

INSPECTION REPORT

HERRINGTHORPE INFANT SCHOOL

Herringthorpe, Rotherham

LEA area: Rotherham

Unique reference number: 106851

Headteacher: Mrs E B Crowcroft

Reporting inspector: Dr. Richard Perkin
14591

Dates of inspection: 31 October – 3 November 2000

Inspection number: 224527

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2000

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Herringthorpe Infant School Chatterton Drive Rotherham South Yorkshire
Postcode:	S65 2JW
Telephone number:	01709 828959
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs C Williams
Date of previous inspection:	16 March 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Richard Perkin [OIN 14591]	Registered inspector	English	What sort of a school is it?
		Art	The school's results and pupils' achievements.
		Music	How well is the school led and managed?
		Religious education	
		English as an additional language	
Susan Wood [OIN 19446]	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
George Mitchell [OIN 17085]	Team inspector	Mathematics	How well are pupils taught?
		Information technology	
		Geography	
		History	
		Equal opportunities	
		Special educational needs	
Linda Murphy [OIN 16173]	Team inspector	Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Design technology	
		Physical education	
		Special educational needs	

The inspection contractor was:

Leeds Metropolitan University
Schools Inspection Service
Fairfax Hall
Beckett Park Campus
Headingley
Leeds
LS6 3QS
0113 283 7573

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division

The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	18
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	20
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	22
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	23
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	27

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Herringthorpe Infant School caters for pupils from four to seven years old and is of average size. Its numbers vary markedly from term to term because of the entry arrangements for the reception class. At the time of the inspection, there were 151 pupils on roll with a further 51 children attending part-time in the nursery class. There were 14 children under the age of six in the reception class. Forty pupils qualify for free school meals, 26.5 per cent, which is slightly above the national average. Most of the pupils are white but there are six pupils from a variety of ethnic backgrounds for whom English is an additional language; only two of these pupils are at the early stages of learning English. Forty-one pupils, including five in the nursery, are on the register of special educational needs, 23 per cent, which is in line with the national average. Two pupils have statements of special educational needs, just over one per cent, which is in line with the national average. The school is situated in the suburb of Herringthorpe, about two miles east of the centre of Rotherham. Over two-thirds of the pupils live in council property on an estate near the school and there are above average levels of underprivilege. The school has been part of an Educational Action Zone since September 2000. Children's attainment on entry to the school, which at the time of the last inspection was in line with national levels, is now below average, particularly in language and literacy.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a rapidly improving and now effective school. Standards in English, mathematics and science are now in line with those expected of seven-year-olds and standards in reading compare very favourably with those seen in similar schools. Pupils throughout the school achieve well. The initiatives recently put in place have already had a positive effect on pupils' academic standards and on the quality of education provided. Teaching, learning, leadership and management are good. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Good quality teaching and learning result in better than average achievement for pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language.
- Standards in reading are well above those in similar schools.
- Standards in art and design are well above the national average and in physical education, they are above the national average.
- Pupils' behaviour, their relationships and their respect for others are very good. This results from the school's excellent provision for pupils' moral development and its very effective and consistent promotion of good behaviour.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, including their spiritual and social development.
- Effective leadership and management and the whole school team's very strong commitment to improvement ensure that the school's aims and values are very well reflected in its life and work.
- The nursery and reception classes provide a very good start for children in the school.

What could be improved

- Higher attainers do not achieve as well as they should in writing. *
- Standards in information and communication technology are below the national average. *
- The youngest children's language and literacy, particularly their speaking, listening and writing, are not sufficiently well developed.

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

* indicates that these are priorities in the school improvement plan.

The school's strengths considerably outweigh its weaknesses.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made a very good level of improvement since the last inspection. It no longer has serious weaknesses. Standards have improved in reading, writing, mathematics, science, religious education, design and technology and geography and are now in line with the national average. Standards in art and design were deemed to be good and are now very good; in physical education, standards have improved and are now good. Pupils now make good progress in literacy skills and the weaknesses identified in investigation in mathematics and science have now been remedied. The progress of pupils with special educational needs has improved and they now make good rather than satisfactory progress. Standards of teaching and learning have improved and are now good overall with a substantial amount of teaching that is very good and none that is unsatisfactory. There have also been substantial improvements in the leadership and management of the headteacher, key staff and the governing body. Financial planning has greatly improved and the school now gives good value for money. There have been major changes for the better in the curriculum, in planning and assessment and in provision for pupils' personal development.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	E	D	B	A
Writing	E	D	D	C
Mathematics	D	D	D	C

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

National test results for seven-year-olds in 2000 show that standards in reading were above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. While standards in writing and mathematics in the tests were below the national average, they were in line with those of similar schools. The inspection shows that standards of attainment for seven-year-olds are at nationally expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards of literacy and numeracy are at expected levels in Years 1 and 2. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, achieve well in relation to their previous levels of attainment. Children enter school with below average levels of attainment and the attainment of the majority is average by the time they leave the school. The successful implementation of the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies has had a positive impact on standards, as have the school's procedures for assessment and its use in planning. Projects to raise pupils' standards in literacy, such as the Oracy Project and the Better Reader Partnership, and attempts to involve parents further in the development of reading through such successful initiatives as the very good home-school reading diaries, have had a strong impact on standards in reading; they have not yet had a similar impact on standards of writing and too few pupils reach above-average levels in writing. Children in the nursery and reception classes have under-developed skills in speaking, listening and writing. Standards reached by seven-year-olds in information and communication technology (ICT) are below what they should be for most pupils because teachers do not yet have the confidence or the software to plan extensively for the use of ICT across the curriculum. Standards in art and design are much higher than expected and in physical education, standards are above average. Standards in religious education are at expected levels.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are keen to come to school, have positive attitudes and enjoy learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour of pupils in their classrooms and around the school is very good. The pupils respect each other, the resources and the buildings and clearly understand the impact of their actions.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils respond well to the school's encouragement to become independent and to take responsibility for their learning. Relationships are very good.
Attendance	Pupils' attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching and learning are good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Seventy-nine per cent of teaching and learning seen was good or better; 20 per cent was very good. Very good teaching was seen in the foundation stage (particularly in the nursery) and in Key Stage 1. The teaching of literacy, numeracy and science is good. Teachers are particularly skilled in promoting the development of pupils' basic skills. Pupils work hard with interest and concentration because teachers' expectations are high and they plan lessons that provide challenging activities. Behaviour in classrooms is very good as a result of the positive and caring relationships that teachers develop with the pupils. The consistent organisation of classrooms helps pupils to feel secure and confident in school and promotes the good pace of their learning. Support staff are in general effectively used to promote pupils' learning, particularly those with special education needs and English as an additional language, but are not always used to best effect.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a lively, well structured, broad and balanced curriculum that meets statutory requirements. It reflects the school's aims and is very successful in promoting pupils' physical, intellectual and personal development. Provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers and support staff work hard to make certain that lessons help these pupils to achieve their targets and regular assessments ensure that their progress is good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good. Teachers and support staff work hard to ensure that these pupils participate fully in class and elsewhere so that they make good progress.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school gives extremely clear guidance about right and wrong and has very high expectations about pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Provision for moral development is excellent. For cultural development, it is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a caring environment in which pupils of all ages and abilities can learn. Procedures for assessing and monitoring the work of the pupils are good. Arrangements for the access of delivery vehicles present an unnecessary risk to pupils and staff.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The parents are supportive of the school and the school keeps parents well informed about their children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well led and managed by the headteacher, strongly supported by an effective deputy and other effective key staff. There is a very strong commitment to improve from the whole school team. The school has a very strong capacity to improve even further.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	An effective governing body fulfils its responsibilities well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school monitors and evaluates its standards and provision well and uses the information to improve. The school's aims and values are very well reflected in its life and work.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its resources efficiently. Financial planning is good, is closely related to the school's educational priorities and makes sound use of the principles of best value. The school runs smoothly and efficiently. The young children's outside play area is not effectively used by the reception class.
The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	The school is well staffed by committed and hard-working teachers and other staff, whose professional development needs are very well met. The accommodation is satisfactory though the outside classrooms mean some uncomfortable journeys for the pupils using them. Learning resources are satisfactory overall and good in English and mathematics.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems. • The school is effectively led and managed. • The teaching is good. • Their children are expected to work hard and do their best. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some are not happy with the amount of homework their children are expected to do. • Some feel that the school does not provide a wide enough range of activities outside of lessons.

Inspection findings fully support the positive views of parents. Inspection judgements are that arrangements for and the use of homework are good and that the school makes satisfactory provision for activities outside of lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

- 1 Pupils' performance in reading in the 2000 national tests for seven-year-olds was above the national average and well above the average for schools with similar free school meals figures. The percentage of pupils reaching above average levels in reading was also greater than in other schools. In writing, pupils' performance was below the national average but in line with the average for similar schools. Whilst the proportion of pupils achieving the accepted level in writing was similar to that nationally, no pupils achieved the higher level. The reading results marked a significant improvement on those of previous years and were much better than those at the time of the last inspection, the result of the school's successful targeting of reading over the past year. The attainment of boys and girls over the past four years has been similar, more so than nationally, where girls clearly outperform boys. In the 2000 results, however, boys' performance was even closer to that of the girls in reading and writing. The school's targeted attempts to motivate boys to achieve are obviously being successful. Results in reading and writing over the past three years have steadily improved although the school is aware of the need to improve the performance of above-average pupils in writing. In the 2000 national tests in mathematics, pupils' performance was below the national average but in line with the average in similar schools. The percentage of pupils attaining above average levels was below the national average. Boys achieved better than girls by more than the national trend. Trends in pupils' performance in mathematics have been slightly downwards before this year, when performance has slightly improved. Teacher assessments for seven-year-olds in science showed a below average percentage of pupils reaching the expected level but an average proportion reaching the higher level. In comparison with similar schools, the percentage attaining the expected level in science was about average, but the proportion achieving the higher level in science was above average.
- 2 Levels of attainment of the children entering the nursery are in a wide range but overall are below those expected, particularly in language and literacy. Many of the higher attainers in the nursery transfer to other schools and, by the time the remaining children move into the reception class, their speaking and listening skills and their writing skills are still below those expected. Most children spend little time in the reception class because entry occurs at three different points in the year and because for the past few years the intake in the summer term has been much greater than in the other terms. Consequently, although children continue to make progress in developing their skills in all the areas of learning in the reception class, their attainment in speaking, listening and writing by the time they begin Year 1 is still below average. However, in all the other areas of learning, most children reach levels of attainment that are expected for their age.
- 3 The standards for seven-year-olds in reading, mathematics and science found at the last inspection have been improved and the weaknesses identified in investigations in mathematics and science have been effectively remedied. The good strategies in place for literacy and numeracy are having a positive impact on standards. Initiatives such as the Oracy Project and the Better Reader Partnership, together with successful attempts to involve parents more actively in their children's learning through, for example, the use of very good quality home-school reading diaries, have already led to significant improvements in reading standards. Major improvements in procedures for assessing pupils' work and in using those assessments to plan lessons are also having a

significant impact. The school has met its targets for 2000 and has set realistic targets for 2001.

- 4 Inspection judgement is that, by the time they leave the school, most pupils' overall attainment is in line with that expected nationally. Pupils' attainment in English is broadly in line with the national average for seven-year-olds and, while standards in writing for higher attainers are still below what they should be, the school has plans to improve them. Pupils are achieving well overall in terms of their prior attainment. Literacy skills are effectively developed across the curriculum. Standards of reading are boosted by the skilled and systematic teaching of strategies for tackling unfamiliar words, by frequent opportunities, carefully recorded, to read to adults and by effective group guided reading sessions in the literacy hour. Consequently, most pupils read with accuracy and understanding; higher attainers read with fluency and expression. Most pupils' speaking and listening skills are well developed through the frequent opportunities they have for talking to the class or to the school in assemblies. Pupils write for a range of purposes and audiences, using a reasonable variety of forms, including letters and poems. Most write reasonably correctly with appropriate levels of punctuation, spelling and handwriting, though not often at great length. Pupils do not use information and communication technology enough to boost their English skills. An important factor in the progress that pupils make is the consistency with which teachers implement the school's literacy strategy and other initiatives.
- 5 Standards in mathematics are in line with the national average. Pupils have a sound understanding of number and can use a variety of strategies in working with numbers up to and beyond 100. They are beginning to apply their knowledge to problems and higher attainers can generalise from individual cases. They know the names of common shapes and can measure using standard units. They handle and record data with appropriate skills. Teachers promote numeracy well across the curriculum, notably in geography and music.
- 6 Standards in science are in line with the national average. Pupils are relatively good at carrying out investigations. They have sound observation skills and can make reasonable predictions of what might happen. Many understand whether a test is fair or not. They can use a variety of ways to record their results.
- 7 Standards in information and communication technology are below those expected for seven-year-olds. Pupils are reasonably competent in word processing and, as well as typing in their text, some can make simple alterations to the way the text is formatted. Many pupils, however, have more limited skills. Pupils can program a floor robot and manipulate data to some extent but none of these skills is well developed and, for most pupils, they are under-developed. Pupils are, however, good at using the computer to produce effective patterns and pictures. Pupils use the computers very little in most subjects.
- 8 Standards in religious education are in line with those indicated in the locally agreed syllabus for seven-year-olds. Pupils have only a limited knowledge and understanding of religions other than Christianity and Judaism. They are, however, good at applying their knowledge to their own experience.
- 9 Standards in art and design are well above those expected for seven-year-olds. The school's policy to develop skills in five areas of art begins in the nursery, where children mix their colours with confidence and delicacy, and is applied systematically and consistently throughout the rest of the school so that, by the time they leave the school, pupils paint, draw, use pen and ink, sew and handle clay with great confidence and skill.

Consequently the work that is so effectively displayed is of a very high quality. Standards in physical education, especially in dance, are above those expected for seven-year-olds. Standards in design and technology, geography and music are those expected for seven-year-olds. No judgement could be made about standards of attainment in history because of the limited evidence available.

- 10 Pupils of all levels of attainment make good progress and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support from teaching and non-teaching staff and, consequently, make good progress across the curriculum. This is particularly true in relation to their development of speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Where focused teaching for individuals and groups takes place, this ensures their progress in this key area. Pupils for whom English is an additional language also make good progress because of the level and quality of support they receive and because the teachers are skilled at ensuring that pupils understand what is required of them. Higher attaining pupils make good progress because of the stimulating tasks that are set for them and the level of challenge in lessons; the school is aware of the need to develop further strategies to improve the level of writing for higher attainers.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 11 Pupils' attitudes to school are good. They are keen to come to school and show interest in their lessons where they settle quickly to task and activities. Pupils listen carefully in class sessions and eagerly respond to questions, giving answers that are sensible and relevant to discussions. A good example of this was seen during a religious education lesson following the reading of the parable of The Good Samaritan. Pupils were able to share their thought and feelings in a sensitive and mature manner. Pupils clearly know what is expected of them and are often eager to please the class teacher. They work sensibly and generally quietly, usually sustaining concentration whether they are working as individuals, in pairs or in a group.
- 12 The attitudes of the very youngest children in the school are very good. They love to come to school and at the beginning of each session immediately get busy with their tasks for the day. They need much help to enable them to speak and listen in larger groups but quickly develop an understanding of the school's values and the importance it places on kindness and care. The respect shown by adults sets a very good example for children who take care of one another, being helpful, courteous and willing to share. For example, they are kind and helpful to others and extend their care well when they look after their pet guinea pig, making sure it is clean, comfortable and has a regular supply of fresh food and water. Resources for teaching and learning are very well looked after because children enjoy using them and even at this early age appreciate the breadth and quality of books and other items, some made especially for them by the teachers. Children put much effort into their work and on the whole concentrate well because they become engrossed in the rich selection of activities provided. A mark of their personal development is the good understanding they have about their work because the teachers take much time to explain and consolidate routines and to talk about the underlying reasons why particular tasks are important.
- 13 The school's ethos promotes very good behaviour and the pupils respect each other, the resources and buildings. Pupils clearly understand the impact of their actions on others. Pupils' behaviour is very good throughout the school day; this marks an improvement since the last inspection. The school is an orderly community and the majority of pupils move around the building sensibly. On the rare occasions when pupils behave inappropriately, teachers quickly address the problem without distracting from the focus

of the lesson. Behaviour in the playgrounds is good although there is currently little structured play provided. The school has just embarked on a fun and fitness club to develop pupils' knowledge of playground rhymes and games. Pupils respect property and handle resources well. Pupils clearly understand what is expected of them and understand the school's rules and expectations. There are no recorded exclusions in the last academic year.

- 14 Relationships are very good throughout the school community, an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils know the daily routines of the school and quickly respond to teachers' requests. All the adults who work in the school act as very good role models for the pupils. Pupils are provided with a range of responsibilities such as lunch box and register monitors, which they enjoy. They respond well to these opportunities. For example, two pupils, given responsibility for organising the music for assembly, made their own choice of music rather than use the teacher's suggestion.
- 15 Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to school, clearly enjoy their work and are keen to learn. Their behaviour is very good in class lessons but very occasionally deteriorates in small group work. They work very well with other pupils and staff and they willingly take on responsibilities around the school. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are very well integrated into the life of the school and clearly enjoy their work, responding particularly well to the good support they receive.
- 16 The school's attendance figures are satisfactory, maintaining the standards seen at the last inspection. The vast majority of pupils consistently arrive at school on time to enable the school day to start promptly. The school does find that more families are taking holidays during term time but they regularly emphasise that this can be detrimental to pupils' learning. Absences are always quickly followed up. Registers are completed quickly and imaginatively at the start of each session, often using a theme such as favourite animals, or with high and low voice as seen at the start of a science lesson on pitch. Teachers often invite pupils to suggest a number pattern that describes the number of pupils present. As a result, pupils' learning in a number of subjects benefits from an apparently mundane activity.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 17 Through the school, standards of teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection and they are now consistently good. In well over half of the lessons seen, teaching and learning were good, in a further fifth, they were very good and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. A particular strength is the attention that teachers give to the development of basic skills, which results in pupils making good progress in reading and mathematics.
- 18 In the nursery and reception classes, members of staff have a very clear, shared understanding of the needs of young children, which leads to the creation of stimulating and imaginative activities that encourage effective learning. This is very evident in the nursery, where children become involved in a wide range of areas, working with concentration and interest in a calm and purposeful manner. A good example was seen in the outside area, which is small but very well planned so as to encourage children not only in their physical development but also in their number, language and co-operative skills. As yet, the reception children are not able to make full use of this area but the school has plans to develop this aspect. There are also insufficient opportunities for children to work in small mixed ability groups where they can concentrate on the development of their speaking, listening and writing skills.

- 19 In Years 1 and 2, teachers have a good understanding of most areas of the curriculum and consequently pupils make good progress in developing knowledge and skills across subjects, particularly in mathematics, reading, art and physical education. An exception is in information and communication technology, where teachers are less confident in the use of computers and other technical equipment. There are, however, clear and appropriate plans for training to take place so that teachers' expertise and pupils' skills can be developed. The national literacy and numeracy strategies are well established and understood by staff and this is having a positive impact on pupils' attainment.
- 20 A strength in the teaching is in the quality of planning, which is much improved since the previous inspection and is now based on effective assessments. As a result, lessons have clear and relevant objectives, teaching is purposeful and pupils have a good understanding of the reasons for their activities. Homework is well planned to support and extend pupils' learning in lessons. Teachers' questioning is focused and this leads to high quality discussions where pupils are able to express their thoughts about a topic. This was seen very clearly in a history lesson about Guy Fawkes for Year 1 and 2 pupils, where the clarity of the teacher's objective led to questioning which explored pupils' existing knowledge and helped them to both express and develop their ideas about an important event from the past. All pupils were involved, regardless of their level of attainment or background, as the teacher varied the depth of questions to match pupils' understanding. This awareness of equality of opportunity is a consistent feature of the way that the school operates.
- 21 The very high quality of relationships between pupils and staff is another notable feature. Both teaching and support staff are skilled in managing pupils in a firm, caring and positive manner. The resulting very good behaviour leads to lessons where the pace of learning is rapid, with minimum interruptions. In this atmosphere, pupils concentrate well and are able to work independently in unsupervised groups allowing teachers and support staff to move between groups picking up learning points with individuals. In mathematics lessons, for example, pupils often work in groups with others who are at similar stages, on tasks that match their particular level of knowledge, rather than the whole class working on the same activity. This has a significant positive effect on the speed with which individual pupils acquire knowledge and skills and allows teachers time to assess how pupils are doing so that they can plan the level of future work.
- 22 Lessons begin promptly and teachers and pupils make full use of the time available for learning. Learning resources are well prepared – work sheets and equipment are appropriate to the activities and help to motivate and interest the pupils. Teachers also make good use of artefacts, books and pictures in displays to provide examples that extend and reinforce pupils' knowledge. Classrooms are well organised in similar ways, which helps pupils to feel secure as they move through the school. Support staff are generally well used, particularly in supporting the good progress of pupils who are learning English as an additional language; however, they sometimes take a passive role or work on menial tasks when they could be more fully involved in working with pupils.
- 23 The same can be said of the involvement of support staff in the education of pupils who have special educational needs. Most examples seen are of good support both within and outside classrooms, where staff are well prepared to aid the learning of individuals and small groups. Good questioning and appropriate activities are used to challenge and improve what the pupils know, understand and can do. Detailed records are kept and regular assessments ensure that pupils' progress is monitored and enhanced. In a session taught by a learning support assistant, a pupil responded confidently to the rigorous questioning and the opportunity to assess his own progress. Sometimes, the unobtrusive support provided in classrooms helps pupils with special educational needs

to be fully involved in activities, when they might otherwise be unable to participate. The pupils make good progress, particularly in developing speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. There are, however, occasions when support staff take too much of a back seat and this delays progress.

- 24 In summary, improvements in the quality of teaching and learning have had a significant, positive impact on pupils' standards of progress and attainment. All staff can take credit for the professional way in which they have taken responsibility for developing their practice.

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

- 25 The school provides a bright and lively curriculum. It is broad and balanced and very successfully promotes pupils' physical, intellectual and personal development. Statutory requirements are met, including those for religious education
- 26 The school's aim of providing an enriching, practical curriculum that uses assessment well is met very strongly. A particular strength in the curriculum is the way in which all aspects are brought together to provide pupils with a broad understanding of particular topics. This approach is very well demonstrated through the use of educational visits that take place each term for each class and considerably enrich pupils' learning across a range of subjects. Another strength is the way in which the curriculum is planned over a two-year cycle to facilitate equality of opportunity to the mixed year group class and to make sure that children of the same age but in parallel classes receive the same education. The approach to medium and short-term planning is school wide and an advantage in this is that teachers work well in teams to plan the work each term and pool ideas. Provision for extra-curricular activities is adequate and includes a book club and a fitness club. It is less than might be otherwise expected because of the absence of the member of staff responsible for music and physical education.
- 27 Since the last inspection, sound policies and schemes of work based on national schemes have been used to make sure that skills and knowledge are built upon step-by-step. The work has been developed in consultation with staff and a clear programme of review is in place.
- 28 The school places a good emphasis on basic skills through a number of approaches, which link well together to promote oracy and reading in particular. The Oracy Project and the Better Readers Partnership involve trained adults, including some parents, in working with pupils on basic speaking, listening and reading skills and these are having a good impact on pupils' standards. Strategies for teaching literacy are good and the national strategy for literacy is implemented well with clear impact on the raising of standards in reading and, to a lesser extent, in writing. The extension of writing activities across the school is under-developed and as a result, though standards are broadly typical of pupils' ages by seven, the higher attainers are not pushed sufficiently far in their writing. Strategies for teaching a daily lesson in mathematics are good and are influential in raising standards in mathematics. Progress has been made in the provision of computers, though the application of information and communication technology across all subjects is not yet rigorous enough, resulting in standards that are below those typically expected of seven-year-olds.
- 29 Pupils with special educational needs are able to participate fully in the curriculum. The same is true of pupils who have English as an additional language. Teachers and support staff ensure that they are fully involved in everything that the school has to offer

and that their work is pitched at an appropriate level. Indeed, all pupils, regardless of attainment, age, gender or ethnicity, have equal access to the curriculum offered by the school, in line with its agreed policy.

- 30 Children in the nursery and reception classes are provided with a rich and very well organised curriculum very appropriately based on national guidance, which is implemented very well. Progress for the nursery and reception children is planned in measured steps and brought together through an investigative approach. This not only provides good opportunities for developing independence and collaborative work but makes sure that there is a very smooth transition between the nursery and reception classes. The curriculum prepares children very well for the early work in the National Curriculum. A great strength in the nursery is the planning for structured play to take place out of doors. However, the provision of outside play for the children of reception age is a shortcoming. The school is aware of this and is already giving thought as to how best the situation can be improved. The long-term curricular plan for the foundation stage of learning is insufficiently precise in identifying the exact aspects to be taught at particular times.
- 31 Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good and integrated into the rest of the curriculum. For example, health education, sex education and awareness of drugs misuse are mostly taught through the science curriculum. Time is set aside in each class for a formal discussion each week when everyone has the opportunity to contribute. It is a good opportunity for talking about moral issues such as behaviour and school rules. It is also a vehicle through which pupils can talk about feelings in an atmosphere of respect and consideration for others.
- 32 The good contribution of the community to pupils' learning is sustained through the Education Action Zone and through work with local charities. The school provides work experience for older pupils from other establishments, which is much appreciated by the young people fortunate enough to gain a placement in the school. Pupils are appropriately prepared for the next stage of their education and transfer procedures to the adjacent junior school are effective.
- 33 The very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has particular strengths in the provision for moral development, which is excellent. The school makes very clear what is acceptable and what is not and invests time talking to parents when children first start school so that there is a joint understanding of important matters. The school dedicates much time and energy into this aspect of school life. Rules are set out thoughtfully and clearly and adults have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour. A very consistent approach by all adults and a very positive response from pupils helps to create a very harmonious and happy school where teaching and learning of good quality is a way of life. Pupils quickly learn to consider others and they contribute to local charities. Pupils respect property and really look after the learning resources provided for them. Respect for the individual is a high priority for the school.
- 34 Collective worship provides very good opportunities for prayer and reflection because it is well planned. A notable aspect of the school is that it gives time to pupils so that they can think things through for themselves. Assemblies are very good and led equally well by a range of staff. The seating arrangements and music all help to promote a sense of community and belonging where the school's aims are affirmed daily. A sense of ease pervades these special times and pupils of all ages are confident to stand up and answer questions clearly so that every one can hear their contributions, as when one pupil explains a Bible by saying that it 'helps you to live your life'. Spirituality is promoted very well through art and the school abounds with displays of very good

quality, which encourage pupils to appreciate the joy of nature and colour in the world about them.

- 35 Pupils' social development is very good because of the very effective provision the school makes. Pupils are encouraged to work hard and play hard harmoniously. They are encouraged to behave responsibly and to respect and value other people. As a result, pupils are friendly and polite. They are encouraged to work together in pairs and groups in lessons, as when they move apparatus in physical development or identify and record sounds in a science lesson. Pupils take on simple responsibilities such as returning the register to the school office, organising the music for assemblies and serving lunch. At lunchtimes, children develop good table manners as a result of eating together in a family atmosphere, which is well supervised. The discrete discussion time in each class contributes very well to pupils' social development as it promotes speaking and listening skills and the importance of listening to the views of others.
- 36 The good provision for pupils' cultural development includes an appreciation of the immediate locality through walks and study. Cultural development is promoted through geography and religious education and through the wealth of displays around the school. Good emphasis is placed on other cultures and the school grasps opportunities provided by the children. For example, a parent helped the school in the traditional celebration of the Chinese New Year and a striking dragon was made and celebration food cooked. Pupils have access to a wide variety of cultural experiences through visitors to the school and through visits to a wide range of venues. For example, pupils visited the Yorkshire Sculpture Park to look at the work of other artists and consequently made their classrooms into sculpture parks. They remembered the work of Sir Anthony Carew and recognised the architect's name when the Millennium Bridge was recently in the news.
- 37 The school has yet to include aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in its weekly or termly planning to highlight even more opportunities for promoting this already strong aspect of school life. Nonetheless, very good improvement has been made since the last inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 38 The school has good procedures to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety, and uses appropriate agencies to support the needs of individual pupils. The headteacher is responsible for child protection and ensures that all members of staff are aware of relevant procedures. The school's policy for child protection, which is being reviewed, is supported by the local education authority's guidelines. All pupils are well known to staff and pupils feel confident to approach any adult if they have worries or concerns. Pupils are also encouraged to support their peers if they are hurt or upset. There are clear procedures that are followed to report and record accidents. All aspects of health and safety in the school are well documented and half-termly fire evacuation practices are held. The school provides a safe and caring environment in which pupils and staff can work. The school's arrangements for the access for delivery vehicles during school hours is unsatisfactory and presents an unnecessary risk to staff and pupils. Since the last inspection, the school has developed clear policies and procedures to ensure that health, safety and welfare of all people who work in the school and these are clearly understood and followed by all the staff.
- 39 The school has very good procedures to monitor attendance and parents are very clear about the procedures they have to follow if their child is absent from school. The school has very effective procedures in place to support the needs of all pupils during their time at the school. In particular, the school promotes pupils' good behaviour very strongly

and has very effective systems for dealing with the very few examples of bullying that arise. Pupils' academic and personal development needs are met through staff knowing each individual child well and they quickly recognise any change in behaviour or attitude. Pupils with special educational needs are very well provided for with personal needs included in their individual educational programs.

- 40 The school has good procedures in place to assess the academic performance of the pupils and these are used very well to meet the needs of all pupils including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Assessments for the very youngest children are of good quality, of a sensible amount and are used well to impact most positively on the teaching and learning. Initial assessments are clearly analysed and used well. In this, the school works hard, as it admits children at three points during the year. The school is not one willing to sit on its laurels and, though assessment is good and working well, the school is striving to improve it even further; it is rightly looking to develop some aspects such as physical development in more detail. Assessments are used effectively in planning and have a positive impact of pupils' attainment and progress. Very good attention is paid to pupils' health and personal development. Detailed records are kept and updated regularly.
- 41 The progress of pupils who have special educational needs is carefully monitored and the school's systems help to ensure that these pupils are identified at an early stage and that they receive relevant and appropriate work that promotes their learning. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements of special educational need, have clear targets that provide small steps of progress, helping pupils to have regular success and building their confidence. Outside agencies such as speech therapists and psychologists are used effectively to support the school's work with these pupils. Similarly effective systems are in place to monitor and promote the progress of pupils for whom English is an additional language.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 42 Parents have positive attitudes towards the school and are satisfied with what it provides and achieves. They feel welcome in the school, find all the staff very approachable and are generally very pleased with their children's progress. Some parents are concerned about the amount of homework that is set and the consistency of approach to this throughout the school; however, the inspection judgment is that homework is used consistently and well and makes a significant difference to pupils' learning, particularly in English and mathematics. Reading is sent home daily and other activities, such as number work or simple research tasks, are a regular feature. The inspection team found this to be appropriate for the age of children. Some parents feel that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons. The school has a bookshop and has recently started a fun and fitness club, through the Education Action Zone. The choir and recorder group are currently not running because of staff absence. The inspection judgement is that this is reasonable provision for these young children.
- 43 The school provides parents with good opportunities to become involved in their children's learning. Parents receive regular good quality information through newsletters and information sheets. However, little written information is sent home about what the pupils are studying. This is an opportunity missed to enable parents to support their children's learning by sharing first hand experiences or artefacts. The school holds curriculum information evenings for parents, which have recently included sessions about mathematics and language development. The annual written reports given at the end of the academic year inform parents of the areas their children have studied over the

year and the progress they have made. Termly targets are also set and discussed with parents at each of the three parent and teacher consultation evenings held during the year. Parents of children for whom English is an additional language are kept fully informed of their children's progress. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are consulted at all stages to ensure a full understanding of their children's needs.

- 44 Close liaison with parents and carers is a mark of the work with the younger children. A good induction process is in place and parents are kept well informed through helpful leaflets and a very useful notice board, which includes detailed information about what is to be taught. Similar notice boards are placed outside each classroom and they contain useful information for parents. The work with parents is further developed through the use of homework. Reading diaries are used very well and form an extremely useful dialogue between parents and carers and teachers which impacts considerably on the quality of teaching and learning in reading. Communication with parents has improved since the last inspection.
- 45 The Friends of Herringthorpe Infant School provide a range of social and fund raising events to help provide additional resources for the school. They have recently purchased a computer, physical education equipment and some musical instruments for the school. The school fully and rightly appreciates the dedication of the group. Parents have also been involved in making story sacks for the school and a number provide useful support for the pupils by receiving training and participating in the Oracy Project and the Better Readers Partnership; this help has a positive impact of pupils' standards of reading and speaking and listening in particular.
- 46 The school's aim to foster and develop an effective partnership between home and school is very successful.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 47 The good leadership and management of the school make a strong contribution to pupils' achievements and to the quality of teaching and learning. This marks a considerable improvement since the last inspection. The parents also feel that the leadership and management of the school are good. The effective headteacher, with good support from the local educational authority, has worked closely with a committed and competent deputy headteacher and other key staff and a hard-working governing body to put right the faults identified by the last inspection and to provide a clear and coherent educational direction for the school to improve even more. The management of the school works closely as a team. There is a very strong commitment to improvement and high achievement from all staff and governors and the school's aims and values are very consistently reflected in its life and work. The school has recently become part of an Education Action Zone. The thinking that this has generated is already proving beneficial and the fact that some key personnel have already been working in the school in other capacities promises a continuing positive impact on standards and quality of education. The school has a very strong capacity to improve still further.
- 48 A number of factors have strongly contributed to the school's very high levels of improvement. Further training for the headteacher helped her to clarify the school's priorities and to take a more dynamic lead. The decision to focus on the assessment of pupils' work, the careful recording and analysis of those assessments and their use in planning further work for the pupils has enabled much more precise and appropriate targeting of activities and material for groups and individuals; the quality of the ensuing procedures and their effective implementation has led to marked improvements in pupils' attainment in the focus subjects, English and mathematics. Careful monitoring of teaching and learning, particularly in English and mathematics, has ensured that the new policies and practices are implemented consistently. At the same time, energetic and effective co-ordinators have been delegated the power to implement the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and to introduce a number of other initiatives, targeted initially at standards in reading. The effective involvement of the local authority support services and parents have enabled initiatives such as the Oracy Project, the Better Readers Partnership and the very good quality home-school reading diaries to operate to very good effect and to raise pupils' reading standards to their present levels. Co-ordinators of subjects that are less urgent priorities are less active in monitoring teaching and pupils' achievements in their subjects and some have only just taken up their responsibilities. Most, however, have a clear view of where they would like their subject to go. The special needs co-ordinator works closely with the governor responsible and also liaises with the co-ordinator from the junior school to ensure a smooth transition when pupils move to the next phase. The leadership and management of the nursery and reception classes are very good. The school has most effectively established over a short period of time an area especially for the foundation stage of pupils' learning. The accommodation is particularly well used and is most conducive to teaching and learning because of the way it is set out and managed. Resources are good and many made by staff are of a very high order. All of this impacts very well indeed on the standards achieved by the very youngest children in the school.
- 49 The school's policy for equality of opportunity is well designed and consistently applied. All staff are aware of its implications for the way in which they treat pupils and they provide good role models for pupils to follow.
- 50 The governing body was re-formed in January 2000 to act as the appropriate authority for the infant school and it has worked hard to improve its effectiveness; it fulfils its

statutory duties well. This marks a very good improvement since the last inspection. Under the experienced and energetic leadership of its chairperson, it has established an efficient committee structure and appointed committed and effective governors to take on key responsibilities. The governing body has played a significant part in shaping the direction of the improvements made and it knows the school's strengths and weaknesses well. Close liaison between the headteacher and the chair of governors is echoed in the way that other governors with responsibilities work closely with relevant subject and aspect co-ordinators; for example, the literacy governor and the literacy co-ordinator have worked closely to monitor teaching, learning and pupils' attainment in English, thus enabling important spending decisions to be made as a result of the knowledge gained.

- 51 The school monitors and evaluates pupils' achievements and the quality of teaching well and acts sensibly on the information gained to inform the good quality school improvement plan, in which the school's priorities are identified and carefully costed. The monitoring of teaching and learning is also used in the school's effective staff development processes that have already had a positive effect on the quality of teaching through the setting of targets for individual teachers. Systems for the induction of new staff are also good. However, the school has not yet fully met the requirements for staff performance management.
- 52 Effective financial planning is based on accurate up-to-date financial information and relates to the priorities identified in the school development plan. The school uses its financial and other resources well to support learning. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs is well managed with income used efficiently to provide staff and resources. Financial control is good and the school runs smoothly and efficiently. The school makes sound use of the principles of best value. The good value for money that the school now provides marks a very good improvement since the last inspection.
- 53 The good levels of staffing are used efficiently to take account of the large summer term intake and, in the meantime, to provide extra support for targeted groups of pupils to improve their English skills. The committed and hard-working teaching and support staff operate effectively as a team to apply the school's policies consistently. While the support staff are well deployed at times in supporting pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language, sometimes their use is not sufficiently geared towards improving pupils' learning. The school's accommodation is satisfactory but the outside classrooms present problems for pupils in inclement weather in moving to and from the main building. The young children's outside play area is not effectively used by the reception class. The level of learning resources is satisfactory overall and good in subjects such as English and mathematics. This marks an improvement since the last inspection.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 54 In order to further improve standards, the headteacher, staff and governors should:
- Ensure that more pupils attain above average standards in writing by:
 - planning more opportunities for the direct teaching of writing skills in smaller groups from the outset of the child's time in the school;
 - making more extensive use of information and communication technology to motivate pupils' writing by providing more opportunities for writing for particular purposes and audiences;
 - extending to pupils' writing some of the good practices used in successfully involving parents in improving standards of reading. *(paragraphs 1, 28, 72, 74)*
 - Raise standards in information and communication technology by:
 - implementing the planned programme for staff development;
 - acquiring appropriate software;
 - providing planned opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in ICT across the curriculum. *(paragraphs 4, 7, 74, 78, 105-108)*
 - Develop children's speaking and listening skills in the foundation stage by providing more opportunities for children to be taught and to practise these skills in smaller groups of mixed attainment *(paragraphs 18, 59, 61, 65)*
- 55 Minor issues:
1. Make more effective use of support staff throughout the school. *(paragraphs 22, 53)*
 2. Make better use of outside play facilities for the reception class. *(paragraphs 30, 53, 65)*
 3. Improve the arrangements for the access of delivery vehicles. *(paragraph 38)*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	36
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	53

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	20	59	22	0	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 – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	25.5	151
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	40

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	5	36

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	7.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.4
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	38	35	73

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	31	32	37
	Girls	29	30	28
	Total	60	62	65
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (69)	85 (78)	89 (82)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (86)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	31	36	35
	Girls	28	26	28
	Total	59	62	63
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (74)	85 (84)	86 (88)
	National	88 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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	1
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	4
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	145
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	90

Financial information

Financial year	1998 - 99
	£
Total income	407772
Total expenditure	407033
Expenditure per pupil	1817
Balance brought forward from previous year	5125
Balance carried forward to next year	5864

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	200
Number of questionnaires returned	57

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	5		2
My child is making good progress in school.	43	50	7		
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	45	4		5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	49	19	2	4
The teaching is good.	44	49			
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	30	56	11	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	30	5		
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	51	46	2		2
The school works closely with parents.	35	54	5	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	53	28	9	2	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	36	52	7		5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	18	36	12	9	25

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

Introduction

- 56 Very good improvement has been made since the last inspection when progress was unsatisfactory for five-year-olds, the curriculum did not meet their needs and provision did not build on the good start made in the nursery. The overall provision for the children in the nursery and reception classes is now good. The good and at times very good teaching and learning, the effective and consistent quality of curricular planning and the clear determination for even further improvement all play a strong part in this. The aims of the curriculum are very well put into practice for the very young children and include a clear focus to allow time for structured play and for children to wonder, imagine and pretend.
- 57 As a result of the effective provision, pupils achieve well and reach nationally expected standards by the time they are in Year 1. In speaking, listening and writing, standards are below the level typically expected because, although children also achieve well in these aspects, they enter the nursery at a generally lower level than in other areas of their learning and consequently have more ground to make up. A significant proportion of higher attaining children from the nursery transfer to other schools, leaving the reception class with much work to do to push children to attain the standards that they do.

Personal, social and emotional development

- 58 Personal and social education is nurtured very well through carefully planned activities, very well established routines and the good use of day-to-day assessment. As a result, pupils make good progress and are on target to achieve appropriately for their age by the time they join Year 1. Good teaching overall effectively makes sure that children's independence is promoted and that children have good opportunities in learning to make decisions for themselves. As a result, children's concentration improves well. Across the foundation stage, children quickly develop an understanding of what is expected of them because teachers are very good at explaining and engaging children in their work. Very good teaching in the nursery includes a fine attention to detail. For example, when a child spends too great a length of time on one activity to the exclusion of other work, the activity is moved and re-directed to encourage the child to use a different part of the nursery, work with other children but yet remain within the familiarity of the original choice of resource. This encourages children's confidence and broadens opportunities for developing relationships. Pupils learn at a good rate.

Communication, language and literacy

- 59 Pupils achieve well in terms of their prior attainment because the quality of teaching is good overall and often very good in the nursery where the awareness of the rate of learning of each group of children and of individuals is an important factor in making sure that children's learning is maximised as much as possible. This very good overview is not quite so well established in the reception class, where, for example, when the teaching focused on guiding children's reading, the discrete group working with the teacher made good progress but other children in the class were not so well employed. Lower attainers insufficiently developed their speaking and listening skills at that time because the way that the groups were arranged meant the less able children had no

exemplar patterns to follow. Speaking and listening is developed better in whole class teaching in the reception class. Even so, standards in speaking and listening are below those typically expected of children of their age. For example, the teacher has to remind children to look at the person to whom they speak and has to work very hard to make sure every one contributes a word or phrase to discussions. This special time for speaking and listening is very helpful to those children new to learning English and also to those with special educational needs and they make good progress. The nursery children missed out on the formal small group discussions because during inspection they only met together in a whole large group, which gave too little opportunity for all to contribute their thoughts and feelings. Through all other activities in the nursery, opportunities are grasped and promoted very well to develop children's skills in spoken language. Speaking and listening are a focus of the majority of activities.

- 60 Standards in reading are appropriate for children's ages. Higher attainers can match the spoken word to the printed word. Middle attainers can read together with adults and lower attainers enjoy and pay close attention to the pictures. Children gain a particularly good understanding of their learning because the teaching rightly focuses on what it is that will make them better readers such as reading daily, taking books to read at home and taking cues from pictures. Children respond very well and try very hard with their reading, making good progress. Day-to-day assessment is very good in reading and group records are up-to-date and used well. Reading diaries have a positive effect on children's attainment through the involvement of parents and carers because the comments are diagnostic and give focus to the next step in children's learning. Children enjoy books and handle them with care. They make their own books and read them or tell the story to others, further promoting their love of books.
- 61 A significant number of children enter the nursery with well below average skills in writing and, though the quality of teaching is good, resulting in good progress, children do not reach the expected level. They have a wealth of opportunities in early writing because the nursery provides a very wide range of writing and drawing activities within a rich environment. Reasons for writing are very much part of structured play; children write cheques in play about banks, make lists and tickets and produce individual booklets to read. By the end of the reception year, children's writing is still immature and below that typically expected of children of their age. Pencils are on the whole not gripped correctly, and this means that letters are often sharp and not sufficiently well rounded. Children find it very hard to write and many are reluctant to do so even given the great encouragement they receive. The most effective writers can form a string of letters and are beginning to match the sound of letters to the written ones. Very, very few children remember to leave spaces between words. Lower attainers resort to making light marks on the paper which resemble drawings rather than writing. The modelling of writing by the teacher is not as strong as it could be. Too little attention is given to teaching children how to hold pencils correctly. Children acquire an incorrect pencil grip and this is hard to overcome.

Mathematical development

- 62 Children's mathematical understanding is developed well and their achievement is good because the quality of teaching and learning is effective. Tasks are well matched to children's attainment and, by using parts of the national strategy for teaching numeracy, children are making good gains in acquiring skills and confidence with numbers. Day-to-day assessment of good quality enables questions to be very well matched to children's levels of understanding and means that knowledge is built upon step by step. The great attention given by teachers to the type and use of resources for learning encourages children to use and apply their mathematical learning in a range of situations. This was

the case, for example, in the nursery, when children wrote their own number plates for tricycles and matched these to parking spaces chalked on the playground.

- 63 Children's attitudes and behaviour are very good and children make optimum gains from working and playing together or alongside each other. For example, in the reception class, children learned to take turns as well as to identify colour and improve their counting when they played a game with the class teacher using large coloured dice. The teacher also provides displays and information charts of very high quality which attract children to find out more about mathematics. Higher attainers can already count backwards and forwards within 10 providing they have a line of numerals to help them. Lower attainers have difficulty counting to 6 and need much help. Children have a significant strength in mathematics when compared to other areas of their learning and are well on target overall to meet the expected level for their ages.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 64 Teachers are very good at providing interesting and exciting activities to develop children's understanding of the world about them. They are also very good at linking these activities to language development. Such was the case when African animals and vegetables were introduced following the story of 'Handa's Surprise' by E Browne. Younger children made good progress in firstly identifying English fruit, smelling the skins and looking closely at the cut up portions, even sampling them at snack time. They then progressed to looking at African fruit, learning correct names and extending their understanding of hot countries. Very good attention is given to encouraging children to find out things for themselves through investigation. It works well because the teaching includes very good strategies for intervention in activities to take children on quickly. As a result, children's knowledge grows at a good rate, they make good progress and achieve typical standards by the end of their time in the reception class. Teachers' very good understanding of how youngsters learn enables tasks to be set up to develop children's collaborative skills. Children's responses are very good. In most sessions pupils are very well behaved. They settle down well and become engrossed in their tasks. The effective teaching brings together under one umbrella many aspects of children's learning.

Physical development

- 65 Strengths in the very good teaching in the nursery are the opportunities provided for outside play supported by very good quality resources. Role play such as taking on roles of the emergency services is very well supported through items such as dressing up clothes, writing of reports and lists and the use of telephones, all of which support children's language development very well indeed. Children are thus provided with a purpose to their physical development as they ride tricycles, use a scooter, jump and climb and build with bricks. A relative shortcoming is that the high quality provision is not extended to children in the reception class. They have good opportunity in formal lessons in physical education but have too little opportunity to work informally and imaginatively out of doors. Higher attainers can jump and land well, bending their knees and ankles on impact. Middle and lower attainers are less agile and are still developing this skill. Pupils have a fair awareness of space and can work and play safely with others. Children's manipulative skill develop slowly because, although the teaching makes sure they have access to a wide range of materials and many opportunities to use small tools such as scissors, spatulas and pencils, the precise skills of holding scissors or pencil, for example, are not taught sufficiently directly.

Creative development

66 Children achieve particularly well in their painting because the skills needed to mix paint are taught very precisely and clearly right from the very beginning. In the nursery, children are able to work at an easel with independence, concentrate for a long time, explain their work and achieve a sense of great satisfaction from producing bold, colourful and aesthetically pleasing paintings. By the end of the reception year, levels are higher than typically expected for children of their age in painting. The effective teaching of basic skills is linked well with the provision of interesting artefacts and materials for children to explore. It is particularly strong in developing children's imagination and creativity through play. Higher attainers use computers very well to create colourful patterns and are adept at controlling the shape and colouring of their pictures on screen. Overall, children attain standards expected of them by the time they leave the reception class. They really enjoy their creative work and concentrate for good lengths of time. Teaching is good and allows time for children to practise and develop their creative skills. The very good relationships enable children to be free in their inventiveness and the high expectations inspire children to give of their very best in the firm understanding that anything is possible.

ENGLISH

67 Standards in English have improved since the last inspection and are close to those expected nationally of seven-year-olds in speaking and listening, reading and writing. In reading, they have improved year on year. Standards in reading and in speaking and listening are higher than in writing, where above-average pupils do not produce work of the level expected. The results of the 2000 national standardised tests for seven-year-olds confirm the school's strength in reading, where standards were above the national average and well above those in similar schools for that particular group of pupils. Because the above-average pupils did not achieve the higher level expected, the overall performance of pupils in writing was below the national average, though in line with that in similar schools.

68 Children arrive in the reception class with language and literacy skills that are below those expected and they are particularly weak in speaking and listening and in writing. Good teaching and a variety of initiatives implemented by the school remedy these weaknesses by the end of Year 2. Pupils achieve well and, by the time they leave the school, standards are typical of their age. While boys do not quite reach the standards achieved by girls, their performance is closer to that of the girls than is true nationally. The school has consciously tried to improve boys' English skills by providing more non-fiction books and by setting written tasks that are designed to catch the interest of boys as well as girls; these attempts have been successful.

69 Pupils' confidence and skill in speaking and listening is consistently developed throughout the school. In lessons and in assemblies, teachers provide rich opportunities for pupils to share their experiences and their opinions with the rest of the class or, in assemblies, with the whole school. In one assembly, for example, a pupil stood up self-assuredly in front of the school and explained that 'special means that it's very important'; other pupils confidently declaimed the prayers that they had composed. Consistent teaching of good habits ensures that pupils make good progress in their oral skills. Pupils are encouraged as they gain confidence to stand up to speak out their views and the other pupils are encouraged to listen carefully to what has been said (with the occasional check by the teacher to make sure they have been listening). Pupils' skills in expressing themselves orally and in listening with sensitivity and respect to one another's ideas and opinions are enhanced by regular experiences in religious education and personal, social and health education lessons, where pupils can speak only when

holding the 'speaker's frog' or some other device. In these lessons, pupils are guaranteed a respectful hearing and consequently feel able to express their views honestly and clearly.

- 70 Pupils' reading skills are well developed and higher attainers read fluently, accurately and with good levels of understanding from a variety of fiction and non-fiction. The best readers appreciate the humour in the text and bring it out subtly in the way in which they read – often with a twinkle in their eye. Average and below-average pupils read with fair accuracy and reasonable understanding, though generally with less expression. Pupils are encouraged from the outset to develop a good understanding of letter sounds and the skills to use this knowledge to help them recognise unfamiliar words. They are taught successfully to use pictures to help their understanding of a text and above-average readers use the meaning of the whole sentence to unravel the meaning of a particular word. These skills are carefully, consistently and systematically taught throughout the school. Pupils are good at finding information from a book and are very effectively taught to do this. For example, the booklets that Year 2 pupils produce about their topics include a contents page, an index and even a blurb or synopsis. Pupils' skills in understanding the subtleties of a variety of texts are developed through effectively taught guided reading sessions in literacy lessons. A very important factor in pupils' progress in reading is the way in which teachers promote enjoyment of books and literature; pupils enjoy reading and even weaker readers talk animatedly about the stories they most enjoy.
- 71 Reading was identified by the school as a particular weakness after the last inspection and was consequently a target for particular attention. A number of initiatives, along with the effective implementation of the school's literacy strategy, have been successful in improving reading standards significantly. Lower attainers and pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is not their first language have benefited particularly from good quality support from trained learning support assistants and this has enabled them to make good progress. The Oracy Project has also enabled pupils to work on oral and reading skills in small groups with trained support and the Better Reading Partnership has provided frequent opportunities for pupils to read aloud to a trained adult. Both these projects have involved some parents in their children's learning but more extensive parental involvement occurs through the school's use of very good quality home-school reading diaries, which enable a productive dialogue to occur between teachers and parents about the pupils' strengths and weaknesses in reading. The school is appropriately thinking about extending the use of these diaries to include writing. Pupils regularly take home their reading books, their guided reading books and a library book and consequently read aloud extensively and frequently from a variety of texts. Other English homework, in, for example, spelling, also occurs regularly and has a positive effect on pupils' learning. Average and higher attainers have benefited from extra support from an additional teacher who withdraws targeted groups for particular attention in both reading and writing. All pupils have profited from the teachers' skills in guided reading, used as part of the literacy hour and the subject of extensive training for the teachers. The school's greatly improved systems for assessing, recording and evaluating pupils' attainment in reading and writing have meant that the work set for pupils has been much more carefully geared towards their specific needs and this has also had a strong impact on their standards of work.
- 72 Standards of writing are generally sound, showing good achievement for most pupils. Pupils write with reasonable standards of spelling, punctuation and handwriting for a variety of purposes and audiences. More able pupils are beginning to show some understanding of the need to adjust style and vocabulary for different audiences; for example, a gripping horror story is well structured to hold the reader's attention, shows

good imagination and includes carefully chosen words to achieve the desired effect. However, there are too few examples of writing of this quality and even the above-average pupils are unable to sustain the high quality consistently. While opportunities are sometimes taken to word-process stories and there is evidence of some editing of their own work, pupils do not use the computer enough to produce extended writing for particular purposes and audiences or to present their work in anything but normal text. Teachers teach the basic language skills very well. Pupils learn spellings through a well understood procedure and show their understanding of the words spelled by including them in sentences. Their spelling is at expected levels though pupils with special educational needs and some pupils for whom English is an additional language need substantial support to achieve as well as they do. The skills of punctuation are systematically taught and, by Year 2, most pupils know and practise the proper use of more common punctuation marks. Pupils' handwriting skills are developed well in Years 1 and 2 and are at appropriate levels by the end of Year 2. However, the teaching of higher level writing skills such as varying the structure of sentences and using more adventurous vocabulary is less well developed; nor is the range of help and support as effectively exploited to help with writing as it is for reading.

- 73 The teaching of English is good. Teachers plan well for the full range of ability, working well with support assistants to provide appropriately for the needs of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language. Pupils with special educational needs have well thought out detailed individual education plans and are well supported by learning support and other classroom assistants; they work very hard and make good progress. Teachers assess pupils' work and responses well so that they set clear objectives and know that the activities planned are relevant. Consequently, pupils know what they need to learn and make good progress. Stimulating tasks and lively presentations catch pupils' interest from the outset and, because teachers maintain a brisk pace, pupils work hard and productively. Pupils behave very well in lessons because of the teachers' very well developed class management skills, which are based on very positive relationships. Teachers have high levels of expectation to which pupils respond well. For example, pupils listen very well to each other in discussions because of the habits of respect for others that the teachers insist on.
- 74 Teachers set a good example by reading stories with lively expression and savouring the sound and meaning of words, infecting the pupils with their own enjoyment of language and books. They are skilled in using group guided reading sessions to promote pupils' understanding and insight and to develop higher order reading skills; this has a marked impact on the number of readers who attain at above-average levels. Similar sessions do not yet occur to develop the more advanced skills of writing for higher attaining pupils. Below average writers are provided with a number of helpful templates that improve the structure of their story writing but there is a lack of similar help for potentially above-average writers. Pupils respond well to opportunities to write in subjects such as science, where a below-average pupil described a tadpole as being 'like a rocit in space', history and geography. Teachers provide a good balance of writing activities between opportunities for independent extended writing and exercises to develop the more technical aspects of writing. Pupils are encouraged to use their own words and consequently most write confidently and their attempts at spelling are often uninhibited. The teachers' sensitive marking and careful selection of spellings for homework ensure that spelling improves. Opportunities are missed to use information and communication technology to extend pupils' writing skills; pupils produce some simple word-processed pieces but are not challenged to produce more complex and extended pieces of writing on the computer.

75 The management of the subject is very good and the school is very well placed to improve further. The energetic co-ordinator has put in place a number of successful initiatives since the last inspection, notably in establishing useful procedures for assessing reading and writing and in establishing a consistent approach to the literacy hour throughout the school. She has supported the staff in building pupils' confidence in writing and has very effectively involved parents and support staff in improving standards of reading. Very good quality support from the local education authority has been effectively used to promote pupils' standards, particularly pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Literacy is a priority for the Educational Action Zone and there are plans to build on the initiatives already introduced by the school. The co-ordinator, together with the headteacher and a knowledgeable governor, have observed teachers teaching the literacy hour and provided constructive feedback to enable them to improve. The improved quality, organisation and number of books have also made a significant difference to pupils' learning and the pupils' confidence in selecting reading books is impressive. However, pupils do not use the library to find out information as often as they should do.

MATHEMATICS

76 In the previous inspection, pupils' standards were found to be below average by the age of seven. There was no joint planning by teachers within year groups and the scheme of work did not support teachers' planning for pupils who were at different levels of understanding. Since then, the school has made significant progress; the national numeracy strategy has been successfully established, joint planning now takes place and, consequently, pupils' attainment has improved to the point where the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level in the year 2000 national tests was in line with the national average. The percentage achieving the higher level was below average but inspection evidence indicates that standards this year will be higher. In the past, girls gained higher standards than boys but this year the trend has been reversed.

77 When pupils enter the school, their awareness of mathematics is below average. Their progress from nursery to the end of Year 2 is good and they gradually achieve better understanding so that, by the time they leave the school, pupils have a sound grasp of the foundations of number. They are familiar with the order of numbers and operations such as doubling, halving and counting on and back. They work confidently with numbers over 100 and can find missing numbers in simple equations. In multiplication tables, pupils are familiar with 2, 5 and 10 times and are beginning to apply their knowledge to problems. Not only can they add and subtract but they are also able to describe the outcomes as generalisations; 'subtraction always results in a smaller number'. They know the names of many common two dimensional and three dimensional shapes and appreciate angles as turns and straight movements. Pupils know that length can be measured in standard units and they measure accurately in centimetres. When handling data, they sort and classify objects and draw simple graphs. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the good quality of teaching. Those learning English as an additional language are well supported and make good progress.

78 Pupils make use of their numeracy skills in other subjects; for example, in geography their appreciation of direction and turning is linked effectively to their map work and their understanding of sorting and classifying helps them to identify and group the different ways in which musical instruments generate sound. Teachers also encourage the use of language skills in mathematics when they ask pupils to explain their ideas in words and writing. There is some use of computers to enhance learning – for example, directional work with simple robots and the collection of data from a traffic survey in Year

2 - but this aspect is not well developed largely because the school does not possess appropriate programs that link with the numeracy lessons.

- 79 The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and they use their understanding to prepare effective sequences of work that build pupils' knowledge gradually and securely. This was seen very clearly in a series of lessons in Year 2, where pupils' experiences systematically reinforced their understanding of odd and even numbers. By the end of the week, lower attaining pupils could appreciate the significance of the series 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, the middle group could confidently separate odd and even numbers up to 100 and some higher attainers were close to discovering the pattern of numbers required to create odd and even numbers, ($\text{odd} + \text{odd} = \text{even}$, $\text{odd} + \text{even} = \text{odd}$, etc.). Within this type of work, it is necessary for teachers to group pupils according to their level of understanding and then to circulate supporting pupils with individual issues. This strategy is well handled and results from teachers' secure assessments of pupils' progress. The quality of pupils' behaviour is also an important factor in this situation; their ability to occasionally work unsupervised helps the smooth progress of the lesson and is a testament to the quality of the relationships between staff and pupils. From beginning to end, lessons have a good pace; pupils learn quickly because of the rapid question and answer sessions and the challenging activities. An occasional weakness is in the involvement of support staff; they usually work effectively, particularly in supporting pupils with special educational needs, but they are sometimes not as involved as they could be in supporting pupils' learning. Teachers make regular reference to homework and it is used well to enhance and reinforce the day-to-day work and to help pupils link mathematics with their daily lives.
- 80 Pupils respond well to their lessons, they work confidently and are keen to learn. One notable feature is their willingness to express ideas even at the risk of failing, which is indicative of the consistent high quality of supportive relationships in the school. The regular use of group work has a significant positive impact on pupils' personal development; they work harmoniously, sharing equipment and ideas and benefiting from the experience of working with others. Pupils follow the staff models in their respect for other people and their ideas.
- 81 The subject is well co-ordinated by a knowledgeable teacher who has done considerable effective work in improving the quality of teaching and in establishing the principles of the national numeracy strategy. The curriculum includes all elements of the National Curriculum requirements and is reasonably well balanced, although the aspect of shape, space and measures is less well developed than the elements to do with number and investigations. Targets for the future development of pupils' experiences are appropriate, particularly in relation to computer work, and the link with the resources provided by the Education Action Zone is effective, especially in supporting parents in working with their own children. There is every indication that the school will continue to make progress in the development of its mathematics curriculum.

SCIENCE

- 82 The results of assessments in science in 2000 placed Year 2 pupils at just below average. These results were marginally lower for the school than in 1999; however, the proportion of pupils attaining at a level higher than typically expected for their age increased very significantly in 2000 from eight to 23 per cent. Inspection judgement places pupils at a broadly typical level for their age and this represents a good improvement since the last inspection, when standards were too low. The use of a national scheme of work, improved planning and the clear focus by the school on

developing children's investigative skills are paying dividends and raising standards well. The school is well placed to maintain its improvement. At the time of the last inspection, teachers were at times managing too wide a range of activities and the focus on science was not clear enough. This has been addressed and though other activities take place at the same time as science, all are managed well. Classroom routines are exceedingly well established and the teaching makes expectations very clear, to which the pupils respond maturely. Work is particularly well matched to levels of attainment and this also forms an assessment vehicle for the teacher. For example, when testing materials for absorbency, higher attainers give detailed accounts of their findings and understand that a particular item floated because it was light and did not absorb water. Pupils working at a lower level simply recorded their findings without the explanations.

- 83 There are relative strengths in pupils' knowledge and understanding about scientific investigation. Pupils' skills of observation are sound and pupils are able to predict what they think will happen in a simple test. Many can tell whether or not an investigation is fair. The quality of teaching is good as demonstrated in a lesson about sound. The introduction was used very well to find out what pupils already knew, to quickly revise work from the last lesson and to move onto new work. Questioning was effective, not being satisfied with initial responses but delving deeper, making children really think about their answers. Day-to-day assessment was used well. Good links to literacy were made as speaking skills were developed well. One pupil described the sound of leaves falling, for example, as 'gently rustling in the wind'. Pupils worked with partners in a mature way, quickly settling to their tasks because the teachers' expectations of very good behaviour and classroom routines were clear and consistent. Another strength in the teaching is the variety of ways that children are taught to record their findings. They can use simple tables, lists and diagrams well though the level of writing inhibits some aspects.
- 84 Children are inquisitive and independent in their work and this is promoted through good quality displays inviting children to interact by using artefacts to make sounds and by handling items to obtain a better understanding of how they might work. One child was so interested in the work that she made a set of pipes at home for children to listen to the sounds they made. Teachers have high expectations of finished work and this was reflected in the homemade pipes which were decorated to a high standard and strong enough to be used in a subsequent music lesson. Pupils present their work in individual books of high quality, which include enticing front covers and contents pages. Children are keen to learn, get on very well with their tasks and take turns fairly when working together.
- 85 A comparative weakness in the teaching is the context in which tasks are set for children. This was the case in one lesson where the teacher explained the tasks in terms of what the children were required to do to fulfil the learning objective rather than giving them a reason for the activity. Better lessons made reference, for example, to being detectives or scientists and gave children a real reason for their studies.
- 86 Teachers use national guidance well and, though science has not yet been a focus of the whole school, the co-ordinator has promoted investigation well. Children attain overall at similar levels in each aspect of science though not particularly at the higher level other than in investigative skills and life and living processes. Results vary year on year in relation to the two year planning cycle. The school has recognised the need to build into its curriculum a short period of revision to address this. The subject leader has collected examples of work that is assessed but has not presented them in a form that is easily accessible for reference by other staff.

ART AND DESIGN

- 87 No art lessons were observed and judgements are based on the scrutiny of pupils' work in their folders and in displays, discussions with pupils and teachers and the examination of planning. Standards in art at the time of the last inspection were good and now they are very good. Pupils' attainment by the time they leave the school is well above that expected for their age and pupils of all levels of ability achieve very well.
- 88 Pupils have very well developed skills in painting, sewing, drawing using pen and ink and pencil, and working with clay. They use computer drawing programs with great skill to produce bright and pleasing patterns and pictures. They begin to mix colours with skill in the nursery and the confidence and independence created there is further enhanced as they move through the school by the consistent and productive establishment of good routines and working habits. Year 2 pupils produce clear and bold paintings of themselves in particular settings with subtle use and blending of colour and very good detail on, for example, clothes. Backgrounds are convincing and grass, for example, is credibly portrayed through very effective use of greens, yellows and blues. Younger pupils paint with equal confidence and individuality though with less detail and less subtle use of colour; for example, young pupils produced bold pictures of a visit to the seaside with varying textures and strong figures. Very effective paintings by Year 2 pupils of a moving engine wheel based on observations during a visit to a museum have a convincing sense of movement. Year 1 pupils produce beautifully detailed observational drawings of Teddy Bears using coloured pencils very skilfully; other furry bear paintings show a good feel for texture. Fine brush pattern paintings show very good brush control, imaginative use of colour, fine detail and a mature sense of form. Year 2 pupils also produce very effective sewing and clay work.
- 89 The school's decision to focus largely on a limited number of kinds of art work has enabled the teachers to concentrate on the systematic teaching of skills in these areas. Teachers have been trained to teach pupils to learn through looking and to encourage pupils to re-visit their work to see where it can be improved. They have also received training in critical questioning to support the pupils at work. Consequently, routines and processes are consistently taught and pupils know very clearly what is expected of them. Pupils' own work is supported by looking at the work of other artists and by visits such as that to a sculpture park. Attractive displays of pupils' work raise pupils' self-esteem and show the importance with which the school views the subject. It promotes pupils' spiritual and cultural development very well. Art work is used well to support learning in other subjects such as, for example, history, where pupils' detailed understanding of old toys is enhanced by their effectively detailed observational drawings. The practice of encouraging pupils to talk about their art work and to explain precisely what they are doing enhances their speaking and listening skills.
- 90 The subject is very effectively led by a co-ordinator who has a very clear view of the subject and who carefully monitors pupils' work to ensure that the high standards are maintained. The good level of resources and their effective use has a positive impact on pupils' learning.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 91 Standards meet expectations by the age of seven and pupils achieve well because they study the subject in sufficient depth. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when the aspect of design was not good enough and pupils' progress was unsatisfactory. Standards have risen because the school has a clear commitment to providing a broad curriculum, often enhanced through visits. Planning has improved and

the subject leader is making sure that a national scheme of work is implemented appropriately.

- 92 Pupils are able to join materials using a variety of fixings such as sewing, glue and tape. They know that they have to be careful when using tools and they have a good understanding of safety. Pupils use construction equipment effectively to make a range of models because the school has built up a good stock of construction kits and teachers ensure that good use is made of them. Pupils can follow simple instructions and make good use of simple pro-formas to record their designs. They make a drawing of their design and list materials they will need. In discussion, pupils are able to say clearly what worked well in their models and what needed further attention. Higher attainers can give good reasons for improvement. Through discussion also it is clear that pupils have a keen interest in the subject and like nothing better than to investigate how things are made and to design and make models using their own ideas. They have a keen eye for detail and for finishing off their work to a good standard. For example, when pupils designed seed packets for the children in the nursery to use in role play, the packets were of a suitable size, they had text on the cover and, though safely sealed, had contents within the packets. Similarly in a model of a room, great attention was paid, for example, to the curtains, which could be drawn along a rail.
- 93 A strength in the subject is the way in which there is a clear purpose set for activities. This was very evident in the one lesson seen, in Year 1, where the quality of teaching and learning was very good. The chosen activity was very relevant and engaged pupils' interest. Pupils were given a real reason for making puppets and were keenly interested to find out about how puppets were made because they knew that when finished the puppets would be used in a puppet show. The teaching was effective in developing a range of vocabulary to describe the processes to be used. Pupils knew very little about puppets at the beginning of the lesson but, by the end of the lesson, they had made fast progress in identifying simple design ideas and had a view on the materials that could be used and how they could be joined. The lesson planning was effective and pupils were managed very well. The very sensitive but determined questioning enabled pupils to gain an understanding about how puppets were made, how materials were joined and the use of a template. Good links were made with work in mathematics when pupils had previously measured their hand size. This was drawn upon very well in deciding the size of template for the glove puppets.
- 94 In the lesson seen, pupils concentrated well, were alert and were very keen to gain knowledge. The teacher set a task over lunchtime for pupils to think about the puppet that they were going to make and to make decisions about the design. This worked very well and whilst waiting for lunch children were busy discussing their choice.
- 95 The long-term plan for design and technology is clear and addresses the mixed-age group well without disadvantaging others. A strength in the two-year cycle is that pupils in different classes each have access to a similar curriculum. Assessment opportunities are sound. Resources are stored very well and are readily accessible from well-labelled containers.

GEOGRAPHY

- 96 The last inspection found that teachers' planning was poor and did not ensure that the National Curriculum requirements were met; consequently, pupils' attainment was below average. The school has made good progress since then: an appropriate policy has been developed, a good scheme of work has been introduced and teachers' planning has improved considerably. Whilst no geography lessons were taught during the

inspection, the sample of pupils' work shows clearly that, by the age of seven, their standards are similar to those found in most schools.

- 97 The development of pupils' mapping skills is particularly evident; they create maps of their journey to school, maps based on stories such as Peter Pan, maps of visits to the zoo and detailed large maps of Rotherham. This latter work also involves pupils in considering the nature of the town, the local river, the impact of pollution and comparisons with their local suburb of Herringthorpe. Geographical understanding is built appropriately from an appreciation of the immediate environment of the school, then to places further afield such as Eyam until eventually pupils become aware of the wider world and learn about the location of the countries of Britain. The local environment is carefully studied and the resulting sketches and writing are of above average quality. The development of pupils' numeracy skills occurs through compass work and co-ordinates and the mapping of stories makes an effective link to literacy. There is some use of computer skills when pupils word-process reports but this aspect is not fully explored. Whilst it is clear that the majority of pupils make good progress, it is not possible to make separate judgements about those with special educational needs or those learning English as an additional language.
- 98 Since no lessons were seen during the inspection, it is not possible to make a judgement about the quality of teaching, learning or pupils' response. It is clear from teachers' planning, however, that lessons are founded on clear objectives, key questions and activities which accord due importance to the progressive development of pupils' skills and knowledge. The quality of the sample of pupils' work is also a good indicator of the standards required by teachers and of pupils' attention to detail and pride in performance.
- 99 The co-ordinator for geography was not present during the inspection but analysis of the teacher's file indicates that some lessons have been evaluated to ensure both the quality of the teaching and the progress made by the pupils. There is also evidence of risk assessments being carried out to ensure the safety of pupils during the many visits that have enhanced pupils' learning. There are indications that the school will continue to make progress in this subject.

HISTORY

- 100 In the previous inspection, pupils' attainment was found to be below average. The school lacked a scheme of work and teachers were not supported in their planning to meet the National Curriculum requirements. The school now has an appropriate policy and a scheme of work that meets requirements, with history being taught in blocks rather than on a regular basis. This is an effective practice but means that, at this stage in the school year, there is little evidence of pupils' work and only a few lessons are being taught. As a result, there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the level of pupils' attainment.
- 101 Consideration of the work available, classroom displays and informal discussion with pupils indicate that pupils receive a sound range of historical experiences. They study articles from the past and compare them with those from the present day; for example, old toys and modern toys. Pupils learn about people as sources of evidence when they interview parents and grandparents about their memories and a topic in Year 2 centred on the way in which modes of transport have developed over time. Pupils apply their literacy skills in reading and writing for history topics and numerical understanding is practised through the consideration of chronology but there is little evidence of the use of computers to enhance learning.

- 102 The teaching and learning seen during the inspection were good. Lessons were about Guy Fawkes and the discussions involved were skilfully handled by the teachers so that they were able to establish what pupils knew already and, through explaining and questioning, build up pupils' awareness of the issues involved at an understandable level. Pupils made clear gains of knowledge about an important figure from the past and were helped to understand the reason behind a modern event. This was evidenced by one pupil's delighted response, 'I never knew about any of that before!' Teachers also make good use of books, pictures and artefacts in attractive displays around the school that help to prompt pupils' thinking about historical matters. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language are fully involved in lessons because of the effective support provided by teaching and support staff, which is often unobtrusive but nevertheless effective. Good use is made of visits, for example, to a local museum, in order to interest and motivate the pupils.
- 103 Pupils respond well to the lessons. They listen attentively and are confident to express their ideas and answer questions. Their behaviour is very good and pupils respect the views and rights of others largely because of the high quality of relationships, which are a significant part of the way the school operates.
- 104 The history co-ordinator recently left the school and has not yet been permanently replaced. The establishment of a scheme of work based on the recommendations to the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority is a positive step and ensures that pupils have access to the National Curriculum requirements. There is also evidence of the effective monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes of teaching. The appointment of a permanent co-ordinator should help the school to continue its development of this subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 105 The previous inspection found that the school offered too few opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in using computers and that, by the time they were seven, pupils' standards were below average. Evidence available during this inspection indicates that, whilst teachers' confidence has improved to some extent, insufficient progress has been made to have had an impact on pupils' standards and they are still below average.
- 106 By the time they are seven, pupils know how to use a listening centre comprising a tape recorder and earphones and they are reasonably competent in word processing. They can type in their ideas using the keyboard and some are able to change the size and type of font, amend text and print. This is not consistently the case, however, and many pupils have more limited skills. In discussion, pupils can recall using a floor robot and can describe how instructions are put in but here again some have no recollection of being involved in this work. There is some evidence of Year 2 pupils using a computer to organise information where they have carried out a traffic survey, entered their records into a simple database and created bar charts but there is little evidence that this is a regular activity. There is, however, some effective work done in the creation of pictures using computers, where the outcomes demonstrate that pupils can control line and colour using mouse and keyboard.
- 107 With the exception of some word processing in English, there is little evidence that pupils can use the power of computers to enhance or develop the knowledge and skills gained in other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs have the same access to computers as other pupils but there is no evidence that the experiences are used to

boost their progress. In summary, pupils do have access to the strands of this subject but the skills they acquire are not fully developed.

- 108 Little direct teaching of computer skills was seen during the inspection. One example included clear instructions from the teacher about how to use a new program but the intervention of lunch time prevented any immediate opportunity to practise the skills involved. On other occasions, teachers did intervene effectively, encouraging pupils to do things for themselves after advice, which prompted learning. Some teachers do not demonstrate confidence in knowing how information and communication technology skills can be developed in lessons. Consequently, in many cases, computers are switched on but hardly used, which is a waste of a valuable and expensive resource. The school is also short of programs that could be used to support learning in, for example, numeracy and literacy.
- 109 Pupils' response to the use of computers and other equipment is good. They enjoy the experience and readily share tasks and ideas, learning effectively from one another. Indeed, teachers make use of this strategy, encouraging pupils to help each other.
- 110 The development of this subject has been inhibited by the school's priorities for the implementation of the numeracy and literacy strategies so that plans for the development of information and communication technology have had to be delayed. There are, however, appropriate plans for the future and staff training has already taken place under the auspices of the Education Action Zone. The co-ordinator has a relevant action plan, has devised an appropriate scheme of work and plans are in place to acquire much needed software. The school is well placed to improve both provision and pupils' attainment.

MUSIC

- 111 The standards seen at the last inspection have been maintained and, by the time pupils are seven, their attainment is at levels expected for their age. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make satisfactory progress and achieve soundly.
- 112 By the time they are seven, pupils can listen to a piece of music and identify the composer and some of the instruments they hear. They sing a variety of songs tunefully, maintaining a steady beat. They can sing in two parts with each group maintaining its tune quite well. They are able to accompany songs with tuned and untuned percussion and keep to time by using a coloured grid. Pupils compose their own tunes and use pictorial notation to record them. Younger pupils have secure knowledge of a variety of instruments from around the world.
- 113 The quality of teaching is sound and sometimes good. Teachers lead the singing confidently and several play instruments to support their teaching, showing a secure knowledge of the subject. While the main focus is on singing, pupils are given opportunities to play a range of instruments, to compose their own music and to listen to the music of other composers. Teachers have well developed class management skills and use the very good relations they have with the pupils to keep the pace of lessons brisk while still maintaining pupils' high levels of enjoyment. Pupils work hard in music lessons without realising it. Teachers ensure good learning for all by insisting on good levels of attention and by asking pupils about ways in which their work could be improved.

114 In the absence of the co-ordinator, recorder groups and choir are not taking place but the school has plans for them to begin again soon.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

115 Standards are above those found in other schools for pupils of a similar age and have improved since the last inspection. The quality of teaching and learning has improved through staff training.

116 By the age of seven in dance and movement, pupils express their feelings through making well-chosen body shapes and are motivated to perform well. Their understanding of stillness and ability to hold a shape for a length of time improved very well in a dance lesson. For example, at the beginning pupils were wobbling and not holding their shape very well but by the end of the lesson there was considerable improvement in pupils' balance, quality of shape and stillness. This was as a result of the good teaching that allowed time for pupils to practise and improve their first attempts. Demonstration was used effectively to develop teaching points and pupils commented on the work of others, giving well-earned praise. This was very useful in developing their understanding and knowledge of their work. The skills that pupils are acquiring in dance are transferred to their work with large apparatus. They are able to work at a variety of levels on apparatus, are confident to climb up high and to jump from appropriate heights giving good attention to finishing off their work before going to use other equipment. Lessons progress briskly because routines are well established. Pupils are very well behaved, work quietly, use the space and apparatus well so that time is not wasted in queuing and have a good understanding of safety procedures.

117 The school has a very positive approach to the subject and makes sure that each week children have time to work both inside and outside to develop their skills. Pupils learning English as an additional language achieve just as well as other pupils because they often have extra adult help or extra time from the teacher to make sure that they understand what is required. Planning makes clear what pupils should achieve in lessons and how this is to be tackled. Pupils' are really enthusiastic. They listen particularly well and try very hard indeed to improve their first attempts be it in dance or in developing their already good skills in games. Higher attainers can use an over-arm movement to aim and throw a ball accurately as they move across a space. Partners swiftly catch and return from a different position. Middle attainers work less quickly and at a nearer distance but are equally accurate in their work. Lower attainers know to position themselves reasonably closely and to hold their hands ready to receive the catch thrown slowly and carefully under-arm. Pupils use a range of good quality resources very safely. This is in part because they are taught how to lift and move apparatus correctly from the very start. Time is very well spent when children first enter the school in teaching the skills required in handling apparatus. The outcome is that, even in Year 1, children can work in small groups almost independently to replace apparatus they have used. They know how many children should lift each piece of equipment, they know the correct way to lift and have a basic system to make sure that all lift safely together.

118 Provision for pupils who are taught in the temporary annex is not as well thought out as it could be. Pupils walk between their classroom and the school hall ready changed for their lesson. This is inappropriate, particularly in inclement weather. The hard work of staff in lesson time is not built upon as well as it could be at other times such as playtime and dinnertime. Opportunities for pupils to further their skills and enjoyment in physical education through the use of playground games and equipment have not yet been established. The school has already recognised this as an area for improvement and has already purchased the resources and begun the training for this to become

established practice. Pupils' learning experiences have very recently been extended through the introduction of a fun and fitness club held at lunchtimes led by a teacher from the Education Action Zone. The subject is being maintained by the headteacher until the return of the subject leader. The capacity for improvement is good.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 119 Standards in religious education by the time the pupils are seven are in line with those of the locally Agreed Syllabus. This marks an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for who English is an additional language, achieve soundly. Pupils know a number of stories from both the Old and New Testaments and can discuss their implications. For example, pupils produced their own modern versions of the story of the Good Samaritan and developed their own set of Ten Commandments. They know about Christian and Jewish festivals and practices and understand some of the similarities and differences between the two religions. Pupils have some understanding of festivals of other religions and societies; for example, a parent supplied the costumes and artefacts for an exciting rendering of the Chinese New Year. However, the weakness identified at the last inspection in knowledge of religions other than Christianity and Judaism has not yet been fully addressed.
- 120 The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers effectively use the conventions of Circle Time (when pupils take turns to speak without being interrupted) to consider the implications of the stories and messages that are the topic for the lesson. The very good relationships between pupils and teachers give pupils the confidence to speak openly and honestly about their ideas in the certainty that their views will be listened to and respected by the teacher and by their fellow pupils. Teachers use a lively variety of methods to present ideas and to allow pupils to show their knowledge. For example, a class was divided into Christians and Jews so that each group could describe differences and similarities between the two religions; the most fervent and well-informed contributor to the discussion was a pupil with English as an additional language who was of another religious faith. Teachers are well informed about the subject and this enables them to question pupils closely to challenge them to think more deeply; pupils respond well to such challenges.
- 121 High quality assemblies support learning in religious education well. The subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The newly appointed and enthusiastic co-ordinator is adapting the school's policy and scheme of work to meet the requirements of the new locally agreed syllabus and has promising plans to improve provision for the subject.