

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BIRSTWITH C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Harrogate

LEA area: North Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 121550

Headteacher: Mrs E A Bedford

Reporting inspector: Mr A J Dobell  
10373

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> December 2000

Inspection number: 224918

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Wreaks Road Birstwith Nr Harrogate North Yorkshire
Postcode:	HG3 2NJ
Telephone number:	(01423) 770554
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Mitchell
Date of previous inspection:	July 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr A J Dobell 10373	Registered inspector	Mathematics English Music Physical education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well does the school care for its pupils? How well is the school led and managed?
Mr J R Lovell 14756	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr R C Whittington 4350	Team inspector	Science Information and communications technology Art Design and technology Geography History Religious education Special educational needs Areas of learning for children under five Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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The Registrar  
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The Office for Standards in Education  
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is situated in the village of Birstwith, near to Harrogate in North Yorkshire. There are 56 pupils on roll, which means that the school is very small in relation to the average primary school. No pupils come from minority ethnic groups. There are 36 girls on roll and 20 boys.

The available social indicators suggest that the school is situated in a socially advantaged area. Only four per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is well below the national average. The percentage of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs (14 per cent) is below the national average, but four per cent of pupils have statements of special educational needs, which is above the national average.

The average class size is 19, which is more favourable than in most primary schools. While the attainment of pupils is above average when they enter the school, there is a wide range of ability across the key stages. There have been no exclusions in recent years.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a good school with the potential to become a very good school. In the National Curriculum tests in 2000, the school's pupils attained results which were well above the national average at the end of both key stages.

The quality of teaching is good, overall, and very good in the Foundation Stage. The large majority of pupils are enthusiastic about the school and about their work. The headteacher and her colleagues provide very good leadership and management and are very well supported by the governing body. This is an increasingly effective school. Given the good improvement since the last inspection, the high standards of attainment in most years and the very good quality of education that the pupils receive, the school gives good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 are well above average.
- The quality of teaching is good, overall, and very good in the Foundation Stage: it results in good progress in learning.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to school and behaviour in and out of class is very good: relationships are very good throughout the school.
- There is a very good range of learning opportunities in most subjects and, for its size, the school has a very good range of activities outside class.
- There is very good provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development and excellent provision for spiritual development.
- Educational and personal support and guidance for pupils are very good.
- Parents and the community make a very good contribution to children's learning.
- The headteacher, very ably supported by her colleagues and the governing body, provides very good leadership and management.

#### **What could be improved**

- The lack of large play equipment for children under the age of five inhibits their physical development.
- The lack of large equipment for physical education restricts the range of work in gymnastics.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has experienced many changes since the last inspection, including two changes of headteacher and a number of changes in the teaching staff. Concerns during this turbulent period led a number of parents of older pupils to remove their children from the school. The school has emerged well

from this period of uncertainty and is in a strong position to go on to improve further.

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good, overall; unsatisfactory teaching has been eliminated. The quality of work in physical education has improved and is now in line with standards found in most schools. Attendance has improved and, in 1999/2000, was very high in comparison with other schools. Procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' attainment are now very good and are used effectively to promote further progress.

The high standards of leadership and management identified in the last inspection report have been regained. However, a key issue in the last report was to review the teaching commitment of the headteacher. This remains high, so that much of the management of the school is carried out in the headteacher's own time when the teaching day has ended.

Overall, the school has improved well since the last inspection. This was confirmed at the meeting for parents held before the inspection when parents agreed that they were very satisfied with standards of attainment which were at least as good as they have ever been.

## STANDARDS

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

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

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

In 2000, attainment was well above the national average in the National Curriculum tests at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Significantly, attainment, overall, is also well above the average achieved in schools which draw their pupils from similar backgrounds. However, the small number of pupils at the end Key Stage 2 means that these results cannot be reliably used to evaluate trends in attainment.

Attainment in art, design and technology, geography, history, information and communications technology and physical education matches what would be found in most schools of this type at the end of both key stages. Attainment in music is better than is found in many schools and attainment in religious education is better than is normally found in schools, following the North Yorkshire agreed syllabus for religious education. Children under the age of five attain the early learning goals for this age group by the time they begin their work on the National Curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment, as do pupils who are identified as being gifted and talented.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to school. They are very keen to come to school and to contribute to lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave very well both in and out of class. The school's procedures for managing behaviour are very effective and are applied consistently.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are very good. Pupils develop very well in personal terms.
Attendance	Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is very high in comparison with the national average.

Pupils' attitudes and values are a strength of the school. These positive attitudes and supportive values are promoted very effectively by the school. The school's ethos promotes in pupils a respect for themselves and others and an appreciation of their community and the wider world. The very good behaviour means that there have been no exclusions in recent years.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

The quality of teaching is good across the key stages and has improved well since the last inspection. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection; in the 27 lessons observed, in 15 per cent the quality of teaching was satisfactory; in 52 per cent, it was good; and in 33 per cent, it was very good. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well and teaching meets the needs of all groups of pupils effectively. The management of pupils is a strength and, in most lessons, teaching is successful in challenging and motivating pupils of different levels of attainment.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school meets statutory requirements for teaching the National Curriculum and religious education. The quality of learning opportunities is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs and, as a result of the good teaching and support they receive, they make good progress in their learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This is a strength of the school. The provision for spiritual development is excellent: for moral, social and cultural development, it is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Educational and personal support for pupils is very good. The school cares for its pupils very effectively.

The school knows its pupils very well and this very good knowledge is used effectively to provide the very

good quality of care that pupils enjoy. Pupils benefit from a broad and stimulating range of learning opportunities. Parents are pleased with the attitudes and values that the school promotes. The school has good links with parents.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher, very ably supported by her colleagues, provides very good leadership and management. In this small school, it is the quality of the teamwork that underpins the very good learning opportunities that are provided.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities and provides very good support. It is very concerned for the school to be successful.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has very good systems for analysing and evaluating its performance. There is an excellent, shared commitment to improve.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its human and physical resources very well. It is alert to the need to obtain the best value from its expenditure.

The headteacher has worked tirelessly to bring the school out of its period of uncertainty into one of stability and success. This has been achieved. There is a clear vision for the school, which is to continue to raise attainment, while maintaining the school's record of care and support. The school is well staffed to teach the National Curriculum and religious education and its accommodation and learning resources are adequate.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Children make good progress.</li> <li>▪ Behaviour is good.</li> <li>▪ Teaching is good.</li> <li>▪ Children are expected to work hard and do their best.</li> <li>▪ The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>▪ Children become more mature and responsible.</li> <li>▪ There is a good range of activities outside lessons.</li> <li>▪ Children like school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ About one eighth of parents do not think that children get the right amount of homework.</li> <li>▪ Just over one quarter of parents do not believe they are kept well informed about their child's progress.</li> <li>▪ One fifth of parents do not believe that the school works closely with parents.</li> </ul>

The school issued 56 questionnaires and 35 were returned (65 per cent). Nine parents attended the meeting held before the inspection.

The inspection team judges that the school uses homework well to support learning. This school takes more opportunities than many schools to inform parents about their children's progress and does so effectively. The school is involving parents increasingly in its work and sees them as key partners in the education of their children.



## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000, 100 per cent of the school's pupils attained at least the national expectation of level 2 in reading, compared with 84 per cent nationally. Further, 54 per cent of the school's pupils achieved the higher level 3 compared with 28 per cent nationally. In writing, 100 per cent of the school's pupils attained level 2 at least compared with 85 per cent nationally, and 15 per cent attained level 3 compared with nine per cent nationally. In mathematics, 100 per cent of the school's pupils attained level 2 at least, compared with the national figure of 91 per cent, and 38 per cent attained level 3 compared with 25 per cent nationally. This means that the school's pupils attained standards which were well above the national average in each subject. In reading and mathematics, these results were also well above the averages attained in schools which draw their pupils from similar backgrounds; in writing the school's results were above the average for similar schools. The teacher's assessment of pupils' performance in science was very high in comparison with the national average.
2. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000, the school's pupils attained at least the national expectation of level 4 in English, mathematics and science. However, because of the very small number of pupils taking the tests, comparisons are not statistically viable.
3. In 2000, attainment in reading and mathematics in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 was marginally higher than at the last inspection. In writing, attainment has declined since 1998, although it must be emphasised that attainment is still above the national average. At Key Stage 2, attainment since the last inspection has been erratic, but attainment in 2000 was an improvement on 1998 in all three subjects. However, given the small numbers of pupils, it is not possible to conclude that this is an indication of a trend which is statistically significant.
4. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning in relation to their prior attainment in all areas of the curriculum. They attain standards in line with their abilities. The good quality of adult support and the careful planning of their work have a very positive impact on their learning. The pupils' individual education plans are carefully written, reviewed regularly and signed by parents. They provide suitably short term and achievable targets and so play a valuable role in assessing the pupils' progress, so that further targets can be set. Pupils who are gifted and talented are identified by the school and provided with work which ensures that they make good progress and attain the standards of which they are capable.
5. The last inspection judged attainment to be above average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science at the end of both key stages and at least in line with national expectations in all other subjects, with the exception of physical education. Standards in physical education, a key issue at the last inspection, have improved and are now in line with the standards found in most schools. Standards in swimming are above average. The inspection team found standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science to be above average at the end of both key stages. In art, design and technology, geography, history and information and communications technology, standards match those found in most schools at the end of both key stages. Attainment in music is above that normally found, while attainment in religious education is above that found in most schools following the North Yorkshire agreed syllabus. Attainment for children under the age of five is good and they achieve the early learning goals for this age group by the time they begin their work on the National Curriculum.
6. Since the last inspection, staff changes resulted at one stage in a serious fall in standards of attainment in Key Stage 2. The school has emerged well from this situation and attainment in Key Stage 2 is now secure. At the last inspection, the unsatisfactory quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 was a key issue; other staff changes mean that this issue is now resolved and teaching in Key Stage 1 is now good.

7. The school has successfully introduced the National Strategies for literacy and numeracy and these strategies are being used well to raise standards of attainment in English and mathematics in both key stages. Attainment in these subjects is now good and good opportunities are taken to practise literacy skills in subjects throughout the curriculum and numeracy in subjects such as science and design and technology.
8. The school set targets for attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000 and these challenging targets were met. The targets for 2001 are equally challenging. The school has emerged well from a turbulent period since the last inspection. Good standards of attainment have been re-established throughout the key stages and the school is in a strong position to go on to improve further.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

9. Pupils, including children under five, have very good attitudes to work and play and their behaviour is very good. Relationships are very good between pupils and between pupils and adults. Throughout the school, there is very good response to opportunities for personal and social development and to display initiative; this makes a very good contribution to pupils' attainment and progress.
10. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and, in most lessons, their response is good and, often, very good. They sustain their concentration very well and work in lessons with interest and enthusiasm. Pupils work effectively on their own and with others, co-operating, collaborating, and sharing resources. They respond very well to challenging work and show good initiative when working independently; for example, pupils in Year 1 constructed simple sentences from jumbled words and checked the text for meaning with a good level of interest and concentration. Pupils listen carefully to teachers and to each other; for example, in a 'show and tell' session in the Reception Year, children were fully engaged and the very good standards of listening boosted the confidence of those who were sharing their 'treasures' with the class. Pupils relate well to each other and to adults and display consideration for their feelings, values and beliefs, taking pleasure in sharing in the celebration and recognition of each other's successes.
11. Pupils work effectively on their own and with others, sharing resources and co-operating well with each other from an early age. Older pupils become increasingly able to collaborate, particularly in practical activities. For example, Year 3 pupils, investigating the stretchiness of tights in a science lesson, discussed their ideas well and were able to develop theories relating to properties of the material and to why some fabrics stretch more than others. Besides taking responsibility for their learning, pupils support each other very well, tidy up after lessons and undertake jobs within the classroom. As they get older, pupils take on more whole school responsibilities. For example, all pupils take part in an informal 'buddy' system to help to support and welcome new pupils into the school. Pupils relate very positively to each other and to adults; play is usually inclusive, although boys tend to dominate the upper playground where football is played during breaks. Lunchtime is a social occasion where pupils of all ages mix well together. This exemplifies the high standards of personal and social development and the warm and caring relationships which exist between all members of the school community.
12. Pupils' behaviour is usually very good in the classroom, in the hall at lunchtime and at play. Rarely, a small minority of pupils behave in an inappropriate manner, but these unusual occasions are quickly and effectively dealt with. Pupils are orderly in their movements around the school and are very courteous and polite. They are trustworthy and have respect for equipment, resources and property. There is no evidence of graffiti or litter around the school. Pupils know that bullying and violent behaviour are wrong. They recognise that they may turn to staff for support and that any incidents are dealt with effectively. There is no evidence of oppressive behaviour within the school. There have been no exclusions in recent years. Pupils understand and respond very well to the expectation of high standards for behaviour, understanding that good behaviour and consideration for others help to produce an environment in which they can all learn.
13. Throughout the school, pupils welcome visitors and are keen to show and discuss their work and

share ideas. They respond well to visiting speakers and to a wide range of visits, identifying and supporting a range of charities and sponsoring two children in Mombassa. Pupils also play an active part in the local community through established links with local groups and the church. Pupils enjoy and are proud of their school. They enjoy the rich curriculum on offer, the range and variety of extra-curricular activities and the educational visits provided. They are keen to participate in all that is offered to them.

14. Attendance is excellent and has shown a small but steady improvement in recent years. Last year overall attendance was 96.88 per cent with no unauthorised absences. This was very high in comparison to other schools nationally; these high levels of attendance have a very positive impact on pupils' progress. Punctuality is excellent for the large majority of pupils, but a minority arrive a few minutes after the start of the school day and staff seek to discourage this, because it causes additional work when instructions have to be repeated.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

15. The quality of teaching in the school is good, overall. It is very good in the Foundation Stage and good in Key Stages 1 and 2. During the inspection, 27 lessons were observed and, of these, 15 per cent were satisfactory, 52 per cent were good, and 33 per cent were very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. This is a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection, when 25 per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory. The key issue to improve the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 has been addressed successfully.
16. Teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is good in Key Stages 1 and 2 and very good in the Foundation Stage. Pupils throughout the school speak confidently and have good listening skills. This results from the good opportunities for speaking and listening which are planned into the curriculum. Reading skills are taught effectively throughout the school and pupils develop their writing skills well as they move through the key stages. However, while the technical accuracy of written work is good, for a number of pupils, work is presented in an untidy and careless way. This aspect of written work is unsatisfactory for a significant number of pupils. The successful use of the mental mathematics session as part of the National Numeracy Strategy is sharpening pupils' standards of attainment with number.
17. The teaching of the increasingly important skills of information and communications technology is satisfactory. Pupils are given frequent opportunities to use computers to support their learning in subjects across the curriculum and this is reinforcing for them the fact that information and communications technology is a crucial source of information for learning, to be used alongside books and other traditional means of learning.
18. Teachers' subject knowledge is good in Key Stages 1 and 2. For children under the age of five it is very good and there is a very secure understanding of how young children learn. Lesson planning is sound and the learning objectives for the lesson are normally made clear to the pupils. In the Foundation Stage, impressive care is taken to ensure that children under five are given good quality learning opportunities, which are different from pupils in Year 1 in the mixed age class. Teachers have good expectations for their pupils' conduct and effort. These high expectations support the very good management of pupils, which is a strong feature of the school. Behaviour in lessons is very good because it is managed very effectively. As a result, in the most successful lessons, pupils join with their teacher in the enjoyment of learning.
19. Teaching methods are successful in ensuring that work is targeted accurately to pupils of different ages and abilities. As a result, pupils of all ages and abilities make good progress in their learning. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early and teaching takes good account of their needs. Their individual education plans are used in the planning of lessons and progress towards the targets identified in them is carefully monitored. As a result, pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to the targets set for them. Pupils who are particularly gifted and talented are identified and work is set to ensure that they reach their potential. Assessment is used very effectively to ensure that all groups of pupils in the school make good progress in their learning. Marking is thorough and, together with discussions with

individuals and groups, helps pupils to make further progress.

20. Teachers are very well supported in lessons by non-teaching staff. Support staff fulfil a range of roles in the school and make a significant contribution to the quality of learning for different groups of pupils. The school is also grateful to the parents who support teaching and learning in the school. Resources for learning are used very well by teachers in their lesson planning. Homework is used well to support learning.
21. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher was the only teacher in the school with a permanent contract. It is a tribute to the professionalism and dedication of her colleagues that pupils in the school continue to receive an education of very good quality. This group of teachers has the potential to continue to improve standards of attainment in the school.

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

22. The school meets all statutory requirements for the National Curriculum, the Foundation Stage and the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Very good use is made of resources within the local community and a wide variety of different activities enrich pupils' learning. The provision for children's moral, social and cultural development is very good, and, for their spiritual development, it is excellent.
23. The overall quality and range of learning opportunities offered to pupils is very good and has improved well since the last inspection. The breadth, balance and relevance of the whole curriculum is a strength and provides high quality learning opportunities. Following a period of instability during the past few years, pupils throughout the school are now making good progress with their learning. The curriculum includes a weekly French lesson for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6. All staff, whether teachers, classroom support assistants or lunchtime supervisors, make a positive contribution to the curriculum, both within the classroom and outside. The joint planning for the curriculum and the way in which pupils are given work which is suitable for their ages and abilities within the mixed age classes, is a strength.
24. Following the previous inspection, there was one key issue associated with the curriculum. This was concerned with the quality of physical education. This has been largely addressed, although the lack of large apparatus still limits the opportunities available in gymnastics.
25. Pupils have very good equality of opportunity and access to the curriculum. In the Reception/Year 1 class, planned activities for the Foundation Stage take very good account of the needs of young children to learn by exploring and experimenting with a wide range of different materials and equipment. A high quality curriculum is provided within this class of two-year groups. However, the lack of large outdoor play equipment limits their physical development. Statutory requirements in Key Stages 1 and 2, for example, for sex and drugs education, are met within the good provision the school makes for personal, social and health education.
26. Although the attainment of the majority of pupils with special educational needs is below average, it is commensurate with their abilities. They receive effective support and make good progress towards their targets. This is a result of well-structured teaching and the high quality support that pupils with special educational needs receive. Need is identified early and all staff are aware of the procedures that are involved. Detailed, individual education plans are drawn up and reviewed regularly; parents are fully involved in this. The curriculum meets the statutory requirements of the special educational needs Code of Practice. The school is beginning to identify those with the potential for high attainment so that suitably targeted work is available to them.
27. The teaching of literacy is good. The planning is specific, lessons are purposeful and pupils learn well. The numeracy strategy is implemented successfully across the school and this is having a positive influence on the quality of learning in mathematics.



28. The range of extra-curricular activities offered to enhance the quality of education is very good, given the size of the school and number of staff. All are committed to ensuring that no pupil is disadvantaged because this is a small school. There are residential visits for those in Years 5 and 6, and pupils throughout the school benefit from regular educational visits. There is a range of clubs and activities at lunchtime and after school, for example, recorder and guitar classes and football practice.
29. The school's provision for spiritual development is outstanding. Ideas offered by pupils are valued highly and they are sensitive to the needs and feelings of others. There is a good understanding of different religions and Class 2 has visited the Inter-Faith Centre in Bradford to reinforce this understanding. There were a number of occasions during the inspection where pupils experienced awe and wonder. This happened for example, during a lesson in Class 1 where unusual fruits were tasted. Similarly, in Class 3, during a religious education lesson, pupils listened very sensitively to choral music played as an introduction to a discussion on the role of the Three Wise Men. Collective worship meets statutory requirements, is rich and inclusive and time is given for pupils to reflect on their attitudes and values. During the inspection, the first candle of an Advent Ring was lit and pupils understood its significance. Assemblies have a strong 'family' ethos and this is reinforced by the large number of parents and grandparents who attend the weekly merit assembly.
30. There is very good provision for moral development. Pupils are aware of what is acceptable and unacceptable and understand very clearly the differences between right and wrong. They respond appropriately to praise and blame and some are able to put themselves in the other person's place, so as to appreciate what he or she is feeling. Teachers and other adults set very good examples and this has a beneficial effect on the overall moral and social development within the school.
31. Provision for social development is very good. Most pupils play happily together and respect adults and each other. Relationships are very good and pupils co-operate very well both in the schoolyard, where they play well together and in lessons where they work to help and support each other when appropriate. A sense of responsibility and independence is encouraged through the opportunities provided within the school: for example, helping to tidy classrooms, looking after younger pupils, particularly at playtimes and lunchtimes, and in general work that is set during lessons. For Years 5 and 6, social development is enhanced further by the opportunity for a residential visit. The pupils collect for a number of charities and they have 'adopted' two children who live in Kenya.
32. There is very good provision for cultural development. Multi-cultural awareness is encouraged successfully through a wide range of values and attitudes. There are links with a school in Sri Lanka and an 'Indian Day' was held recently where pupils experienced dance, puppets and food from a different culture. During the inspection, Class 1 explored different fruits which grow in Africa. Local culture plays an important part in learning. The school is an integral part of the village: pupils have designed 'Welcome to Birstwith' road signs, Class 2 are involved in a study of the local environment, and the curriculum is enriched through numerous visitors to and visits from the school.
33. The strength of this spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision results from the very high levels of commitment of all adults within the school and of those who visit regularly. All contribute to the very caring Christian ethos, which runs seamlessly through the whole life of the school. The quality of the curricular provision has improved since the last inspection, as has the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
34. The school has very good links with the local community, the local church and education support services. In addition, the school receives a number of visitors, who contribute to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. The school actively participates in community activities such as the dressing of the well and a collection for 'Operation Christmas Child' organised by the local church. The school's involvement in these activities and in supporting charities contributes to pupils' understanding of their own culture and promotes awareness of those less fortunate than

themselves.

35. The school undertakes a wide range of visits, for example, to Ripon Cathedral's light exhibition, which supported science week. The school uses the local environment to enhance and enrich aspects of the curriculum. Although opportunities for partnership with local businesses are limited within a rural community, the school takes full advantage of those available. For example, a local vet has spoken to pupils about her work.
36. Links with local schools are good; for example, links with the local community college enable Year 6 pupils to visit on a weekly basis for one half term, to support work in design and technology. A partnership with another small local primary school enabled pupils to experience an 'Indian Workshop' which provided them with opportunities to experience Indian dance, drumming and foods. As a result of the workshop, interesting and stimulating displays, particularly about Hinduism, have enriched pupils' work and their understanding of another culture.
37. Close links, forged by the Reception Year teacher, exist between the local play-school and the school and these links ease the transfer of pupils into the school.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

38. The school offers a very good standard of care and personal support. Child protection procedures are satisfactory and the school is careful and vigilant in the way in which it exercises its responsibilities. The headteacher is responsible for child protection and has a sound understanding of the relevant procedures. However, neither she nor other members of staff have undertaken training in this area. All adults in the school know what to do if concerns arise and clear guidance is included in the induction procedures for new staff. The school is aware of the need for training and keen to take it up when the opportunity arises.
39. There is sound day-to-day management of health and safety. Pupils are taught safe practices in lessons; for example, in a Year 23 science lesson, safety issues were clearly identified and discussed with pupils at the start of the lesson. The school is alert to the need to identify faulty equipment and take it out of use until it is repaired. Evacuation procedures, checks of equipment and maintenance are carried out regularly. There are also regular inspections of the premises by the headteacher and governors, although there is insufficient understanding of risk assessments and these are insufficiently developed.
40. There are good arrangements for first aid. One full time and one part time teacher hold current qualifications and further training is planned. First aid equipment is readily accessible throughout the school. The system for recording accidents is excellent. Any accidents are reviewed by the headteacher to identify any potential risk.
41. The school works very effectively to safeguard pupils' welfare and to promote their personal development. Teachers and support assistants know their pupils well and show a keen and concerned interest in their welfare. This promotes very good relationships and ensures that pupils are able to work in a safe and caring learning environment. The headteacher has recently initiated a system of achievement diaries for all pupils. These will be used to record pupils' personal development, not only in school, but including such successes as music or ballet certificates gained outside school. Pupils will set themselves personal targets each term, which will enable them to evaluate their own personal development.
42. These very good systems for monitoring personal development are supported by good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance and very good systems for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour. Parents are grateful that any rare incidents of bullying or oppressive behaviour are quickly and effectively dealt with.
43. The school cares for its pupils with special educational needs well and this caring attitude reflects the ethos of the school. Pupils understand that they are valued and cared for and this has a positive impact on attitudes and attainment.

44. These effective systems for personal support are reinforced by very good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. Pupils' potential is assessed by use of the local education authority's baseline assessment scheme in their first term in the school. From then on, progress and attainment are assessed regularly and systematically. There is a comprehensive system in place for assessing progress in English and the school plans to introduce a similar system for mathematics to supplement the existing assessment sheet. These systems provide information which is used to identify pupils who need support and planning for their learning is adjusted accordingly. Parents acknowledge that an advantage of the mixed age classes is that pupils are treated as individuals and these systems underpin the daily planning which identifies individual needs.
45. The school's tradition of good quality care and support for its pupils has been maintained since the last inspection. Its procedures for assessing academic attainment and progress and personal support and guidance for pupils have been improved. These now are a valuable means of promoting attainment and improving progress in learning.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

46. The school's links with parents are good and contribute effectively to pupils' learning and attainment. The partnership between school and home is promoted through sound communications and the very good involvement of parents in the life and work of the school.
47. Parents express positive views of the school and believe that the school expects pupils to work hard and do their best. They are particularly positive about the range of activities outside lessons and state that teaching and standards of behaviour are good. Almost all parents state that their children like school. A significant minority of parents express some concerns about the information which is provided to them about how their child is progressing and have some concerns about the way in which the school works closely with parents. The inspection supports the positive views of parents and recognises that, although the quality of reports could be improved, the new headteacher has done much, in a short time, to improve the quality of information provided to parents and to make staff and the school accessible to all parents.
48. The school, as a central part of the community, welcomes parents and prospective parents into the school, prior to admission, to enable them to get to know the school and its staff. The school produces an attractive, comprehensive and helpful prospectus for parents. The headteacher and staff welcome parents into school and this co-operation is reinforced well through friendly, welcoming newsletters and letters which are informative and provide news about the life and work of the school, its staff and its pupils. They exemplify the community ethos of the school. A good overview of the curriculum is provided through 'Curriculum Chronicle' and this helps parents to know what work their children will be undertaking, so that they can offer support at home and whilst on family outings. Most parents attend the two formal consultation evenings each year and have the opportunity to meet staff after the annual report has been issued. The annual report provided to parents is written carefully and shows a good knowledge of pupils as individuals. Because of staffing changes, the reports are not always consistent and, sometimes, targets, to help to raise attainment, are insufficiently clear to enable parents to understand what support they can provide. However, staff are always very accessible to parents to discuss any matters of concern. Parents are also invited to come into the school informally. For example, following the recent completion of the library, parents were invited to 'drop in and have a cup of coffee' and, during the week of the inspection, over 20 parents and grandparents attended the weekly 'merit assembly'.
49. Staff and pupils value the contribution of parents, who have a very important role in the life and work of the school. The school has sought to build upon the very effective partnership with parents through the home/school agreement and the significant majority of parents are very supportive of the agreement. They help with reading, spellings and topic work which their children are expected to undertake at home. A small number of parents regularly help in class, providing very good support for practical activities, reading and subjects such as science. Other parents help with the supervision and transport of pupils on visits and activities such as swimming. The Friends of Birstwith School provide excellent support to the school and arrange fund-raising events as well as

social occasions and discussions. The recent Christmas Fair alone raised over £2000 and other events, such as 'beetle drives' and 'recipe evenings', are well supported. The Friends have been able to fund such items as resources to support literacy, and have provided hoops and skipping ropes which are used by all pupils at lunchtimes and PE equipment. They are holding a balance to enable them to contribute towards large PE equipment and large toys for children in the Foundation Stage. The support of the Friends of Birstwith, make a valuable contribution to the quality of the learning environment and opportunities for pupils.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

50. The school has a clear vision of what it is trying to achieve and this underpins its very positive ethos. The school wishes to encourage in its pupils enquiring minds and an awareness of how to learn, as well as a knowledge of the relevant facts. It seeks to develop in pupils a respect for themselves and others and questioning, creative and adaptable attitudes. It expects to enable pupils to reach their potential academically by learning in a secure, happy and stimulating learning environment. The headteacher has very successfully incorporated these aspirations into the daily life of the school. In this, she is given very good support by all who contribute to teaching and learning in the school.
51. The headteacher, very ably supported by her colleagues, provides very good leadership. Her drive and enthusiasm have enabled the school to make good progress since the last inspection. The school has undergone many changes of personnel since the last inspection, including two changes of headteacher. During the course of these changes, standards declined and a number of older children (often with their younger siblings) were withdrawn from the school by their parents. This loss of numbers is particularly worrying in a very small school. Since her appointment, the current headteacher has worked unstintingly to raise standards and bring the school out of its difficulties. Because of her dedication and commitment and the very good support from her colleagues, the school has emerged well from its problems and is now in a strong position to build on this success and go on to improve further.
52. In this very small school, the very good management is rooted in teamwork. Decisions result from frequent contacts and discussions, so that all teachers are thoroughly briefed about potential developments. This informal debate results in excellent involvement of all staff in decision making. However, there is a danger that, because discussions are informal and unstructured, valuable ideas may be lost because there are no systematic records of these discussions. This teamwork results in an excellent shared commitment to improvement among teachers and they have the capacity to succeed in improving the school further.
53. The management of special educational needs is good. The co-ordinator has developed an effective policy, which covers the various stages of need and arrangements for referral. All staff are fully aware of the provisions of the policy. Support assistants provide very effective help for pupils on Stage 5 of the special educational needs Code of Practice, despite the local education authority's inability to provide full time support. The assistants work closely with the class teachers and help to ensure that these pupils have equality of access to the curriculum. Other pupils are understanding of the needs of these pupils and help to provide an accepting and supportive environment. Parents are involved appropriately in the education of pupils with special educational needs. Resources for these pupils are satisfactory and are managed efficiently. All the statutory requirements of the Code of Practice are met and the school uses funds allocated for special educational needs appropriately.
54. Equality of access and opportunity is central to the school's work. Parents are grateful that all pupils are treated as individuals and that their individual needs are considered and met. To this end, the school is developing a policy to meet the needs of pupils who are particularly gifted and talented, so that they are given graded work which will enable them to reach their potential. This is an element in the school's successful efforts to ensure that all groups of pupils in the school are given equality of access to all the school's activities and the opportunity to work at their own pace and meet their particular needs.

55. The governing body is very committed to the school and provides very effective support. Governors share the headteacher's vision for the school and wish to be able to see the school as 'a centre of excellence'. There have been a number of changes to the governing body since the last inspection and governors are now enthusiastic and keen to contribute. Members of the governing body are in the school frequently and so are able to bring a good knowledge of the school to their deliberations. There is a strong committee structure, which supports the governing body in shaping the direction of the school. Regular consultation between teachers and governors ensures that the governing body is involved appropriately in decision making. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities.
56. The school runs efficiently on a day-to-day basis. Planning is good in both the long and short term and reflects the priorities identified in the School Improvement Plan. The school has very good strategies for monitoring and evaluating its performance and uses this information effectively to determine new priorities for the future. These priorities are then supported by funds allocated for the purpose in the budget. As part of this process, the school has very good procedures for analysing and managing the performance of teachers. From this analysis, professional development needs are determined and funds designated for this purpose are used appropriately. Funds provided for specific purposes, for example, for special educational needs or for the professional development of staff, are used appropriately.
57. The school makes good use of new technology, overall. Pupils throughout the school are used to using computers to support their learning, for example, by word processing. The use of information and communications technology in administration is very good. The school's budget is kept on computer and arrangements for ordering goods and paying for them are securely managed by the secretary-bursar. The school's accounts were audited in December 1999 and the auditor's report was very supportive. The single recommendation has been acted upon. The daily routines in the school are clearly understood and effective.
58. The school is very well staffed with teachers and support assistants to teach the National Curriculum and religious education. Their work is supported by a small number of parents who help in class and whose contributions are much appreciated. Teaching is managed very well; new staff are settled into the school effectively and the school has good potential to support the initial training of teachers.
59. Accommodation is adequate to teach the National Curriculum and religious education. The building is always welcoming and cleaned to a high standard by the caretaker. The learning environment is enriched by good displays which celebrate pupils' achievements. Resources for learning are adequate, overall, but the lack of large play equipment for children under the age of five and of large equipment for physical education adversely affects learning. The new library is an important, additional learning resource for the school, but the range of books it contains is still limited.
60. A key issue in the report from the last inspection was to review the teaching commitment of the headteacher to provide more time for monitoring. The report noted that much administrative work and other management responsibilities were carried out in the headteacher's own time. This remains the case and the headteacher and her colleagues continue to work long hours after school and at weekends to ensure that the school runs efficiently and that teaching and learning are of good quality. This remains a cause for concern.
61. The school has improved well since the last inspection because of the clear-sighted leadership of the headteacher since her appointment and the very good support she has received from her colleagues and the governing body. The school is in a good position to continue to improve.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

62. In order to improve further the quality of education provided by the school, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) provide large play equipment, including climbing equipment and wheeled toys, in a secure play area, to enable children in the Foundation Stage to develop qualities of co-ordination, control and confidence in a range of challenging physical activities (see paragraphs 25, 59 and 63); and
- (2) provide large equipment for physical education to enable pupils to experience a broader range of activities in gymnastics throughout the key stages (see paragraphs 24, 59 and 115).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	27
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	33	52	15			

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	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	56
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	8

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

### Attendance

**Authorised absence**

	%
School data	3.1
National comparative data	5.2

**Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.0
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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	5	8

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	5	5	5
	Girls	8	8	8
	Total	13	13	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (88)	100 (100)	100 (88)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	5	5	5
	Girls	8	8	8
	Total	13	13	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (88)	100 (100)	100 (88)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	0	2

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (50)	100 (75)	100 (75)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (88)	100 (75)	100 (75)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

**Because of the small numbers involved, individual results are not recorded.**



### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	45
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

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

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR - Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.6
Average class size	19

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	52.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	145,611
Total expenditure	140,072
Expenditure per pupil	2,746
Balance brought forward from previous year	6,380
Balance carried forward to next year	11,919

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	56
Number of questionnaires returned	35

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	34	9	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	38	6	0	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	59	0	3	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	41	6	6	3
The teaching is good.	50	44	3	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	28	25	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	22	6	3	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	41	6	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	39	36	20	0	5
The school is well led and managed.	50	41	3	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	44	6	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	63	3	0	0

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

63. The quality of education provided for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. This is an improvement from the previous inspection. However, there is a lack of large climbing apparatus and wheeled toys for use outside, and limits opportunities for physical development. Children at this stage of their education are in a mixed class with pupils in Year 1. Meticulous planning ensures that all in this class receive an appropriate curriculum through tasks, which are linked well to the needs of the different age groups. The quality of teaching is very good and both the teacher and support assistant have a very positive effect on the quality of learning. This is particularly striking given that, at the time of the inspection, the teacher had been in post for only three weeks. Weekly planning covers all areas of learning very effectively and demonstrates that there is a very good understanding of how young children learn. Relationships are good and the children are eager to learn.
64. Attainment on entry to the school is generally above that found nationally in children of this age. By the time children enter Year 1, the majority have achieved the early learning goals in all areas and most exceed them. This is largely due to the good and very good teaching from all staff within the class. The wide variety of carefully planned and purposeful activities and very well-targeted questions help to ensure that learning is of high quality. Praise is used very effectively to encourage and support children as they rapidly acquire new knowledge, skills, and understanding.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

65. Many children enter the school with skills which are generally average in personal and social development. The high quality and skill of the teaching ensure that all children rapidly develop the necessary skills in this area of learning. During the time of the inspection, children were working and playing happily together, co-operating, taking turns, sharing appropriately and developing self-control. Behaviour is very good. Resources are used very effectively to promote personal and social skills and many children are becoming independent and responsible as a result of the well-structured and often self-initiated tasks provided. Work has been covered on friends and in discussion of rules and relationships. One child wrote, 'Be kind to everyone in school', thus demonstrating how effectively values have been instilled in the short time that the children have been in the school.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

66. Speaking and listening skills, on entry to the Reception class, are generally above average and many children communicate well. Most have some knowledge of books. The children enjoy listening to stories and respond enthusiastically to them. High expectations from staff ensure that children respond well and most show good understanding through their questions and comments. Many children gain confidence and are willing to 'have a go' with tasks, which are very well planned to provide an appropriate level of challenge for different abilities.
67. Children develop a good knowledge of books and how they 'work', recognising that print carries meaning and wanting to tell the story themselves. Many children write their names and are keen to attempt occasional sentences. Books are taken home regularly and most parents help their children with their reading.
68. Elements of the National Literacy framework are used well in the Reception class, so that phonics and letter formation are taught effectively. Most children have exceeded the expectations of the early learning goals for language and literacy before the end of the Foundation Stage.

## **Mathematical development**

69. Children enter the school with a knowledge of number that is generally above average. Most have attained the early learning goals for mathematics before they transfer to Key Stage 1. Again, well-planned activities ensure good quality learning. Children are encouraged to count forwards and backwards, giving them confidence with number and number rhymes and songs are used effectively to reinforce this. Children recognise the relationship between a figure and the number of objects referred to, they develop an understanding of size and position, using words such as 'smaller'/'larger', 'heavier'/'lighter' and 'longer'/'shorter', correctly.

## **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

70. Most children enter the school with a wide range of general knowledge. Numerous activities foster learning in this area and the early learning goal in this area is attained by the time children are five and often exceeded. For example, when experimenting with magnets, children stated that plastic was not magnetic and that a stronger magnet was needed to complete some of the tasks. During a topic on night and day, children investigated the use of torches to produce light. They have designed mehndi' patterns on their hands and have compared Victorian and modern kitchens. Following a visit to a local supermarket, where they watched bread and pizzas being made, the children designed their own plastic bags. Again, the quality of teaching of both the adults working in the class guarantees good progress for the children. Both have very good questioning skills and continually ensure that all children are given very good opportunities which will help them to learn. For example, children select their own resources for their work and use them with care.

## **Physical development**

71. Throughout their Foundation Year, children continue to develop an awareness of the needs of others and the space around them. They have achieved or exceeded the expected standard by the time they enter Key Stage 1. They play outside, running, jumping and learning to consider others. Many throw and catch large balls with some accuracy. Their physical development is good. However, there is no secure outdoor play area and there are no large construction toys or wheeled vehicles available, which limits some areas of physical development.
72. Materials are readily available for children to cut and paste and this develops their skills and confidence as they explain what they are doing. Similarly, when using the computer, children use the mouse confidently and with some accuracy to move icons around the screen.

## **Creative development**

73. Many children have already begun to develop their creative skills and imagination prior to starting the school. They continue to make significant progress as a result of the variety of stimulating activities provided and standards are above those expected by the time the children leave the Foundation Stage. Painting activities are provided to enable children to mix paints and to produce interesting models and collages. A good range of opportunities is provided for children to choose their own activity and develop their imagination through well-structured play. The role-play area has, amongst others, been the 'Birstwith Health Centre'. Children have built a snowman, a model of the 'lighthouse Keeper's Lunch' and their own 'Big Book'. They sing enthusiastically and make music, using a range of instruments. When playing in sand or water, many children develop fairly complex imaginary stories. One concerned a crocodile which lay in wait at the bottom of the water tray and waited patiently for other animals to fall in and be eaten!

## **ENGLISH**

74. Standards of attainment are above the national average at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and pupils are on course to attain very good standards by the end of the school year. The results of the National Curriculum tests in 2000 show that, at the end of Key Stage 1, the school's pupils' attainment was well above the national average in reading and writing. Further, the percentage of the school's pupils attaining the higher level 3 was also well above the national

average in each subject. When compared to schools which draw their pupils from similar backgrounds, this school's pupils were well above average in reading and above average in writing. At the end of Key Stage 2, there were too few pupils for the results to be statistically significant. Even so, the school can be pleased that the pupils entered for English attained at least the national expectation of level 4. Attainment has been erratic since the last inspection, but now appears to be improving.

75. Throughout the school, pupils speak and listen well. When talking, pupils are fluent and confident. Throughout the key stages, they are happy to discuss their work with visitors and explain what they are doing and why. They speak well to each other, both in class and at play and respect each other's ideas and contributions. Listening skills are also above average. Pupils in both key stages listen well in class and only rarely need to be reminded to listen. On occasion, excitement with the work, especially in practical situations, means that reminders need to be more frequent, but, on these occasions, the enthusiastic talk is about the work in hand.
76. Reading skills are also above average at the end of both key stages. In Year 2, pupils read fluently and with some expression. Higher attaining pupils have good phonic skills with which to tackle unfamiliar words. Average pupils have more difficulty with longer, unfamiliar words and phonic skills are insufficiently developed to read words of more than three syllables. A lower attaining pupil read with confidence and good expression, but had the habit of substituting words, for example, reading 'what's' instead of 'that's'. Pupils understand how books work and that print carries meaning. Library skills are developed satisfactorily. In years 5 and 6, pupils are confident and accomplished readers, able to discuss their reading in a confident and mature way. They understand that some books are fictional while others are for reference and they have a secure grasp of how libraries work.
77. The quality of writing is also above average at the end of both key stages. Pupils write for different purposes and alter their writing for different audiences. In Year 2, there are examples of extended investigative writing with some rich vocabulary being used. However, handwriting is not joined and grammar tends to become less secure in longer pieces of work. Spelling is not always secure and presentation can be untidy. By the end of Key Stage 2, writing is well organised structurally and includes good imaginative and descriptive writing. There are good examples of different types of writing, for example, descriptive, narrative writing, instructional writing, and journalistic writing. Again standards of presentation vary from the admirably neat to untidy, ill-formed and poorly spelled writing. Good opportunities are taken to practise writing in subjects such as history and religious education.
78. The school has introduced the National Strategy for literacy successfully. Teachers have a secure understanding of its purpose and lessons are well organised to incorporate the different elements of the strategy. The National Literacy Strategy is having a positive impact on attainment in English throughout the key stages. Good opportunities are taken to develop literary skills in other subjects of the curriculum, for example, in history and religious education.
79. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning in English in relation to their prior attainment. Their work is carefully managed in the light of the targets identified in their individual education plans and progress towards these targets is monitored regularly. They take a full part in lessons and have full access to the curriculum.
80. Pupils' attitudes in English are very good in both key stages. They concentrate well for long periods and move smoothly from one part of the lesson to the next. They work with sustained interest and, frequently, with enthusiasm. Pupils co-operate well in group and paired work and share resources in a mature way. They support and encourage each other very well. They are capable of impressive initiative when tackling tasks which give them appropriate challenge.
81. The quality of teaching in English was very good in two of the lessons observed in Key Stages 1 and 2 and good in the third; overall teaching is very good in both key stages. Teachers skilfully involve pupils in discussion and engage their interest. Good questioning promotes further thought and tests and extends understanding. This means that pupils are fully engaged and enjoy their

work. As a result, class management appears almost effortless. Pupils' interest is engaged particularly well when the purpose of the lesson is clearly explained and they are absolutely clear as to what is expected of them. Teachers are adept at retaining interest by good use of humour and praise. They have high expectations for learning and conduct and this ensures that pupils make good progress in their learning throughout the key stages. Pupils are given regular opportunities to use information and communications technology to support their learning in English. Assessment is used very well to promote progress in English. The subject is managed very effectively, so that standards of attainment are reinforced by clearly focused planning and monitoring of the progress of individual pupils.

82. Resources for learning in English are adequate. The new library is a useful additional resource, but, at this stage, its stock of books is limited. There has been investment in books to support the Literacy Hour and this needs to continue, if pupils are to be provided with a wide range of reading resources.
83. The good standards in English noted in the report from the last inspection have been maintained. The school is in a good position to improve further.

## **MATHEMATICS**

84. Attainment in mathematics is well above average at the end of both key stages. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000, attainment in mathematics was well above the national average. It was also well above the average attained in schools which draw their pupils from similar backgrounds. The proportion of the school's pupils attaining the high level 3 was also well above the national average. At Key Stage 2, 100 per cent of the school's pupils attained the national expectation of level 4 at least.
85. In Year 2, pupils have a secure understanding of numbers up to 100 and count forwards and backwards confidently. They understand the concept of a half and identify halves of different shapes successfully. They know the basic two and three-dimensional shapes and understand the concept of symmetry, being able to identify shapes which are and which are not, symmetrical. They measure successfully in metres and centimetres and weigh in kilograms. They understand money up to £1. They have a secure understanding of addition and subtraction and are beginning to understand the concept of multiplication. They are on course to attain at least the national expectation of level 2 by the end of the key stage.
86. By Year 6, pupils use the four rules of number - addition, subtraction, multiplication and division - accurately and use these with four figure numbers. They understand how fractions, decimals and percentages work and how they are related. They estimate and then measure accurately. They have a secure knowledge of two and three-dimensional shapes, including more unusual ones such as a rhombus and trapezium. They represent data on a range of graphs, including bar charts, bar-line charts and pictograms. They are able to interpret information contained in such graphs. They are in a good position to go on to attain the national expectation of level 4 by the end of the key stage.
87. Pupils have good attitudes in mathematics lessons. They work with a good level of interest and concentration, although they need occasional reminders. They are happy to discuss and explain their work and are courteous to each other and to adults. They are capable of good initiative when using and applying mathematics in new situations. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in their learning in mathematics.
88. The quality of teaching in mathematics is good in both key stages and the subject is managed very effectively. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding and a secure knowledge of the principles of the National Numeracy Strategy. Good resources are available to support learning and lessons move at a sensible pace, so that each point is understood before the lesson moves on. Classes are managed well with good use of praise and humour to motivate pupils. Questions are searching and ensure that pupils have understood the principles of the work being done. Assessment is used very well to promote further progress for individual pupils.

Homework is used well to support learning. Other subjects are used well to support learning in mathematics, for example, geography, design and technology, and science. The mental mathematics element of the Numeracy Hour is being used effectively to sharpen pupils' mental agility with number.

89. Standards of teaching and attainment have improved, overall, since the last inspection. The school is in a good position to consolidate this good quality of learning and to go on to improve further.

## **SCIENCE**

90. Attainment in science is above average at the end of both key stages. Due to the small number of pupils who took the end of Key Stage 2 test in 2000, no comparison involving them are statistically significant; however, the pupils entered attained at least the national expectation of level 4. Teacher assessments for attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000 were very high in comparison with the national average. In comparison with similar schools, attainment in 2000 was very high at the end of Key Stage 1 and above average at Key Stage 2. Standards in science have improved since the last inspection. The last inspection found that, although standards were above the national average, some pupils made unsatisfactory progress during the lessons observed. This is no longer the case and, now, the quality of learning during lessons is good.
91. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils understand simple facts about the absorbent properties of materials. They have conducted a number of experiments, including 'which cloth was the strongest that would clean up the water?' and 'how to melt ice cream in a room'. One very good lesson was observed during the inspection in which pupils in Year 1 used a variety of magnets and different materials to reach some simple conclusions about magnetism. During the year, pupils study natural and man-made materials, for example, they know that paper is made from trees and leather from animal skins.
92. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have investigated the various properties of solids and different methods of separation, whether using a colander to separate peas from water, or a tea strainer to separate leaves from tea. They conduct experiments to test the different ways of dissolving sugar in water. They have looked at how sound is created at different pitches; they have grown plants, studying the effects of photosynthesis and have investigated temperature, including different forms of insulation and the effect of heat on water. Many pupils understand the principles of a 'fair test'. At both key stages, pupils with special educational needs receive good support which helps them to make good progress in their learning.
93. Pupils are interested in science. They discuss enthusiastically and co-operate well in shared tasks, many of which are of a practical nature. The quality of teaching is at least good and, sometimes, very good in both key stages. Planning is thorough and pupils are interested in the tasks set. Questioning skills at both key stages are very good and a good deal of teaching is done through carefully targeted questions, which extend the pupils' thinking and develop their understanding. The presentation of some written work is unsatisfactory, with spelling errors and untidy handwriting. Assessment is used well to promote progress and the subject is effectively managed. The quantity and quality of resources are satisfactory and they are used effectively.

## **ART**

94. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection. It is not possible, therefore, to make an overall judgement on the standards of teaching and learning. Art displays include still life paintings, illustrating colour tones, and a collage and a long mural, illustrating the village of Birstwith. Art is used well within various topics. Computer programs are used to draw pictures. There is a lack of three-dimensional art throughout the school. Sketchbooks are used, although their use is underdeveloped. Pupils achieve sound standards at the end of each key stage.
95. Pupils are enthusiastic in their approach to art and are interested in the problems of drawing

objects so as to indicate their three-dimensional shape. They found this challenging, but persevered with interest. There is sound teaching in Key Stage 2 to instil into pupils that, if work of quality is to be achieved, then effort, discipline and thought are required.



## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

96. Standards in design and technology at the end of both key stages are in line with what would normally be expected of pupils of this age. All pupils, including those with special educational needs generally make sound progress in their learning throughout the school.
97. There is evidence throughout the school to show that all aspects of the curriculum are covered. Opportunities are provided for pupils to work in a good range of contexts with a variety of materials, although this is more evident in Key Stage 2. At both key stages, they plan and construct, although fewer opportunities are provided for all pupils to evaluate and refine their designs. In Key Stage 1, they taste fruit, recognising the basic features of familiar and unfamiliar products. They use tools and different techniques to make good, wheeled models. In Key Stage 2, pupils have studied dyes and dying, have experimented with a motor to turn a wheel, and have designed some interesting slippers.
98. The quality of teaching is good, overall, in each key stage. Lessons are planned carefully to ensure that all pupils in mixed age classes have appropriate work. Good levels of support ensure good progress and pupils' interest and enthusiasm also contribute to the quality of their work. Resources are readily available and used with care.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

99. Pupils at both key stages make generally satisfactory progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of these subjects and achieve satisfactory standards. The sound standards found at the last inspection have been maintained. Good links are made with other subjects where possible, particularly literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress, through work which is targeted specifically to their needs.
100. At Key Stage 1, pupils have a good knowledge of their own locality and have some understanding of other lands. They begin a study of the Romans and use reference books to research information. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have studied the Ancient Greeks and the Tudors, as well as continuing the work on the Romans begun in Class 2. They are aware of the importance of evidence and the different forms it can take. They have looked at different environments, particularly mountainous areas and have compared where they live with life in Kenya. Pupils' work on Kenya is made more personal by the fact that the school sponsors two children in Mombassa. They have a sound general knowledge of geography. Their work on co-ordinates and grid references is a useful link with numeracy.
101. As few lessons were observed during the inspection week in geography and history, there is insufficient evidence available to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. Pupils are generally interested in these subjects and talk enthusiastically about what they have done. The school uses the local environment very well and pupils have good opportunities to extend their learning through regular visits out of school.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

102. Attainment in information and communications technology is generally in line with the national average at the end of both key stages, with pupils, including those with special educational needs, making satisfactory progress. This reflects the findings of the last inspection.
103. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with standards of attainment which are generally above average. By the end of the key stage, pupils know that the computer responds to commands and signals and understand the basic functions of the keyboard and mouse, using them with accuracy. Pupils within this key stage use a 'Roamer' to programme movement in different directions. High quality computer-generated pictures, at both key stages, illustrate to pupils the usefulness of this

technology both in their learning and in life in general. At Key Stage 2, pupils develop further their ability to word-process and handle data. Although not all strands of the information and communications technology curriculum were in evidence during the inspection, planning shows that all will be covered during the year. The use of information technology to support learning in other subjects is satisfactory.

104. Pupils' attitudes to information and communications technology are good at both key stages and pupils are interested, attentive and generally very confident. They are co-operative and willing to take turns. When working independently, they concentrate well, persevering with tasks and enjoying the challenge of producing work of good quality.
105. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages. When skills are taught, the tasks are explained clearly and carefully and good quality support is given. Resources are satisfactory and are used effectively. Information and communications technology is developed further through extra-curricular activities, which are attended by a good number of Key Stage 2 pupils.

## **MUSIC**

106. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in their learning in music and attainment at the end of both key stages is better than that found in many schools. Whole school singing in assemblies is good. Pupils sing tunefully and sensitively and have a good sense of musicality, with good attention being paid to rhythm and dynamics.
107. In lessons, pupils in both key stages sing well and are alert to changes in tempo. They show good powers of analysis, for example, arguing that it is better to start a song slowly and speed up, than the reverse. They sing quietly and then loudly with a good sense of control. Pupils responded well to taped examples, for instance being able to imagine a swan swimming gracefully. Pupils were then able to create dance movements, which reflected the feelings that had been evoked by contrasting pieces of music. This provided a valuable cross-curricular link between physical education and music.
108. Pupils respond very well to music and work with a very good level of concentration and co-operation. They show very good initiative in creating movements to portray their responses to the music. They support each other sensitively and show good respect for each other's contributions and ideas.
109. The school provides pupils with very good opportunities for musical experiences. About half the pupils in the school take the opportunity to learn an instrument. Guitar and recorder tuition is provided by school staff, while visiting specialists provide lessons in strings, woodwind, brass and key board. The school choir provides another opportunity for some 20 pupils to develop musical skills and an appreciation of the discipline that is needed for successful music making. Opportunities for performance enhance their understanding of the quality of work required.
110. The quality of teaching in music is very good in both key stages. Very good musical knowledge and understanding underpinned imaginatively planned learning experiences, which resulted in very good learning. Very clear learning objectives encompassed different facets of music and enabled pupils to understand that music can evoke different responses and represent different moods. There was very good use of resources and the lesson had good pace as it moved from one activity to the next. As a result, pupils' concentration was maintained and learning was built up systematically.
111. The subject is managed very effectively and a very good range of musical experiences is available for pupils. The school is in a good position to build further on its present good standards.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

112. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in physical

education and good progress in swimming. Standards of attainment match those found in most primary schools and are above average in swimming. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

113. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have a good awareness of space and an awareness of the needs of other pupils. They show good skills in throwing and catching bean bags and large balls. About half the pupils in Years 2 and 3 can swim 25 metres (the national expectation by the end of Key Stage 2) and the rest can swim up to ten metres. All are well on course to attain the national standard by the time they leave the school. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils control a hockey ball with reasonable success. They pass the ball to each other and dribble between cones with varying degrees of success, but attainment is satisfactory, overall. Similarly, pupils show different levels of skill when controlling a large ball with the feet: again, attainment is satisfactory, overall.
114. Pupils show a good level of co-operation during physical education lessons and work with a good level of interest and concentration. They behave well in a potentially difficult situation where space is restricted. The behaviour of the class on the journey to and from the swimming pool and at the baths was exemplary. There are good examples of initiative as pupils respond to the challenge of the different activities.
115. The quality of teaching is good, overall, and this is a significant improvement on the last inspection. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding and their good management of pupils in a difficult outside space is aided by their good use of praise and humour. There were good suggestions for improvements in technique and high expectations for learning meant that the teacher expected pupils to use the correct technique. Overall, resources for learning are adequate, but the lack of equipment for gymnastics severely limits the range of skills that pupils can develop. The arrangements, whereby the oldest pupils have to move out of their classroom if the other classes are to have an opportunity for physical education lessons indoors, are unsatisfactory.
116. There have been good improvements in teaching and learning since the last inspection. The school's potential to improve further is limited by its accommodation and facilities.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

117. Standards of attainment in religious education are above those expected in the Locally Agreed Syllabus at the end of both key stages. The good standards found during the previous inspection have been maintained. The effective support given to pupils with special educational needs means that they, too, make good progress in their learning.
118. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are beginning to understand the meaning of Advent. They know many of the best-loved Bible stories and have a good understanding of the fact that this country contains people of different faiths. They have visited the Multi-Faith Centre in Bradford, and the whole school has experienced an 'Indian Day'. During their time in the school, pupils are introduced to Hinduism and Judaism and, more briefly, to Islam. However, the overall emphasis is on Christianity and, by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have considered personal and Christian symbolism. They understand the need for rules, from class rules to the instructions of Jesus. They are able to compare the stories of the 'Three Kings' with what is written about the three wise men, as part of a very detailed topic on the Christmas Story and understand that different sources of evidence might produce different versions of the same story.
119. Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject and these have a direct impact on the quality of their understanding. They are invariably attentive, interested and take part very enthusiastically in discussions. They do this sensitively and sensibly.
120. These above average standards are a direct result of good teaching in both key stages. Teachers ask open questions which encourage pupils to think deeply. The scheme of work is based on the Locally Agreed Syllabus for North Yorkshire and ensures a good coverage of the topics, promoting a good level of understanding. A number of visitors enrich the curriculum, including regular visits

from the local vicar. There is a satisfactory range of resources and artefacts are borrowed, when needed, to support learning and understanding.