum tests in 2001, 63 per cent of the school's pupils attained at least level 4 in English and 21 per cent attained level 5. This is a good improvement on the previous two years. National comparisons are not yet available.

2. In mathematics in the National Curriculum tests in 2000 at the end of Key Stage 2, 59 per cent of the school's pupils attained at least the national expectation of level 4 with seven per cent attaining level 5. This was well below the national average, and below the average attained by pupils in similar schools. Again, this was an improvement on 1999, but the results for 2001 have not shown further improvement. In 2001, 60 per cent of the school's pupils attained at least level 4, but only five per cent attained level 5. Again, it is not yet possible to make comparisons with the national average. In both English and mathematics, results at Key Stage 2 are worse than the results being achieved when the school was inspected previously.

3. In science in 2000 at the end of Key Stage 2, 86 per cent of the school's pupils attained level 4 at least in the National Curriculum tests and 21 per cent attained the higher level 5. These results were broadly in line with the national average and better than the average attained in similar schools. The results were a marked improvement on those attained in 1999 and are at a similar level to those being attained when the school was inspected previously. In 2001, attainment in science worsened slightly with 81 per cent of the school's pupils achieving at least level 4 and ten per cent achieving level 5.

4. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000, in reading, 88 per cent of the school's pupils attained at least the national expectation of level 2, with 19 per cent attaining the higher than expected level 3. This was below the national average, but matched the average attained by pupils in similar schools. This was an improvement on the results achieved in 1999, and on the levels being attained when the school was first inspected. Very similar results were achieved in 2001, with 83 per cent of the school's pupils attaining level 2 at least and 17 per cent attaining level 3. National figures for comparison at Key Stage 1 are not yet available.

5. In writing in 2000 in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1, 83 per cent of the school's pupils attained level 2 at least with five per cent attaining level 3. This was below the national average, but broadly matched the average attained in similar schools. It was marginally worse than in 1999, but better than the results being achieved when the school was first inspected. In 2001, 77 per cent of the school's pupils attained at least level 2, with ten per cent attaining level 3.

6. In mathematics in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000, 90 per cent of the school's pupils attained level 2 at least, with 19 per cent attaining level 3. Although below the national average, this matched the average attained by pupils in similar schools. It was a good improvement on the results achieved in 1999 and on those that were being achieved when the school was first inspected. In 2001, 90 per cent of the school's pupils attained level 2 at least, and 31 per cent attained level 3. This was a further good improvement.

7. In science in 2000, teachers' assessments placed 90 per cent of the school's pupils at the national expectation of level 2 which matched the national average. However, only two per cent of the school's pupils were placed at level 3 which was well below the national average. In 2001, teachers' assessments placed 83 per cent of the school's pupils at level 2 at least, but again, only two per cent were assessed as attaining level 3.

8. When they enter the Nursery, children's learning skills are well below those normally found. They make very good progress in their learning in the Foundation Stage and attain the early learning goals by the age of five. Good progress is made in Key Stage 1 and sound progress in Key Stage 2. Overall, there is good added value as pupils move through the key stages and the rate at which progress is being made is improving.

9. Evidence from the inspection is that attainment in English is above national expectations at the end of Year 2 and in line with national expectations at the end of Year 6. Pupils have average skills in speaking and listening, although their tendency to use non-standard English adversely affects their progress in spelling and writing. Standards in reading are good by the age of seven and satisfactory by the age of 11. In Key Stage 2, some of the books that they read are insufficiently challenging. Writing is satisfactory at the end of Years 2 and 6. Attainment in mathematics is above average by the age of seven and average at the age of 11. In Key Stage 2, progress is hindered because pupils find it difficult to understand problems which are expressed in words, even though they know the mathematics which is needed to answer them. In science, attainment is at the level expected at the end of Years 2 and 6. In information and communication technology, pupils skills are at the level expected nationally by the end of Years 2 and 6.

10. In the other subjects of the curriculum, attainment is at the level expected in design and technology, geography, history and physical education at the end of Years 2 and 6. In art and design and music, attainment is above that normally found. In religious education, attainment is broadly at the level expected for pupils following the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Years 2 and 6. In virtually all subjects, the standards found at the last inspection have been maintained. In mathematics at the end of Year 2 and information and communication technology at the end of Year 6, standards have risen. Only in history at the age of seven have standards fallen from above average to average.

11. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in the Foundation Stage, sound progress in Key Stage 1 and very good progress in Key Stage 2. Their progress in Key Stage 2 accelerates because they are put into a separate class for English and mathematics where learning activities can be targeted carefully to their particular needs. As a result, many pupils on the register for special educational needs achieved grades above those expected for them in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in 2001. Pupils on the special educational needs register have individual education plans which are reviewed regularly and new targets are set. While these are not always sufficiently specific in defining precise learning objectives, the process has a positive effect on attainment and progress. Higher attaining pupils are being identified and their needs are being provided for with increasing success, but inconsistently, and the extent to which their needs are being met is satisfactory, overall.

12. The school has introduced the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy successfully and they are having a positive impact on attainment in English and mathematics. Pupils have good opportunities to practise writing in subjects such as geography, history and religious education and this is improving attainment. In the same way, elements of mathematics are practised in geography, science and design and technology and this, too, is improving attainment.

13. The school agreed targets for the proportion of pupils to achieve at least level 4 in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in 2001. The school was very close to achieving its targets in English and did markedly better than expected at level 5. In mathematics, the challenging target was not achieved. In science, the target was comfortably exceeded. A careful analysis of the results indicates that pupils who joined the school during Key Stage 2 and who had had a number of moves in their school careers, formed a significant proportion of those pupils who did not attain the national expectation of level 4. On the other hand, those pupils who had spent the whole of their school lives in this school largely attained at the level expected

for them and almost one quarter of them attained at a higher than expected level. This demonstrates that the school achieves good added value for pupils who proceed from the Nursery to Year 6. While there are some differences in the attainment of boys and girls, these reflect differences in groups of pupils and do not indicate a trend.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Pupils continue to have the same positive attitudes towards their school as those found in the report from the school's first inspection. Their attitudes to learning are good in all subjects. Children in the Foundation Stage, in the Nursery and Reception classes, are eager to come to school, enthusiastic about their work and listen well to their teachers' instructions. For example, the Reception children spent a fascinating afternoon comparing different 'mini beasts'. They work and play well together. The older pupils have a good attitude towards their work and to school generally. This was seen during a Year 3 science lesson when the pupils were discovering the effect of shadows changing through the apparent movement of the sun. Occasionally, older pupils' attitudes are unsatisfactory when they lose interest, become bored and distract other members of the class so that learning is adversely affected. Pupils with special educational needs have good attitudes to school, are enthusiastic about their work and keen to do their best in lessons.

15. Nearly every parent who returned a questionnaire agreed that their child likes school and inspection evidence supports this. Pupils enjoy school life and are willing to learn. They show an interest in lessons, particularly when something new is presented in an interesting way, which challenges pupils of all capabilities. Pupils try hard to please their teachers in class. They usually get on quickly with their work and concentrate well. Pupils co-operate well in group work and appreciate the work of others. This was seen, for example, in a Year 4 outdoor physical education lesson on ball games when pupils worked well in pairs and groups. Children in the Nursery develop confidence through the activities that they undertake. During the inspection week, they enjoyed discovering about ladybirds, eating 'bug' ice cream and designing their own ladybirds. They behave well and are familiar with school routines.

16. Behaviour in the school is satisfactory, overall. Pupils generally move around the school in a sensible manner. When there is an instance of unsatisfactory behaviour it is dealt with quickly by the staff. Pupils are reminded during the daily assemblies to reflect on the importance of caring and helping others and they respond well to this. Pupils look after equipment such as the computers well and there are no graffiti or litter around the site.

17. Relationships are good and are cordial and constructive throughout the school. Boys and girls get on well together and with all the school staff. They show respect for each other's feelings, beliefs and values and confidently join in discussions. They appreciate each other's good work, behaviour and attitudes both in class and at the weekly 'achievement' assembly. There have been five temporary exclusions during the current school year and five boys were excluded temporarily on seven occasions during the last full year.

18. Personal development is good. Pupils develop self-confidence and self-esteem well. Years 5 and 6 pupils take their opportunities to show initiative and take responsibility. They provide valuable assistance to the staff, are willing to accept responsibility and carry out duties in class and around the school. The younger pupils have classroom duties appropriate to their age and development.

19. Attendance is unsatisfactory. It is well below that found nationally in similar schools. The rates of authorised and unauthorised absence were above the national average during the last full school year. There has been some improvement in attendance during this school year and the rate of unauthorised absence has fallen. However, attendance remains below the national average. The number of family holidays taken in term time contributes significantly to this. Most pupils are punctual and lessons start promptly, so that little time is wasted at the start of school sessions.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Overall, the good standards of teaching reported when the school was first inspected have been maintained, although the proportion of very good and excellent teaching has declined somewhat. In this inspection, 65 lessons were observed. Of these, in only two per cent was teaching unsatisfactory: 38 per cent of teaching was satisfactory, 46 per cent was good, eight per cent was very good, and six per cent was excellent.

21. In the Foundation Stage, teachers have a good understanding of how young children learn. In the very good and excellent lessons, learning is planned thoroughly and a sequence of lessons builds up knowledge, skills and understanding systematically. Learning activities are meaningful and capture the children's imagination, resulting in high levels of concentration and effort. The management of the children seems almost effortless, because the teacher and class are all working together in their enjoyment of learning. The result is learning of a very high quality. In lessons which are satisfactory, the organisation and management of learning are less rigorous, so that knowledge and understanding are less thoroughly and systematically promoted.

22. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is good, overall. In an excellent English lesson in Key Stage 1, the learning objective was shared with the pupils so that they all knew what they were going to learn and why. Previous work was revised carefully so that pupils were in a secure position to extend their learning. Group work was carefully planned and managed so that pupils worked productively. Praise was effectively used to celebrate good work and the teacher was very effective in providing cues to enable pupils to extend their learning. Pupils with special educational needs were very effectively supported. This very thoughtfully planned lesson and the very good relationships which exist in the class, were very effective in promoting progress. In contrast, in a satisfactory mathematics lesson in Key Stage 1, pupil management was less secure so that the 'mental maths' session was noisy and the teacher's high expectations for behaviour and effort were not always achieved. The learning objective was shared with the class, but proved to be too demanding so that pupils lost concentration and motivation. This adversely affected progress in learning, although pupils were achieving at the expected level.

23. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is good, overall. In a very good English lesson in Key Stage 2, there was effective revision of previous learning which provided a good base for the lesson. Pupils entered enthusiastically into the lesson's activities and were eager to respond to questions. The lesson's brisk pace ensured that pupils worked productively and maintained their levels of interest and concentration. Computers were used very effectively to promote further learning and the plenary session was used well to check that pupils understood the new learning. In an unsatisfactory geography lesson, resources proved difficult to read so that concentration in a lively class was adversely affected. A significant minority of pupils were not effectively engaged in the lesson. They made insufficient progress and affected the progress of others. While the work achieved was at the required level, overall, the quality of learning was unsatisfactory.

24. Overall, teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they are teaching in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and a sound knowledge in Key Stage 2. The quality of teaching of English is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. In mathematics, the quality of teaching is good. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well. As a result, pupils have above average skills in these subject areas by the age of seven. For example, they have a good understanding of the basics of grammar and know what is meant by alliteration. By the end of Year 6, they have satisfactory skills, but find it difficult to use them in practical situations because they sometimes find it difficult to interpret questions. The teaching of science and of information and communication technology are satisfactory. Plans are in place for further training for teachers in information and communication technology and this will improve knowledge and confidence further. There is some insecure subject knowledge and understanding in religious education, particularly in Key Stage 2. However, the school development plan for 2001-2002 has this area as a priority.

25. Work is regularly marked and there are some very good examples of thoughtful comments to show pupils how to improve further. However, the quality of marking is inconsistent and these helpful comments do not feature routinely in marking. The school's good marking policy is not being used consistently in all classes and this is hindering progress for many pupils, because it

is not clear what they need to do to improve and targets for improvement are not set in all classes. The school makes satisfactory use of homework to support learning.

26. Learning is most successful in lessons where it is made meaningful through real life situations, for example, the topic of re-cycling in science and the hatching of butterflies in the Reception Year. However, in many lessons, teachers use pre-prepared worksheets which are often unchallenging, particularly for higher attaining pupils, as they require little quality of thought or effort of imagination. Pupils spend too much time simply completing worksheets, they get insufficient practice in organising and managing the presentation of their own work and their skills as independent learners are unsatisfactory.

27. In most lessons, pupils are managed well, relationships are good and teacher and pupils are working co-operatively in extending learning and understanding. Support staff work effectively with teachers and have an important role in ensuring that pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

28. The quality of teaching ensures that pupils learn well, overall. Teachers have high expectations in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, and satisfactory expectations in Key stage 2. For example, careful questioning in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 helps to ensure that pupils have a good level of understanding of their work. The school has effective systems for evaluating and analysing its work and it is in a good position to improve the quality of learning further.

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

29. The curriculum has good breadth and balance, both in the Foundation Stage and between the subjects of the National Curriculum for pupils at both Key Stages 1 and 2. Suitable schemes of work, based on nationally published guidelines, are in place in all subjects and learning activities are carefully planned to ensure that all pupils, including those in mixed-age classes and those with special educational needs receive suitable work. The National Literacy Strategy is used consistently and well. The National Numeracy Strategy is having a sound impact on learning. Both strategies are implemented in line with recommendations and teachers' planning shows good knowledge of both. The school makes satisfactory provision for health education, including sex education and guidance on harmful substances at an appropriate level and for personal and social education. However, provision for this aspect of the curriculum is not consistent across the school and varies from class to class and from teacher to teacher. The school is aware of this weakness and plans to develop this area further as a matter of some priority in the next school year.

30. At the time of the last inspection, although the curriculum was satisfactory, there were weaknesses in the level of challenge for higher attaining pupils and there were not enough opportunities to develop pupils' thinking and investigative skills effectively. These were key issues. Steps have been taken to remedy these and have been partially successful. Investigative work is now a strength in teaching and learning in science. Curricular planning provides well for higher attaining pupils in some lessons, although this is not consistent across all classes and subjects. Too much time is spent completing worksheets, which tend to be undemanding in terms of the effort and quality of thinking required. This prevents pupils from gaining experience in planning the presentation of their own work and inhibits their development as independent learners. Where different worksheets are not provided for different ability groups, progress is inhibited particularly for higher attaining pupils. There is now good provision for experimental and investigative work, particularly in science. The school has a thorough policy to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the learning opportunities offered and effectively implements this in practice.

31. A significant number of the parents who returned the questionnaires are not happy with the range of opportunities available outside lessons. Provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. These are mostly available for pupils from Year 3 onwards and include a good range of musical and sporting activities, in addition to clubs for art and design and information and communication technology. An interesting range of additional learning opportunities

enriches the curriculum. These include trips, for example, to a re-cycling centre to support work in science and to the theatre in Manchester to support literacy lessons. A range of visitors to the school enhances learning well.

32. The curriculum provided for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. These pupils are supported well in literacy and numeracy lessons and the creation of a separate class for these pupils in Key Stage 2 has enhanced their provision and improved their progress. Other arrangements, including booster classes in Year 6, the 'catching up' programme in Year 3 and the additional literacy support programme, are all improving curricular provision for these pupils. They have individual education plans, which identify their learning targets, are reviewed regularly and new targets are then set. Pupils with statements of special educational needs have their individual education plans reviewed regularly and the requirements of the special educational needs Code of Practice are met fully.
33. The school provides for pupils' personal development, including that for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, but there is no policy statement or guidance document to support teachers in covering the different elements of this area. However, teachers do plan for this and seize other opportunities as they arise.

34. The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' spiritual development. The daily acts of collective worship are of good quality and provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on spiritual aspects of life. These include human qualities such as patience, peace, love, joy and gentleness, which are represented as the fruits of a tree which is displayed in the hall. It is used effectively in assemblies to emphasise the point being made. Music creates a good spiritual atmosphere before and after assemblies. A compact disc of a local children's choir was played singing such songs as 'God is watching us from a distance'. Songs such as these and hymns such as 'Deep Peace', create moments of spirituality and help to establish a calm and peaceful atmosphere. Some highly spiritual moments were seen during lessons, such as the moment when the teachers were showing Reception children a butterfly that had emerged from its cocoon during the night. Amazingly, a second emerged from another cocoon during this talk and pupils had the rare experience of witnessing the birth of a butterfly. Other opportunities are taken to appreciate the beauty of art.

35. The provision for moral and social development is good. The social development of younger children is supported well. They settle quickly into school and learn to work and play together constructively. The learning environment for these children makes an important contribution to their personal development and they learn to be considerate to each other and to adults. For example, they are taught to respect others and to understand that they should listen when other children are talking. Pupils' sense of their place in the learning community of the school is carefully built up as they move through the key stages by the wide range of things that they do. All pupils share in a carefully thought-out celebration of achievement. Success is consistently celebrated, both formally in assemblies and among the pupils themselves. As well as awards and certificates, given as a result of teachers' nominations, pupils are also asked to nominate fellow pupils who have been helpful, supported them in class or at play, or who they feel deserve to be recognised. This makes a significant contribution to both the social and moral development of all pupils. All adults set pupils a good example of teamwork, helpfulness and courtesy and this leads to confident and friendly relationships. Opportunities for competitive sport also provide pupils with the chance to be part of a team and to meet pupils from other schools. The school takes part in a satisfactory range of charity work and this raises pupils' awareness of other people who may be less fortunate than they are. The school has 'adopted' a child in Africa, to whom pupils give financial support, for example, by helping with education. This provides pupils with a valuable insight into the different circumstances of other children.

36. School rules are prominently displayed in strategic places around the school, such as in the assembly and dining hall. Rules were developed with the pupils in their classes and are of a positive nature, stating what pupils should do rather than what they should not do. This effectively focuses pupils' attention on the positive side to behaviour, rather than the negative. Pupils are given good opportunities to develop their own thoughts on current world moral issues. For example, they learn about re-cycling household waste in science and discuss issues, such as whaling, in literacy lessons.

37. Pupils' cultural development is fostered to a high standard. They develop a very good understanding of their own culture through the curriculum for art and music, through visiting the theatre to watch dramatic performances and playing traditional playground games. Pupils learn about different cultures in history and geography lessons, for example, in their topics on Japan and India. In these, pupils study the art forms of these civilisations and this raises their cultural awareness effectively. Linked with the topic on India, an Indian dance company visited the school. They held a workshop throughout the day for the class taking part in the topic and then the whole school was given the opportunity to watch traditional dance. Pupils also have the opportunity to develop understanding of other cultures through religious education, although this provision is not as strong as other aspects of their cultural development. At Key Stage 1, they study Christianity and Judaism. Their understanding of these faiths is developed further in Key Stage 2, when the Islamic and Hindu faiths are also studied. Pupils understand that many other cultures are represented in society and that some people have different beliefs from their own. However, they have no first-hand experiences, through visits, of the multi-cultural nature of our society.

38. There are plans to improve further the provision for pupils' personal development. These include a greater structuring of 'circle times' and the provision of more opportunities to take responsibility, for example, in a school council.

39. The very good links with the local community college, to which most pupils transfer, ensure that pupils' education progresses smoothly. Visits of both staff and pupils to and from the community college help to give pupils a confident start to their secondary education. The Year 7 science and music lessons continue the work done by the pupils in Year 6 in their primary school, and the Summer Learning Festival, in literacy and numeracy for Years 6 and 7, is staffed by both the school and college. The Year 7 students enjoy visiting the school to do paired reading with Year 1. The meetings between the staff are effective in maintaining good communication and ensuring pupils' progress.

40. The school gets a great deal of help from the local community to improve pupils' learning. Close relationships with the local church also improve the quality of pupils' education. The vicar strengthens community links through regular visits to talk to staff and pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. The school's procedures for child protection and for promoting the wellbeing, health and safety of all pupils are good and this continues the good practice recorded in the report from the previous inspection. The headteacher takes the lead in setting the ethos of care, order and structure through her expectations for behaviour and response in daily assemblies. Teachers and non-teaching staff provide a high standard of care.

42. The school has a statement for child protection, providing the guidelines for a new policy. All teaching and non-teaching staff are aware of their responsibilities and are kept up-to-date with regard to child protection issues. Necessary health and safety measures are in place and regular risk assessment inspections are undertaken. Teachers are conscientious in their supervision of pupils in class. Effective use is made of visits from fire officers, the railway police and the police in conjunction with issues relating to alcohol, drug abuse and 'stranger danger'.

43. Good behaviour is promoted well by the school's behaviour and anti-bullying policies and by pupils' involvement in the creation of the school rules. Pupils, staff and parents understand the rules and sanctions, and parents are informed of all instances of their children's inappropriate behaviour. Any instances of bullying, racism or oppressive behaviour are dealt with promptly. Teachers often praise the pupils for their response and behaviour. Pupils value the weekly 'achievement assemblies' and the 'thumbs up' trophies.

44. Procedures to monitor attendance are unsatisfactory. There is no attendance policy or incentives to encourage the pupils to develop sound attendance practices. Parents are reminded in newsletters and the governors' annual report about the importance of attendance and this is having a marginal effect on improving attendance. The educational welfare officer

monitors the registers monthly and contacts families when any pupil's attendance or punctuality gives cause for concern.

45. The school has established good systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. However, these are not yet fully in place and their impact is currently only satisfactory. They have the potential to be more effective. In English, mathematics and science, information from assessments is used well, overall, to guide the planning of the curriculum and to plan future lessons, although its use is more successful at Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 1. The use of assessment to support attainment and progress in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory.

46. The school has a good marking policy, but it is not used consistently across the key stages. There are examples of very good practice in marking. However, not all teachers observe the recommendations of the marking policy, so that it is not effective in promoting pupils' academic and personal progress in all classes.

47. The assessment data collated last year (2000) led to the setting up of the Key Stage 2 special educational needs group. Its purpose was two fold, to enhance the provision for special educational needs pupils and to also give class teachers greater freedom in delivering literacy and numeracy lessons in slightly smaller classes to a group of pupils whose attainment was not as diverse. The success of the group for lower attaining pupils is evident in their improved National Curriculum test results in 2001, especially in English.

48. The teaching and learning policy sets out clear guidance for assessment procedures and National Curriculum test results are analysed as a basis for record keeping and future planning. This provides a solid base from which to build. Assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs are good, with individual education plans mostly setting clear targets and evaluating the progress being made towards them successfully.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. Those parents who expressed an opinion, a small proportion of the total parent body, have overwhelmingly positive views about the school. They state that their children receive good teaching and are confident that any problems will be dealt with quickly.

50. A number of parents and friends regularly help in the classroom and on educational trips. A group of parents and grandparents organise a weekly computer club and a swimming club. The school organises courses for parent helpers and has held a family literacy project. The very active Friends' Association has raised money to refurbish the playground equipment.

51. The quality of the information that parents receive about the school and its curriculum is good. The good quality prospectus presents key information in a straightforward manner and parents are kept up-to-date with school affairs through the numbered monthly newsletters. There is a special booklet for the parents of Nursery children. The governors' annual report, an attractively illustrated publication, gives a clear picture of school life in the preceding year.

52. Parents appreciate that the staff are always available and ready to talk to them about their children's progress or any other problem. They receive a special letter when their child receives an 'Achievement Award'. There are the two consultation evenings per year and parents receive the annual progress report in the third term. Pupils' reports meet statutory requirements and clearly state what children know, understand and can do. They include targets for the next academic year. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved when they are being considered for inclusion on the special educational needs register and are then involved appropriately in discussions about strategies for teaching them. Parents with children who have statements of special educational needs are kept well informed of their progress and of any proposed changes in the provisions granted under the statement.

53. The majority of parents have signed the home/school agreement and support their children at home by listening to them read and supervising the homework set for them. Overall, the school has good links with parents and these have a positive impact on attainment and progress. The

good links identified in the report of the previous inspection have been maintained and built upon.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The school has a very effective ethos which is reflected in all its activities. Essentially, its aim is to enable all pupils to reach their potential in both academic and personal terms within a secure and stimulating learning environment. Through valuing themselves and others, pupils will develop their confidence and self-esteem and recognise the importance of caring for their community and the wider world in which they live.

55. The headteacher is central to the standards that the school achieves. She has a very clear vision of what she is trying to achieve for the school and of how it can be achieved over time. She has established a unified staff team and is careful to involve all adults, including, for example, support staff and lunchtime supervisors in staff training where appropriate. The result is a very strong commitment to improvement and a rapidly improving capacity to succeed. This is being reflected in gradually improving results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Years 2 and 6.

56. The school receives sound support from its governing body. A number of new governors are undergoing training so that they can play a fuller role in supporting the school. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties. It fully supports the school's ethos and is committed to providing good quality education for all pupils. The governing body has formed a number of sub groups to improve its effectiveness and is involved in approving policies and in target setting. Governors have a satisfactory and improving understanding of the school's strength and weaknesses and are effective in seeking out best value from the school's expenditure.

57. The school uses new technology well. Its use in administration is well developed and is effective. Its use in teaching and learning in subjects across the curriculum is developing well. Pupils throughout the school have sound skills in using computers and their use of the relatively new computer suite is improving these skills. The school is in a good position to improve its use of new technology further.

58. The school responds well to the needs of different individuals and groups of pupils. Equality of access and opportunity are central to the school's ethos and are achieved well. Special educational needs are managed well in the school. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early. Their individual education plans are reviewed regularly and new targets are set for them. As a result, they achieve well in relation to their abilities. Pupils with statements of special educational needs are managed effectively and the requirements of the special educational needs Code of Practice are met fully. There is no specific provision for higher attaining pupils although there are opportunities for extension work in some curriculum areas. The school recognises that this is an area for further development.

59. The school's strategic planning is very good. It has a healthy culture of self-evaluation and is very effective in identifying priorities for development, monitoring progress towards them and evaluating their success. The school development plan is a very valuable working document, which analyses how effectively the previous year's priorities have been achieved and then outlines plans relating to current targets. Time-scales, the person responsible, criteria for success, the projected cost and how progress will be monitored, are all identified. The plan gives an overview of possible priorities up to 2003-2004. It is an effective means of moving the school forward.

60. The responsibility for the management of development lies largely with the headteacher. The deputy headteacher was appointed at the beginning of this school year. She is taking increasing responsibility in managing the curriculum and is still developing her management role. The senior management team was established during this school year, but has met rarely and has no clearly defined role in managing the school. Curriculum co-ordinators are well established and monitor the quality of teaching and learning well in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and religious education. In other subject areas, their role is less well developed. The school's marking policy is not being implemented consistently and management's role in implementing this policy and monitoring its effectiveness has been

unsatisfactory. The school operates within a culture of openness, but this is not yet effectively supported by cohesive systems for management.

61. The school operates efficiently on a day-to-day basis. Its routines are straightforward and clearly understood, and little time is lost in moving from one activity to the next. Finance is managed effectively by the school's administration assistant and monitored by the governing body's finance committee. However, there has been no audit of the school's accounts for many years. Monies received for particular purposes, for example, for special educational needs, are used appropriately.

62. The school is well staffed to teach the National Curriculum and religious education. There is a generous provision of support staff and they are deployed effectively to support teaching and learning. The headteacher has established effective procedures for performance management and these are being used well to raise the quality of teaching and learning. There are very good systems in place to support newly appointed staff and the school is effective in supporting initial teacher training.

63. The accommodation is inadequate for the school's current pupils. Many rooms are small for the number and size of the pupils using them and this hinders teaching and learning. The hall is small for the whole school, and for a full class in Years 5 and 6, using it for physical education. Staff work hard to maintain an attractive learning environment, and they are given good support by the caretaker and her staff who keep the building in good condition. Resources for learning are satisfactory.

64. The drive and enthusiasm of the headteacher have meant that the school has made good progress since the last inspection. Highly effective systems for moving the school forward are being established and the dip in attainment is being reversed. The school is in a strong position to increase its effectiveness further.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65. To improve standards of attainment and the quality of education further, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

    (a) develop pupils' skills in presenting their work as independent learners by reducing teachers' use of pre-prepared worksheets (see paragraphs 26, 30, 92, 110, 140);

    (b) share good practice in teaching with a view to providing a consistent level of challenge to higher attaining pupils (see paragraphs 11, 30, 58, 92);

    (c) ensure that the school's marking policy is fully and consistently implemented across the key stages (see paragraphs 25, 46, 60, 97, 99, 110);

    In addition to these key issues for action, the school will wish to address the following weakness:

    - to improve the school's procedures for promoting good attendance in order to raise levels of attendance further (see paragraphs 19, 44).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	65
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	40

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	8	46	38	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	293
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	62

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	77

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	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.5
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	23	19	42

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	17	21
	Girls	18	18	17
	Total	37	33	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88(80)	83(90)	90(85)
	National	83(82)	84(83)	90(87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	20	20
	Girls	18	17	18
	Total	37	37	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88(88)	88(88)	90(88)
	National	84(82)	88(86)	88(87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	15	14	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	11	15
	Girls	8	6	10
	Total	16	17	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	55(49)	59(61)	86(54)
	National	75(70)	72(69)	85(78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	11	10
	Girls	7	8	7
	Total	13	19	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	45(44)	66(49)	59(44)
	National	70(68)	72(69)	79(75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	293
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	7	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)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.4
Average class size	29.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	228.75

Qualified teachers and support staff: Nursery

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

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	64

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001

	£
Total income	553,575
Total expenditure	542,936
Expenditure per pupil	1,701.90
Balance brought forward from previous year	11, 650
Balance carried forward to next year	22,289

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	345
Number of questionnaires returned	58

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	29	7	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	35	3	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	41	7	2	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	45	27	14	5	9
The teaching is good.	69	26	3	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	58	30	9	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	27	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	81	12	7	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	58	31	9	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	72	21	2	2	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	30	9	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	21	24	5	17

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

66. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. These findings broadly reflect the judgements made in the report of the school's first inspection. Education for children under-five is provided in a Nursery and two Reception classes. The curriculum for these children is based on the nationally agreed six areas of learning and gives them broad and balanced experiences. There is a wide range of challenging and well-focused experiences to promote the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. The school provides the children with a good start to their education.

67. The overall attainment levels of most of the children entering the school are well below those expected nationally. Teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes is good, overall, and this has a positive effect on children's learning. Some 15 per cent of teaching is excellent. Teachers have a very secure knowledge of how young children learn and develop. Activities are well organised to promote communication, language, and literacy, and mathematical development. There is a good balance between teacher-directed activities and child initiated ones, although opportunities for extending children's spontaneous play are less well developed in the upper Reception Year. Staff provide very effective support for all activities, interacting well to check and extend children's understanding. Praise and encouragement are highly effective in promoting positive behaviour. Teamwork is of a high quality and staff work very well together. They are enthusiastic and committed. Parents are actively involved in their children's learning through supporting simple homework tasks.

68. As a result of this good teaching, most children have made very good progress and are in line to reach the early learning goals in all six areas of learning by the end of the Reception Year, with a significant number reaching them well before they move into Year 1. Children with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their capabilities.

69. Planning in the Foundation Stage covers the nationally agreed areas of learning well. The procedures for assessing children are detailed; however, the use of this information to guide the planning of future learning is less well developed. There is little to indicate when the children have achieved the early learning goals.

Personal, social and emotional development

70. By the end of the Reception Year, most children will have achieved the early learning goals in this area of learning. They make very good progress in developing self- confidence, assurance and independence because of the good provision and teaching. There are good procedures for introducing children to school life, which help them to settle in with ease. Care is taken to meet with parents and carers in order to plan effectively to meet children's individual needs. They enjoy coming to school, and respond well to the rules and routines of their class. Most are confident in trying out new activities and speak confidently to other children and adults. Relationships are good. The children are polite and respectful to their teachers and other helpers in the classrooms. Classroom resources are used carefully. Children sit quietly in assembly to hear a story and respond with respect during a shared prayer.

71. The children concentrate on their activities for extended periods, either when listening carefully to a book during the Literacy Hour, for example, or when persevering with making a model of a ladybird. Children select their own activities during free choice periods. Most play sensibly alongside other children and some share their activity with others. They demonstrate growing independence in their dressing skills and in personal hygiene, for example, when changing for physical education lessons and washing hands following a painting activity. There are well-planned opportunities for children to develop a sensitivity and awareness of other people. Teaching is good in this area of learning and every opportunity is taken to develop the children's skills. Teachers have high expectations of the children and praise them for doing things well.

As a result, children tidy away when asked and this routine is aided by the structured organisation of the classrooms and the use or labels and specific containers. All adults provide the children with good examples in personal and social skills.

Communication, language and literacy

72. The quality of teaching and provision is good and the children make good progress, particularly in reading. By the end of the school year, most of the children will attain the early learning goals in reading and the higher attaining children will be working at Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum. In other areas, children have a little way to go to reach the standards expected for their age. This area of learning is particularly well taught. In both the Nursery and Reception classes listening and speaking skills are extended effectively through a wide range of appropriately planned activities. When children are playing, staff engage them in discussion, question them effectively and challenge them to think. In most sessions teachers question children to draw out their thoughts. For example, "why is it there?" and “how can we find out?” prompted the children to offer a wide range of ideas as to why the ladybird was crawling round the yellow bowl.

73. Elements of the National Literacy Strategy are used well to develop and extend children’s language and literacy skills. A strong emphasis is placed on listening carefully to the teachers and following instructions. This is particularly effective for children with special educational needs. The children are attentive listeners. They enjoy listening to stories and rhymes and join in familiar ones with enthusiasm. In a very effective reading session, the teacher talked the children through the process of reading aloud with expression. Her confidence in teaching literacy shone through. Comments such as “let's now have a look at these words and see if we can work out what they mean,” kept the children fully involved in the reading. In a discussion about rain, children offered many interesting suggestions as to how it evaporates. Vocabulary skills are developing as children talk about ‘e’ words; for example, elephant, engine and egg-timer. Structured play situations, puppets, group activities and lunchtimes provide opportunities for children to use and extend their vocabulary. Clearly labelled displays, nursery rhyme pictures, calendars, weather charts and individual name cards help all children to develop early reading and writing skills.

74. Progress in writing is satisfactory. Most children hold their pencils correctly and know how to form their letters. Higher attaining children write their names and simple words. Teaching in this area of learning is good and it is sometimes very good. All staff are competent in teaching basic skills in literacy and use every opportunity to promote the development of children’s communication, language and literacy skills.

Mathematical development

75. Children make sound progress in developing their mathematical understanding and most have achieved the early learning goals for this area of learning by the age of five. Work is planned, using the National Numeracy Strategy. Through play, practical activities, number songs, rhymes and counting games many children recognise numbers up to ten, but a significant number also count beyond 20 with ease. Most Reception class children join in with the teacher and count down from ten to zero. In both classes, children have good opportunities to compare, match, sort, order and sequence. Teachers place great emphasis on developing appropriate mathematical language and children are encouraged to consider size, shape and position when playing with toys. A significant number recognise two-dimensional shapes and copy and repeat symmetrical patterns. Imaginative and exciting learning methods are used to maintain the children’s interest and enable them to make good progress in their skills and understanding. One teacher’s excellent use of teaching strategies and resources extended the children’s understanding of time and the language of time. By the end of the lesson the children were able to sequence significant periods of their day, using words, such as after, before and o’clock. This activity was further extended when children recorded on clock-faces the position of the hands, the higher attainers incorporating time words. Calculating skills of more or less, greater or smaller are also developed through practical activities of threading beads and cutting various lengths of paper. Teaching in this area is good. The teachers and support staff are competent in teaching the basic skills of numeracy.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

76. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world are developed well and they attain the early learning goals by the age of five. The natural curiosity of young children is utilised as staff continually encourage them to talk about their discoveries and experiences, to ask questions and to explore man-made and natural materials. From looking at 'mini-beasts' they are aware of their life cycle and habitat. They learn about the passage of time through celebrating birthdays and festivals. They talk about the days of the week, changing seasons, and the weather. Correct emphasis is given to developing children's designing and making skills. Staff carefully provide them with support and encouragement in improving their skills of cutting, folding and sticking. They developed their observational skills as they watched with excitement and anticipation the development of a chrysalis into a butterfly in the school's hatchery. The computer is a popular choice of activity and many children are confident and competent in using the computer mouse to click on icons and drag and drop items on 'screen'. Construction toys are used well to encourage pupils to design and make their own models and to discover how things work. Teaching is good. Through appropriate topics the children gain knowledge and skills which provide a good foundation for future work in science, design and technology, history and geography.

Physical development

77. Children make good progress in their physical development and most have achieved the early learning goals by the age of five. In physical education lessons, they walk, run, jump and hop, using forwards and sideways directions. They hold balanced positions on hands and feet. They listen carefully to the teacher's instructions and generally use space well, being aware of how to move to keep themselves and other children safe. Children use the hard outdoor playground area for riding on wheeled toys, climbing on equipment and playing with balls, hoops and ropes. Emphasis is placed on developing children's skills when handling tools, construction toys and malleable materials. Children are given many opportunities to cut out, glue, paint and crayon to develop their handling skills. Teaching is good and enables the children to make good progress.

Creative development

78. Standards in creative development are average and most children have achieved the early learning goal in this area of learning by the age of five. Children make good progress and enjoy a good range of experiences in art, music, story and imaginative play. Through such experiences children are encouraged to use appropriate vocabulary and to develop their use of language to express ideas. A good range of musical instruments, songs and rhymes helps to develop children's understanding of sound, rhythm and pattern. Children enjoy taking part in role-play situations, for example, taking on the role of ladybirds and acting out the characters from nursery rhymes, using puppets and other resources. The puppets are used very well for developing the children's speaking and listening skills. There are many activities available for children to develop their senses through investigating texture, shape and colour. Staff provide materials with a variety of interesting textures from which children can choose to create their own pictures and models. They work with play-dough, plasticine and junk material to create three-dimensional models. Sand and water are available for children to explore. This good quality of play reflects the way teachers have provided relevant resources and talk effectively with the children about their activities. Teaching is good in this area of learning.

ENGLISH

79. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in the National Curriculum tests in 2000 was below the national average in reading, but matched the average achieved by schools which draw their pupils from similar backgrounds. The number of pupils attaining the national expectation of level 2 at least was slightly above the national figure, but the proportion gaining the higher than expected level 3 was below the national average. Early indications are that very similar results have been achieved in 2001. In writing in the 2000 National Curriculum tests, attainment by the school's pupils was below the national average, but again matched the average achieved by

similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level 3 was below the national average. In 2001, this proportion has increased and is likely to be close to the national figure. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls and the trend over time is one of gradual improvement.

80. At Key Stage 2 in the National Curriculum tests in English in 2000, attainment by the school's pupils was well below both the national average and the average attained in similar schools. The proportion of the school's pupils attaining at least the national expectation of level 4 was well below the national figure as was the proportion attaining the higher level 5. However, attainment in English in 2001 improved and the proportion attaining the higher level 5 improved markedly. National comparisons are not yet available.

81. Inspection findings are that attainment in English is improving and that it is now above the expected level at the end of Year 2 and at the expected level at the end of Year 6. By the age of 11, most pupils read and write at least in line with national expectations and about 20 per cent of pupils exceed the average. Since children enter the Nursery with levels of attainment which are well below those normally found, this shows that they make very good progress in their learning in the Foundation Stage, good progress in Key Stage 1 and sound progress in Key Stage 2. Pupils express themselves clearly, but a large number do not use standard English when speaking and this has an adverse effect on their spelling and the quality of their writing.

82. Attainment in speaking and listening at the age of 11 is at least in line with national expectations. Most pupils speak confidently, but often in non-standard forms, in class discussion. They are able to describe what they know and understand and also give their views on the texts being studied. They are friendly and polite in their exchanges with adults. They listen to instructions and follow them in most situations. A small minority of older pupils need to develop their listening skills and their ability to concentrate.

83. Pupils work well in small groups and in paired work. They co-operate with their peers, often helping and giving advice to those who are lower attainers. They work sensibly, often without the need for teacher intervention. This is especially so in younger pupils.

84. By the age of seven, pupils talk about their reading and name their favourite authors. They show enthusiasm for their work. In one lesson in Year 1, pupils showed a perceptive understanding of the concept of what is precious in their exchanges with their teacher, expressing themselves clearly and with insight. There was a good example of group discussion in a mixed age class at Key Stage 1 when pupils were creating their own story in the style of an author they had recently been studying. Pupils recalled large parts of the story that they had been reading and adapted their own story accordingly.

85. In Key Stage 2, some pupils experience difficulty in concentrating and, as a consequence, misunderstand instructions. They have a greater reluctance to participate in class discussion and prefer to work in smaller groups. Pupils at the beginning of the key stage are obviously benefiting from their prior learning during the Literacy Hour and are more willing to be involved in discussion than some pupils at the end of the key stage.

86. Pupils' reading is at least in line with expectations by the age of 11. Pupils in the present end of Key Stage 1 classes are already achieving at least level 2 and a significant minority attain level 3 in their reading; this is above the national expectation, suggesting that, by the age of 11, they should exceed expectations in reading.

87. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils read with confidence and expression and are benefiting from reading aloud as a class, which gives them practice in reading expressively. Lower attaining pupils read confidently and are aware of punctuation when reading. Their ability to read expressively is developing satisfactorily. Pupils by the age of seven know how to access information from non-fiction texts, using the contents page and the index in a book. A higher attaining pupil knew that a glossary is organised in alphabetical order, but was not secure in its exact purpose except as a dictionary.

88. At Key Stage 1, pupils are not aware of the Dewey system of classification in the library. Library skills are taught formally at the beginning of Key Stage 2. However, pupils in the present Year 6 class were aware that the system is a form of indexing, but did not know what it was called.

89. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils read confidently and with some expression. However, the texts which they had chosen to read were not challenging enough. They were able to find non-fiction texts in the library and to discuss how they would take information from texts. They are able to discuss their reading, and talk about character and plot.

90. In future, an adult will be available for the library and this should improve the ability of pupils to access information more independently than at present. The library has a reasonable selection of non-fiction texts and pupils have access to extra readers in their classrooms.

91. Pupils at the age of seven write legibly and are developing a joined style with some confidence. Most pupils' writing is in line with expectations. They write in sentences, understanding the use of capital letters, full-stops, exclamation marks, question marks and commas. They know about descriptive writing and use alliteration with confidence. Their written work is of a high standard. The expectation is that work is neat and legible. Teachers' marking of pupils' work at the end of the key stage gives clear indications of how well they have achieved the lesson objectives and what they need to do next in order to improve further.

92. By the age of eleven, pupils write neatly and legibly in a joined style, with most pupils meeting the expectations for their age. There were examples of writing for different purposes and some examples of extended writing. However, there are insufficient opportunities to develop independent writing. There is a heavy dependence on worksheets which do not always encourage pupils to think for themselves. In setting work for different ability groups, teachers do not allow higher attainers sufficient scope for managing their own work.

93. Pupils' written work, which is displayed around the classrooms and throughout the school, shows a pride in achievement and is a celebration of standards achieved. It is carefully framed and presented, setting off the efforts made by pupils of all ages. Many of the books analysed did not have lines and resulted in lower attaining pupils experiencing more difficulty in presenting their work.

94. Teaching in English is always at least satisfactory with some two-thirds being good or better. In one lesson, the teaching was excellent. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of English and of the methods of the literacy strategy are good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. The basic skills of literacy are taught well, overall. This good teaching results in positive responses from pupils and in a positive impact on attainment and progress.

95. In lessons where teaching is good or better, teachers target the work for pupils well and provide suitably different work for pupils of all levels of attainment or ages in mixed age classes. The pace of lessons is brisk and the content provides a variety of tasks which include whole class and group work. The plenary session at the end of lessons reviews what pupils have learned not only what they have done.

96. Planning for lessons is detailed and learning objectives are clearly communicated to all pupils. The lesson objectives for the lesson and for the week are displayed on the board for reference throughout the lesson. The National Literacy Strategy is well established and its practice is followed effectively in other subject areas. Pupils have good opportunities to practise literacy skills in subjects such as geography, religious education and music. Pupils also benefit from the generous in-class adult support for the Literacy Hour.

97. The marking of pupils' work is variable, with some excellent examples of careful following of the school's marking policy. This advises teachers to be positive in their marking and to correct and identify areas of achievement and improvement. Too often, however, marking is superficial and does not indicate what a pupil has achieved, corrections are not marked and advice for future learning is missing. Too few teachers follow the guidance and the good practice which does exist is not followed consistently by all staff.

98. At Key Stage 2, where pupils with special educational needs are withdrawn from their literacy lessons, there is good practice in the way in which pupils are grouped and supported. This separate group has done much to improve the skills and achievement of the lowest attainers in Key Stage 2 and they have gained confidence, which is transferred to their other learning experiences throughout the school. The non-teaching support provided for these pupils is very good and well integrated into the teacher's planning for the group. Relationships are very positive and have helped to raise achievement. The strategy has been successful, partly as a result of the teaching and support given in the class, but also to the attitudes of the pupils involved who are very positive and hardworking. This means that these pupils are making very good progress in relation to their previous levels of attainment. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress in Key Stage 1.

99. Assessment in English is well developed, with all Key Stage 2 pupils having a half-termly test, the results of which are measured against National Curriculum levels and recorded for pupils to know what level they have reached. This analysis is then used very effectively to plan future learning. However, not all work analysed was marked and given levels. Pupils have benefited from several initiatives, including booster classes in Year 6, 'catching up' work in Year 3 and the involvement of parents in their children's learning.

100. Learning at Key Stage 1 was satisfactory or better in all the lessons seen. In half of lessons it was satisfactory, in one quarter it was good and in one quarter very good. Learning at Key Stage 2 was good in three lessons, satisfactory in one lesson and unsatisfactory in one lesson. In lessons where learning was good or better, teachers planned more open questions for pupils to ascertain their prior learning and to take their learning on further. Pupils were given opportunities to explore their own learning and to draw their own conclusions to problems presented.

101. In one Key Stage 1 lesson, which was very good, pupils were given the opportunity to build on their prior learning and to use that knowledge to extend their learning further. They were engaged in creating a story as a class, using a writing frame to build good practice for creative writing. Their knowledge of language was impressive, as was their skill in imitating the style of an author they had been studying. They understood and were able to use punctuation accurately and for effect.

102. A Key Stage 2 lesson utilised the information and communication technology suite to consolidate pupils' learning of direct speech. It was possible for all pupils to complete the task, which involved inserting speech marks into a passage of dialogue which the teacher had already transcribed for them. As the lower attainers did not have the constraint of writing to show how much they had learned, it was possible for them to complete the exercise in very little more time than the higher attainers in the group. They were supported, but achieved an accurate conclusion largely unaided.

103. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in their learning by a range of different strategies including additional literacy support, in class support and withdrawal at Key Stage 2. These strategies together with the provision of learning tasks for these pupils in most classes ensure that pupils achieve well in those lessons judged to have been good or better. The subject is managed very well in Key Stage 1 and well in Key Stage 2. This effective management is gradually raising attainment and the school is in a good position to continue to improve.

MATHEMATICS

104. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000 in the National Curriculum tests was marginally below the national average and was broadly in line with the average attained in similar schools. However, the proportion of pupils who gained the higher level 3 was below average. This year the situation has improved and early indications are that the proportion attaining level 3 will rise. The pattern over recent years has been one of improvement, overall. This is reflected in inspection evidence. Standards of attainment found in the analysis of pupils' work and seen in lessons are generally above expectations at the end of Key Stage 1. This is an improvement

since the previous inspection. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school. In both key stages in 2000, boys slightly outperformed girls in mathematics.

105. At Key Stage 2, there has been a decline in standards attained in the National Curriculum tests since the time of the previous inspection. Standards in 2000 were well below average in comparison with schools nationally and below average when compared to schools which draw their pupils from similar backgrounds. Standards for the current year have improved well compared with those of last year. However, there is a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this cohort and a significant number of pupils who have not been at the school for the whole of the key stage. Of those pupils who have been at the school throughout Key Stage 2, 92 per cent attained the expected level 4. This is significantly better than the average for all pupils who took the tests at Key Stage 2 this year. This supports the school's view that movement between schools tends to hold down achievement. Lower attainment in national tests is partly the result of pupils' lack of skills in solving numerical problems expressed in words. This is similar to judgements made at the time of the previous inspection.

106. During Year 1, pupils develop a sound foundation in numeracy, on which they build further work effectively. They start to understand place value through knowing how to work with tens and units. They have a good recall of addition and subtraction to 10 and a satisfactory recall for numbers to 20. They are aware of different procedures such as doubling and halving and use these well to calculate the answers to number problems. In Year 2, pupils build effectively on this basis. They use the principle of doubling and halving to a greater degree and they apply this well, finding out for example that half of 21 is 10½. In doing this calculation, they use approximation and estimation. They have a quick and accurate recall of addition and subtraction to 20 and use this effectively to calculate change from 20p, for example. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of shape and know the names of a wide range of both two and three-dimensional shapes. Overall, attainment at the age of seven is above that normally found.

107. At Key Stage 2, an analysis of pupil's work indicates steady progress throughout the key stage. At Year 3, average and lower attaining pupils generally attain as expected, whilst the higher attaining pupils achieve higher standards. This pattern is repeated throughout the key stage and indicates that the issue from the previous inspection, related to addressing the needs of the more able pupils, has been achieved, although pupils are not always able to demonstrate their attainment under test conditions. Younger pupils recognise fractions and estimate whether the shaded part of a shape is more than or less than a quarter, a half or three-quarters. However, even when using simple diagrams, pupils cannot recognise equivalent fractions such as 2/3 and 4/6. By the middle of the key stage, pupils have developed satisfactory skills in number. They identify pairs of factors of numbers up to 100 and their discussion reveals that they have a good understanding of what a factor is and show a reasonable recall of multiplication facts up to ten times ten. Pupils understand the relationship between multiplication and division and work out division sums by using their knowledge of multiplication. They show a sound understanding of the basics of place value.

108. Older pupils in the key stage work out a range of questions mentally by spotting a pattern. They spot such procedures as adding 100 and subtracting 10 instead of adding 90. They have a good understanding of right angles, half turns and how many degrees there are in a variety of angles described by turns. Most pupils calculate accurately the 'other' angle on a straight line when given one of the angles, knowing that a straight line angle is 180 degrees. By the end of the key stage, pupils have developed a good knowledge and understanding of decimals and place value. Most can mentally add 1/100 to a two place decimal, including difficult additions such as 2.79 + 1/100. They draw on a good set of strategies to calculate answers to questions. These strategies include approximation, estimation and calculating with large numbers. Most pupils calculate accurately addition, subtraction, multiplication and division sums with numbers to two places of decimals.

109. The quality of teaching in mathematics seen during the inspection ranged from satisfactory to very good. It is good, overall, at both key stages and promotes the good quality of learning at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in relation to the pupils' prior attainment. The skills of numeracy

are practised effectively in subjects such as geography, science and information and communication technology.

110. Lessons are well prepared and teachers show a secure knowledge and understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy. Learning objectives are discussed with the class at the beginning of the lesson, so that pupils are clear about what they are to learn in a particular lesson. Planning indicates that work is well targeted to pupils' needs. Marking is generally kept up-to-date and, where weaknesses are identified, measures are taken to remedy them. However, marking does not routinely indicate how pupils can improve. Pupils are managed well generally. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and effort and these are made clear. This leads to pupils' good levels of concentration and interest and, therefore, to good learning. However, very occasionally, class management was unsatisfactory and there was some difficulty in sustaining concentration during the mental session, with pupils not fully settled. Lessons are very often organised well, with resources and time used effectively. This means that pupils usually get through all the planned work. However, teachers often rely too much on prepared worksheets and much of the work presented for scrutiny was worksheet based. This prevents pupils from developing an independent style of presentation. Teachers support pupils' learning well through appropriate use of praise and encouragement when deserved. At the end of lessons, teachers generally go over what pupils have learned and use good questioning to test and reinforce pupils' understanding.

111. Pupils' attitudes are generally good. Pupils' relationships with each other are friendly and they support each other well. They co-operate well with each other in collaborative learning situations and are happy to discuss and explain what they are doing. Pupils generally work with sustained interest and concentration and most are courteous and well behaved. At changes of activity, classes move smoothly from one activity style to another and waste little time in doing so. Pupils respond enthusiastically to a lively teaching style which has a touch of humour.

112. The curriculum is broad and the scrutiny of work shows that all parts of the National Curriculum and the National Numeracy Strategy are covered well. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. The recommendation of addressing the needs of the higher attaining pupils in the report of the school's first inspection has been met well and this now happens in curriculum planning and in practice. Assessment procedures are good. The assessment of pupils' work is against the key objectives of the strategy. Assessment data are used well to group pupils into three groups in each class, based on prior attainment, and to plan lessons and activities for individual groups. Assessment also involves the non-statutory National Curriculum tests at Years 3, 4 and 5. Currently, these papers are not analysed for strengths and weaknesses as rigorously as the end of key stage National Curriculum test papers.

113. Curriculum co-ordination for this subject is good. The curriculum co-ordinator is trained well in numeracy and has led training for all members of staff. There has been well-organised development over the last three years which has led to the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. The quality of numeracy lessons has been monitored by the curriculum co-ordinator. A paper on strengths and weaknesses in mathematics was prepared and teachers were informed of strengths and weaknesses in both teaching and learning. The curriculum co-ordinator has also checked lesson planning, to ensure that the issues raised are being met. Sensibly planned development, which focuses on the quality of teaching and learning, has been completed. The management of the subject has improved well since the last inspection and the school is in a good position to continue to raise attainment.

SCIENCE

114. Teachers' assessments for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000 placed attainment for pupils attaining at least the national expectation of level 2 in 2000, in line with the national average. However, for those attaining the higher level 3, assessments were well below the national average. The situation in 2001 was very similar. Inspection evidence agrees with this assessment overall, but the school has addressed the issue of higher attaining pupils more effectively than this would suggest and they are achieving appropriately. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection and the issue raised to extend the higher attaining pupils by providing more challenging activities particularly in aspects of science, has been

addressed. Pupils make sound progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 and pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the key stages.

115. At the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000, attainment was in line with the national average in the National Curriculum tests, with boys outperforming girls, and above average when compared to schools which draw their pupils from similar backgrounds. Again, the percentage for pupils attaining the higher level 5 was below the national average. The results are broadly similar this year. This can be explained by a higher than average number of pupils being on the special educational needs register and a higher than average number of pupils joining the school during the key stage. In the case of the 26 pupils who have been in the school since Key Stage 1, the picture is more positive; 93 per cent of these pupils gained the nationally expected level or higher. Attainment has been erratic since the previous inspection. There was a decline between 1997 and 1999, but a significant improvement between 1999 and 2000 and early indications are that this level has been almost maintained this year. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when an issue to raise attainment and improve progress, particularly at Key Stage 2 was identified. This issue has been met successfully. Inspection evidence indicates that attainment is in line with expectations at the end of both key stages and that all groups of pupils achieve satisfactorily.

116. A scrutiny of pupils' work at Key Stage 1 indicates that, by the end of the key stage, average attaining pupils are generally working at the expected level, whilst higher attaining pupils shows signs of moving into the higher level 3 of the National Curriculum. Pupils compare how bulbs light in different circuits and, using circuit diagrams, predict whether they will light or not. Higher attaining pupils investigate this situation well and accurately construct the circuits from diagrams to test their predictions. Average attaining pupils need some support in setting out their work and lower attaining pupils have support when describing what they have achieved. All groups have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of appropriate aspects of human, animal and plant growth and of materials and their properties. They are beginning to understand why some materials are used for specific purposes. They are developing effective experimental skills and have an appropriate understanding of a 'fair' scientific test.

117. At Key Stage 2, a scrutiny of pupils' work shows steady progress through the key stage for all groups of pupils. Younger pupils in the key stage are beginning to develop a sound idea of how shadows are created and explain this in brief detail, using appropriate vocabulary. They set up, with some help, a simple set of equipment to create shadows and which also demonstrates the movement of the sun during the day. Older pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of recycling waste materials and effectively outline the processes involved in recycling glass bottles from a scientific point of view, by applying principles of reversible and non-reversible processes. They know that heated glass will melt and can be reformed by cooling when it solidifies again. In addition, pupils show a good awareness of the moral and environmental issues of the recycling of household waste. By the end of the key stage, pupils have a secure knowledge of 'fair testing'. They describe accurately how a test can be set up, bearing in mind what they are expected to investigate and specify the variables and what has to remain constant. They record observations appropriately in simple charts and diagrams, which they have designed. They use numeracy effectively, counting and measuring time and using graphs well to illustrate their findings.

118. The quality of teaching seen was either good or satisfactory in equal measures and is sound, overall, and promotes a satisfactory quality of learning. Lessons have good introductions and teachers explain learning objectives clearly so that pupils are aware of what they are intended to learn. Tasks are challenging and lesson planning takes account of all attainment levels through either the task set, the level of expectation or the amount of support. Lesson planning is, therefore, effective. Teachers provide appropriate opportunities for practical work and this sets the basis for sound scientific practice. Pupils are briefed well, and sound expectations of behaviour and effort are clearly explained. Occasionally, teachers experience some difficulty in settling the class down. Lessons have a steady pace and this helps to ensure that the gains in knowledge are satisfactory. The organisation of most lessons and of resources is good and enables pupils to get on well with achieving the learning objectives of the lesson.

119. Pupils' behave and respond well in lessons. They listen intently and answer questions willingly. They maintain their good levels of behaviour during group work and co-operate effectively with each other in pairs and small groups. They share tasks appropriately within the group and tackle their work effectively. Most pupils work reliably without the direct supervision of the teacher.

120. The assessment of pupils' work and its use of its outcomes in planning are currently in the process of development. Teachers hand assessment sheets to the pupils' next teacher and this is developing a pattern for assessing progress across the key stages. Development is planned to make the recording system more consistent across the school by introducing a uniform system throughout the key stages. Curriculum co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has been in charge since last September when she joined the school. The previous co-ordinator had introduced a number of developments, addressing most of the issues raised in the report of the previous inspection. These include improving experimental and investigative work and this is now a strength of the subject. The new co-ordinator has set appropriate new priorities, including the monitoring of teachers' planning and a review of the curriculum to ensure that good progress is made in the mixed age classes.

ART AND DESIGN

121. By the end of Years 2 and 6, most pupils reach good standards. The previous inspection noted that attainment was above expectations at the end of Key Stage 1. Inspection evidence shows that this position has been maintained and that there have been improvements in Key Stage 2. The school has kept pace with the changes that have taken place in the curriculum since the last inspection and this is mainly the result of the confidence of the teachers both in their subject knowledge and the good teaching methods that they use. The school successfully aims to maintain a rich and broad curriculum and the teaching and learning of art and design make a valuable contribution to this aim. The subject is also a significant element in meeting the school's wider aim of giving the pupils a sense of culture.

122. By the age of seven, pupils, including those with special educational needs, have made good progress in their skills and understanding of art, craft and design. The scrutiny of work and the observation of teaching shows that pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 have experience of the works of recognised artists. They have successfully learned a wide range of techniques. They have looked at pattern and made observational drawings, using a range of media, including charcoal. They have represented their ideas in different ways, such as through the use of collage and clay, incorporating this knowledge into imaginative and lively works of art. They paint boldly, using vibrant colours, influenced by the style of Monet, Van Gogh and Linda Fay-Powell, and generally use pencils, charcoal and chalk well, reflecting their interests in plants and marine life. There are good cross-curricular links and these serve to reinforce and enhance pupils' work in many curriculum areas. Year 2 pupils discussed in detail their accurate drawings of starfish and shells, sharing with the class their scientific and geographical knowledge of marine life. Most pupils' sketches are generally an accurate representation of the originals. They preserve the shape and scale of the objects well.

123. By the age of 11, attainment is above that normally found. Pupils show a good level of maturity and skill in their approach to art and design. They continue to develop their observational skills and techniques well. Older pupils have undertaken drawings from first-hand observations of historical artefacts, using different thicknesses of hard and soft pencils. Some are of a high standard with good application of the techniques of shading, tone and accuracy of observation. Most of the work seen shows strong links with other subjects. In Year 6, pupils' work on making careful drawings of imaginary characters from the J R R Tolkien novel 'The Hobbit' linked to work on literacy. In Years 4/5, activities focused on using wax crayon and paint, based on the style of William Morris, to create impressive backgrounds for their geographical topic on India. Three-dimensional work is also explored. Sculptures, using a range of natural and man-made materials are on display around the school. For example, there are very good three-dimensional abstract cardboard sculptures linked to angles, model helicopters and Batik work. These show good development of investigating and making skills and that the school celebrates the art achievements of its pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

124. The quality of teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is good, overall. It is clear from the scrutiny of work that art and design is valued and taught well. Planning is thorough and teachers are well prepared, so that lessons run smoothly with resources accessible to pupils. In the better lessons, teachers demonstrate well to introduce pupils to new techniques and experimenting is encouraged. For example, in a lesson where pupils were doing observational drawings of shells using pencils, the teacher asked questions and suggested ways of looking at shells from different angles and distances. This resulted in the pupils experimenting and increased their understanding of the possibilities of materials and techniques. Effective learning is also linked to the teachers' good expectations for quality of work and behaviour. This results in pupils taking initiative, being able to work individually and in groups and behaving well. They take responsibility for their learning and pride from the high standards of work they produce. A particularly effective aspect of lessons was that the teachers had the skills and knowledge to assess the work and encourage the pupils to develop and improve it.

125. The co-ordinator for the subject works closely with the staff to raise confidence and skills in the teaching of art, although a significant number of staff are art specialists. There is no formal monitoring of teaching, but the co-ordinator has a good idea of standards from looking at teachers' planning and pupils' work. Staff are engaged in updating the scheme of work to bring it in line with the demands of 'Curriculum 2000'. Good use is made of information and communication technology to research the work of artists and experiment with the appropriate painting programmes. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The school has increased its range of resources since it was first inspected and these are now good. The subject is soundly managed and there are satisfactory systems in place for assessing pupils' attainment and progress.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

126. Design and technology lessons were observed during the inspection only in Key Stage 2. Judgements about standards in Key Stage 1 are based on an analysis of pupils' work, an examination of teachers' planning and discussions with teachers. It is not possible to make any judgement about the quality of teaching in this key stage.

127. By the end of Year 2, standards of attainment are similar to those found in most schools. Pupils make satisfactory progress in a range of joining and assembling skills. They competently make things out of different materials, including card and fabric. For example, in Year 1, pupils successfully made vehicles with wheels and axles. Year 2 pupils were encouraged to evaluate a range of different types of hand and rod puppets before designing their own. They drew and listed the materials that they would need. Their puppets showed good scissor control and the ability to join materials, using a running stitch.

128. Pupils make sound progress during Key Stage 2 and extend their skills to a satisfactory standard.

129. Pupils in Year 3 develop well the design skills learned at Key Stage1. They are taught a basic understanding of 'levers' and 'linkage', involving simple pneumatic systems and produced monsters with a range of moving parts. Pupils in Year 4 designed sandwiches, using different combinations of ingredients. They analysed their appearance, taste and texture, recording their opinions and findings. Sound progress was seen in Year 6 where pupils were investigating and assembling more sophisticated vehicles. They showed a good understanding of the components required to produce a helicopter. They plan carefully, following the design process, including making preliminary models with construction kits. Their vocabulary is developing and words like cam, chassis and axle are understood.

130. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is generally secure and lessons are planned carefully. Effective use is made of discussion to help pupils to evaluate their own designs and models. For example, pupils in a Year 3 lesson discussed their 'mobile monsters' and decided that a simple model with strong joints would be easier to control. The pupils are taught skills systematically and opportunities are provided for them to experiment, using a range of tools and techniques. Pupils have been given the opportunity to examine the design features of commercially produced objects.

However, teachers do not always share with pupils that the purpose of investigating and exploring existing products is to develop their own design ideas. As a result, pupils are not always clear as to why they are carrying out certain activities. In the better lessons, as pupils worked, teachers and support staff further enhanced their learning by asking such questions as "what would happen if…..?", to encourage further experimentation. This positive and open dialogue between teachers and pupils enhanced relationships and most pupils enjoyed their design and technology lessons. Pupils take good care of the resources they use. Sound links are made with other subjects. For example, Year 4 pupils recorded data on their sandwich survey to support work in numeracy. Information and communication technology is used effectively throughout both key stages to support the design aspect of the subject.

131. The school has adopted the government's recommended guidelines for the subject and planning shows that these are central to the teaching of design and technology throughout the school. Resources are adequate. The subject is managed satisfactorily and assessment procedures are adequate. The satisfactory standards found in the previous inspection have been maintained.

GEOGRAPHY

132. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils' attainment matches the levels expected nationally. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in the development of geographical knowledge of peoples, places and environments. They also develop skills in carrying out geographical enquiries both in and out of school, including the use of the Internet. This is an improvement since the 1997 inspection where pupils' knowledge and understanding of 'places' at Key Stage 2 were below expectations.

133. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 make good use of the school and the local area and, as a result, Year 2 pupils talk confidently about South Elmsall and what they would see on a walk around the school. They talk sensibly about their visits to the seaside and about the differences between coastal resorts and their own locality. They use appropriate geographical vocabulary, such as seaside, beach and holiday. They are developing an awareness of different environments, for example, that Filey has beaches and hotels, whereas South Elmsall is a small town in the countryside. They use information and communication technology well to draw simple maps and place on them physical and human features. Displays, weather boards and the regular use of local maps and maps of the United Kingdom and the world are widening their understanding of weather patterns and places in the world. Pupils know that they live in England. They know that ' Spain is hot' and that 'we go to America by plane because it is across the sea'.

134. At Key Stage 2, pupils look carefully at the school environment, noting aspects about the school building which they like or dislike. They think about wider environmental issues as they look at aspects of pollution. By Year 6, pupils have learned how to use a range of maps confidently and to draw their own. They have some knowledge of other communities, such as village life in India, and know that climate and geographical features affect lifestyle. Pupils understand that village life in Chembakolli, India is very different from life in South Elmsall, but there are also similarities; for example, that pupils still have to go to school. As part of a residential visit, Years 5 and 6 pupils look at how the environment can be protected and improved. The 'In the news' board helps pupils to keep abreast of current world developments and adds much to their personal development, especially their cultural awareness. In their work on their locality, they understand the impact of human factors on the environment, for example, how a road closed to traffic affects many people in different ways. Pupils are developing confidence in carrying out their own investigations, but their use of information and communication technology for research is underdeveloped.

135. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, overall. As noted in the 1997 inspection report, the use made of field trips to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of their environment is a key strength. Year 1 pupils gain in knowledge by investigating the travels of 'Barnaby Bear'. Lessons are carefully planned and activities in the better lessons are matched to the different ability levels within the class. In the lessons seen during the inspection, the teachers skilfully revised with the pupils' previous learning, using this strategy effectively to focus pupils on the next stage of learning. For example, in a good lesson in Years 1 and 2,

pupils revisited key words in their topic on investigating their surroundings such as valley, seaside, beach and dyke. The teacher's expectations were high and pupils were constantly challenged to use precise geographical terms. This resulted in good learning where pupils used terms like bay and coastline correctly, thereby developing their understanding of the physical features of seaside towns. In an unsatisfactory lesson in Key Stage 2, the level of learning was satisfactory, but constrained by the teacher allowing the misbehaviour of a few pupils to dominate and diminish the quality of teaching. This affected the concentration of others who did not achieve as much as they should, even though the lesson was well structured and interested most of the pupils. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are effectively developed in most geography lessons.

136. The management of the subject is a developing area. However, the co-ordinator has a good understanding of what needs to be done to move the subject forward. The school has adopted the government's recommended guidelines as the basis for the scheme of work. The co-ordinator has not yet monitored the quality of teaching and learning, but is monitoring curriculum coverage. This is ensuring that pupils experience a range of projects that draw on knowledge from literacy, mathematics and science. Good use is made of the expertise of classroom assistants. Other than lesson plans and the teachers' own assessment records, which are inconsistent, there is little to track the pupils' overall progress and attainment. The use of information and communication technology is a growing feature in supporting teaching and learning, particularly in Key Stage1. The co-ordinator has created a good quality web-site for use in that key stage. Resources for learning are satisfactory.

HISTORY

137. For pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6, attainment is in line with national expectations. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in both key stages.

138. The teaching of geography and history alternates each half term, so that it was not possible during the period of the inspection to evaluate the overall teaching of history in the key stages. Evidence in pupils' books and displays around the school show that pupils aged seven have developed a knowledge and understanding of the passing of time and the changes that spring from this. They understand, from the visits to the school by local people, how life in South Elmsall has changed over the last few years. Through their studies, pupils recognise that life was very different in the past. For example, pupils know from their history work on 'toys' that those from the past are often shabby, damaged or torn whereas present day toys are new, shiny and have many extra features. Teachers have a good understanding of the ideas that have to be taught, such as the use of first hand knowledge and how to draw simple conclusions. Pupils go for walks in the local area and visit historical sites, later discussing what they have seen. This complements the teaching of speaking and listening in literacy.

139. By the age of 11, most pupils have gained a greater awareness of the significance of historical events and the contributions made by people and developments in the recent and distant history of Britain and other countries. Work has been done on Ancient Egypt. Pupils also have very good knowledge of events and aspects of life during the Tudor period and the Victorian era. They use their knowledge well to describe and begin to link characteristics of past periods and societies, for example, studying social conditions in Victorian times and comparing and contrasting them with their lives today. They are developing a satisfactory understanding of the different ways of gathering evidence and distinguishing between fact and opinion. Most understand what is meant by primary sources of evidence. For example, pupils in Year 4 know that archaeological discoveries are an important source for finding out about life in the past. They know about life in Ancient Egypt and that remains, drawings and artefacts provide clues about aspects of the past. Links with other subjects are a consistent feature throughout both key stages, particularly literacy and information and communication technology for carrying out research into historical topics. Art is also used well to illustrate their work.

140. Only one lesson in Key Stage 2 was observed during the inspection. As a result, there was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. Analysis of pupils' work and discussions with pupils are also taken into account in judging the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and the standards they attain. The evidence available suggests that teaching is satisfactory, in that pupils are making satisfactory progress and cover the required elements of the National Curriculum. Pupils generally have positive attitudes to history. They are keen to discuss what they know and share their opinions. The presentation of work is variable, however, and there is an over-reliance on the use of worksheets, which limits independent learning and the degree of challenge, particularly for the higher attaining pupils.

141. The school has introduced the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's guidelines to support teachers' planning. Standards are monitored through the collection of samples of work by the co-ordinator who manages the subject satisfactorily. At present, the co-ordinator has no opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in the subject. Resources are satisfactory and augmented by the library service and items brought into school from teachers' and pupils' homes. These enhance the curriculum and have a positive effect upon the quality of pupils' learning. Pupils' work is displayed well in classrooms.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

142. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 match the levels expected nationally. The previous inspection found that the school was not covering the National Curriculum in sufficient depth, with limited opportunities for pupils to use their information and communication technology skills in other subjects. Further, the lack of confidence of some teachers in knowing how to use information and communication technology resulted in unsatisfactory progress in learning. This

is not now the case. An examination of all teachers' planning and discussions held with the co-ordinator show that the subject is now covered satisfactorily.

143. To compensate for acknowledged gaps in the teachers' knowledge and skills, the school has wisely employed an information and communication technology specialist to work with classes. This has had a significant impact on pupils' progress in acquiring knowledge of specific programs.

144. Pupils in both key stages, including those who have special educational needs, make good progress in taught sessions. This is largely due to three factors. First, pupils work in a computer suite using the most up-to-date equipment and benefit from one-to-one guidance. Secondly, pupils remember what they are told and are very confident in trying things out. Pupils' high enthusiasm and good concentration contribute much to the success of their learning. Thirdly, teachers working with the specialist assistant, introduce new programs and skills in a step-by-step manner, taking the pupils through a planned sequence of activities until they have achieved the purpose of the lesson.

145. A developing strength of the subject is the way in which teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to use their skills in other subjects. For example, in mathematics in Year 1, pupils produced bar charts of their favourite foods. In geography, in Year 2, pupils confidently used picture and text to create an imaginary island, showing good skills in using the mouse. Year 6 pupils used their word processing skills well in publishing their own newspaper. The work they produce in both key stages is of a good quality and is an improvement since the last inspection.

146. However, pupils in both key stages have had limited experience of all the threads in the National Curriculum information and communication technology programmes of study, including controlling and monitoring. The school is aware of this and teachers are currently involved in developing their expertise in this area.

147. By the age of seven, pupils are competent in using the mouse and are beginning to develop typing skills, using the keyboard, identifying letters, using the space bar, capitalising and using 'delete' and ' insert'. Pupils save their work, use the computer to generate pictures and "log on" and "log off" to start and finish their work. They produce pie and bar charts of data and confidently use 'cut and paste' techniques.

148. By the age of 11, pupils use word processors very skilfully to organise and present their work. They draft and re-draft their writing well. Pupils' keyboard and mouse skills are good. Pupils have the ability to experiment with letter font style and size. Their research skills are being developed through use of CD-ROMS and they log on to the Internet successfully to search for and to display specific information. Pupils are currently developing their skills in data handling, for example, creating spreadsheets to find the maximum area for a fixed perimeter.

149. Attitudes to information and communication technology are good. Pupils are keen to demonstrate their skills and talk confidently about their work. Pupils help each other very well and pupils with special educational needs benefit from the support of other pupils as well as support from adults. Pupils talk about trying things out at home, especially using CD-ROMS and the Internet to find information. They follow the laid down procedures for operating the computers carefully and take their work seriously.

150. The overall quality of teaching at Key Stages 1 and 2 is satisfactory. The teaching and support given by the specialist assistant are good and are effective in helping pupils to develop their skills. Good use is made of time, with teachers introducing new skills in their lessons and using opportunities at lunchtimes for pupils to develop and refine their information and communication technology skills. Planning for the use of information and communication technology in the other subjects of the curriculum is good. Throughout the school, relevant software is identified to support work within literacy and numeracy, including number work, reading and writing. Information and communication technology now has a secure place in the curriculum of all classes and this is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. The most successful teaching occurs in the lessons where the teacher spends time ensuring that pupils understand the programs and demonstrates effectively how to use them.

151. The quality of learning is good in the communicating and data handling strands of information and communication technology, as pupils are given regular opportunities to use their skills and have access to up-to-date equipment. As a result, they have confidence to try out new skills for themselves. However, in control and monitoring, skills are less well developed, particularly at Key Stage 1. There are limited resources for this aspect of information and communication technology, but opportunities are missed for pupils to use the technology available in the school and this is a weakness.

152. The subject is soundly managed and provision is generally good. It is led by a knowledgeable co-ordinator. Successful in-service training has raised the expertise and confidence of the staff, thereby addressing the key issue raised in the previous inspection effectively. There is sound planning, based on National Curriculum guidelines. Assessment is a new feature and time is required for this provision to be used in a systematic way to inform future practice. A recent innovation is the school's computer club, organised and run by the information and communication technology specialist assistant and a parent. It caters for parents, carers and pupils at the school. It is very effective in developing and consolidating computer skills. It provides an insight for parents and carers in the way computers are used in the school and, as a result, they feel more confident in supporting their children's learning. The school is well placed to raise standards further.

MUSIC

153. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in music and attainment is ahead of that normally found at the end of Years 2 and 6. At Key Stage 1, this is an improvement in the situation found when the school was first inspected. At Key Stage 2, the good standards found at the last inspection have been maintained. Pupils get a rounded and carefully balanced education in the subject with the scheme of work based on national guidelines. The requirements of the programmes of study of the National Curriculum are met effectively.

154. Whole school singing in assemblies is good. Pupils sing tunefully and musically and have a good awareness of dynamics and rhythm. For pupils in Key Stage 2, singing is enhanced by the opportunity to sing in the school choir where there is good concentration on technique. There are regular opportunities for performance in school which give pupils experience and confidence. Years 5 and 6 pupils also have the opportunity to join a mass school choir in an annual performance in the Sheffield Arena. Some 45 pupils in Key Stage 2 take the opportunity to join one of the school's recorder groups and about 20 pupils have lessons in stringed, woodwind, brass and percussion instruments, either in school or privately. Pupils hear live music from a range of sources, including a visiting group of professional musicians, an orchestra from the local community college and a group of Indian musicians. All these experiences help pupils to appreciate that music is enjoyable, but also that successful performance requires effort and discipline.

155. By the end of Year 2, pupils sing mostly in tune and have a secure understanding of the pulse of a piece of music, successfully clapping a beat at different speeds. They have good ideas about which percussion instruments should be used to 'accompany' different sections of a pirates' journey around an island and successfully play their instruments at the appropriate point in the story. Their attainment is above the level expected by the end of Year 2 and includes a number of higher level elements.

156. By the end of Year 6, pupils have covered the different aspects of the National Curriculum effectively and have a good understanding of the basic ingredients of music such as pulse, rhythm, tempo, dynamics, pitch, texture and melody. Pupils sing well and with expression and clap complex rhythms successfully. They follow rhythm cards and clap the different rhythms created. They also use percussion instruments well to underline rhythmic patterns. They understand how music evokes different moods and analyse what sorts of moods are suggested by different pictures and how they might be expressed in music.

157. The quality of teaching is good throughout both key stages. In Key Stage 2, music is taught by the co-ordinator in all classes, so that there is good provision for the systematic development of skills. Lessons involve a range of activities and this helps to retain concentration and effort. Teachers have high expectations for behaviour and effort and these are largely realised. The management of pupils is good and based on good relationships and humour. Most pupils respond well and their interest and concentration result in good progress in learning. Lessons move along briskly and support staff are used well to promote learning.

158. The subject is co-ordinated by an enthusiastic and competent musician who works hard to ensure that music plays a prominent part in the life of the school. In this, she is given good support by the headteacher. There are satisfactory systems in place for assessing attainment and progress. Most music teaching takes place in a specialist room. This is a useful facility, but is small and hot. Resources for learning are adequate. Having made good progress since the last inspection, the school is in a good position to maintain its good provision in music and to go on to improve further.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

159. Attainment is broadly in line with national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. The sound standards identified in the report of the school's first inspection have been maintained. Attainment in swimming is above average and the large majority of pupils swim at least the national expectation of 25 metres by the time they leave the school. Over half the pupils in Year 6 swim at least half a mile and several pupils swim more than a mile.

160. During the inspection, it was possible to observe dance and games at Key Stage 1 and athletics, gymnastics and games at Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, pupils understand the need to warm up and cool down before and after physical exercise. They have a good awareness of the need for safety and that they need to be aware that other pupils require for space. They create different kinds of movement in response to the sounds of different instruments, for example, spikey, sinewy, and explosive movements. In games, some pupils have good ball control and judge distance and direction well, but, for others, successful passing is less consistent.

161. In Key Stage 2, pupils in Year 3 have a satisfactory understanding of sprinting and that arms need to be used to create speed. Pupils in Year 4 are capable of some inventive movements on apparatus. Pupils in Year 5 have satisfactory skills in throwing, catching and striking a ball with small wooden bats and with rounders bats. In Year 6, some pupils have impressive cricket skills in batting, bowling and catching, but throwing is less successful, particularly over a distance. A few pupils show good skills when bowling over-arm. Overall, progress was satisfactory in the lessons observed, although there was some good progress and, in one lesson, very good progress was made.

162. The quality of teaching is good across the school. Teachers have a good level of subject understanding and lessons are planned effectively, often as a sequence, so that pupils can build up understanding and skills systematically. Lessons mostly have good pace and resources are readily available and used well. Support assistants contribute well to learning. In the very good lesson in Key Stage 2, the management of pupils was very effective and the few pupils who might have been disruptive were fully involved in the lesson. There was very good use of pupils to demonstrate successful techniques. This enabled other pupils to improve their own work and resulted in good initiative in creating new and imaginative movements. However, in other lessons, opportunities to use pupils to demonstrate were missed, so that there was less progress in learning.

163. The subject is being co-ordinated by a teacher who is relatively new to the school. She has drafted a new policy to ensure that the programmes of study of the National Curriculum are being covered. Pupils in Key Stage 2 benefit from some coaching from outside specialists, for example, in rugby league and cricket. A residential visit provides opportunities for outdoor and adventurous activities such as orienteering. Learning is also enhanced by some after-school clubs. For example, during the inspection, there were rounders and tennis clubs. Pupils get some opportunities to experience competition, for example, in 'Kwik cricket', the Wakefield

schools mini soccer competition and in the school's swimming gala. In the Minsthorpe swimming gala held this term, the school won the trophy in competition with nine other schools, with a number of pupils winning gold medals. However, this school provides fewer opportunities for competitive sport than many schools, and some parents expressed concern about this. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory and there have been some improvements to resources since the school was first inspected.

164. Pupils get a well-rounded introduction to physical education and develop sound skills. The school is in a good position to improve further.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

165. Attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6 in religious education is at the level expected in the locally agreed syllabus. This is an improvement since the 1997 inspection. However, some weaknesses identified in the report from that inspection remain. For example, a deeper understanding of different faiths is still not developed, because issues are treated too superficially. In the report from the school's first inspection, a key issue was to improve teachers' knowledge and understanding of religious education. This has not been fully achieved, partly because of changes in the teaching staff which have involved two changes of co-ordinator. The school recognises this problem and the development of religious education is a major element in the school development plan for 2001-2002. The new co-ordinator has plans for a programme to deal with the remaining deficiencies in the curriculum.

166. One of the remaining deficiencies is that the locally agreed syllabus includes a number of topics which contribute to personal, health and social education, for example, environmental issues. The coverage of these topics means that the subject makes a substantial contribution to pupils' moral and social development. However, these topics are not effectively put into a religious context so that the contribution that they make to pupils' understanding of Christianity or other faiths is unsatisfactory.

167. By the age of seven, pupils, including those with special educational needs, have made satisfactory progress. In an excellent lesson in Key Stage 1, the teacher brought in a number of objects which were precious to her. They included water and grain, precious books, including a bible, photographs and a small phial of perfume, which had belonged to her mother. Through these artefacts, pupils were able to explore what made an object precious and they added their own suggestions. By the end of the lesson, skilful teaching had led them to consider the importance of cherishing special people and the conclusion that the most precious gift is love. In this way, they were given a clear insight into a fundamental element of religion and a highly effective lesson developed their religious knowledge and understanding very well. They have a satisfactory knowledge of the major festivals of Christianity, but their understanding of how these relate to the basic beliefs of Christianity is unsatisfactory.

168. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the basic elements of Christianity, including Advent, Christmas and Easter. They have investigated some parables, including The Good Shepherd, The Good Samaritan and The Prodigal Son. They have explored concepts, such as feelings and special places, and are aware of the Ten Commandments, relating them to care of the countryside. They also have an early understanding of symbols used in Judaism and Christianity.

169. By the end of Year 6, pupils have explored a range of religions, including Islam, Hinduism and Judaism. They are aware of different versions of the creation story and the importance of light in different religions. They have investigated the importance of journeys and pilgrimages in different religions. They have explored the life of Christ and considered the season of Lent in the light of the need for self-discipline. They have considered different feelings and the sorts of things that make people feel sad or happy. However, the topics are often dealt with at a superficial level overall, and opportunities are missed to make connections which would help pupils to see links and also differences between religions, for example, in regard to the role played by light in Hinduism, Islam and Christianity.

170. The quality of teaching in the lesson observed in Key Stage 1 was excellent and stimulated mature thinking and high quality responses from six-year-olds. In Key Stage 2, teaching is sound. The assessment of attainment and progress is satisfactory. Lessons are thoroughly planned and cover the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress, overall, in Key Stages 1 and 2.
171. Provision for religious education is better than at the time of the last inspection and is now satisfactory. The co-ordinator manages the subject well and recognises that there is more to be done. Plans are in place for the subject to be improved further. The school is in a good position to move the subject forward.