

# INSPECTION REPORT

**SIMPSON'S LANE JUNIOR and INFANT  
SCHOOL**

Knottingley

LEA area: Wakefield

Unique reference number: 108178

Headteacher: Mrs A Wilson

Reporting inspector: Miss K Manning  
20267

Dates of inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> October 2000

Inspection number: 225084

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Junior and infant

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 5 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Sycamore Avenue  
Knottingley  
West Yorkshire

Postcode: WF11 0PL

Telephone number: 01977 722515

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr B Grainger

Date of previous inspection: 16<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> September 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
K Manning 20267	Registered inspector	English Information and communication technology Physical education English as an additional language Foundation stage	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements. Teaching and learning. Leadership and management.
L Buller 12511	Lay inspector		Pupils' welfare, health and safety. Partnership with parents and carers.
G Halliday 22881	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Geography Equal opportunities	Quality and range of opportunities for learning.
A Welch 31012	Team inspector	Mathematics History Music Religious education Special educational needs	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.

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Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is an average sized primary school, with 103 boys and 97 girls in classes from reception to Year 6. A further 24 boys and 26 girls attend the nursery part-time. Many children have very limited language, literacy and numeracy skills when they join the nursery and their attainment on entry to the reception class is well below expectations for four-year-olds. The school is in an Education Action Zone and pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds. The number of pupils who start or leave the school part way through a key stage is high. The percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is above average. Pupils come predominantly from English backgrounds and all speak English as their first language. The number of pupils who have special educational needs is higher than in most other schools. Seventy-eight children are on the school's register of special educational needs because they have learning, physical or emotional difficulties. Of these, one child in the nursery and a further four infants and juniors have statements of special needs.

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

Good leadership helps the school meet each new challenge successfully and ensures that the school is likely to continue to improve in the future. Almost all the teaching is at least satisfactory and much is good or better. This ensures that pupils reach the standards of which they are capable even though these are not as high as in most other schools. The cost of achieving this is high but pupils benefit considerably from attending a school that is warm and welcoming. When all of this is considered the school gives sound value for money.

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

- Many pupils achieve standards in English that are higher than those achieved by pupils in similar schools.
- Standards in art and design are above the levels expected of seven and 11-year-olds.
- Much of the teaching in the FoundationStage<sup>1</sup> is very good, which means that children get a fine start to their education.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Very good provision for pupils' personal and social development ensures that most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and behave in a mature and responsible way.
- The procedures for promoting pupils' health, safety, welfare and child protection are very good and ensure that pupils are happy in school.

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

- Teachers often fail to use the information they have gained from assessments to plan work that is pitched at the right level for all pupils. As a result, lower and higher attaining pupils are sometimes asked to do the same work and do not always get an equal opportunity to progress at their own rate.
- Standards in information technology are not high enough.

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

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<sup>1</sup> The Foundation stage is the time children spend in the nursery and reception class.

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has improved at a steady pace since its last inspection in September of 1996. Governors responded well to the key issues identified in the last report and clear direction provided by a newly appointed headteacher helped the school tackle two of these successfully. While the school has managed to develop good procedures for assessment there is still some work to do on using the information from tests and records to plan work. There is more good teaching than at the time of the previous inspection and more astute financial planning has helped to systematically reduce a large overspend of the school's budget. The school's results in national tests are increasing at a similar pace to the national trend and it is on course to achieve the targets it has set for raising standards in tests in 2001.

## 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
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	E	E	D	B
mathematics	E*	E	E*	E
science	E	E*	E	E

**Key**

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

Although standards in English were below those expected of 11-year-olds, pupils in Simpson's Lane performed better than those from similar schools. This is a real success story for the school and is due to the very good provision for pupils with special educational needs in reading and writing. Standards in science were well below those expected for 11-year-olds and standards in mathematics were among the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. When compared with similar schools pupils did not appear to perform well enough in national tests. However, standards in these subjects are low because a number of pupils did not complete their test papers.

The standards achieved by most seven-year-olds are below the levels expected for their age in reading, writing and science and well below the expected levels in mathematics. Pupils in Simpson's Lane performed better than those in similar schools in reading tests and as well as those in similar schools in writing tests. Pupils did not perform as well as those in similar schools in tests in mathematics.

Standards in information technology are below the levels expected of seven and 11-year-olds. In religious education, standards meet the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus for seven and 11-year-olds.

Standards are improving steadily but remain a priority for the school. The school exceeded its target for English in national tests in 2000 but failed to reach the target it had set for raising standards in mathematics. Test results are affected by the high numbers of pupils who join the school in the middle of a key stage and have not had the chance to follow the school's programmes of work all the way through.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' have good positive attitudes to learning and enjoy school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Most pupils are well behaved and courteous in lessons, assemblies and at breaks. A small number of pupils have difficulty behaving well and need additional support from the school.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils are mature and sensible. They form good relationships with other children and adults.
Attendance	Attendance is below average and is affected by the number of families who move in and out of the school area.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching has improved since the last inspection. Most is now good or better. Twenty-nine per cent is good and a further 25 per cent is very good. Forty-two per cent is satisfactory and four per cent is unsatisfactory. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is always good or better. Some consistently high quality teaching by a temporary teacher is helping raise standards in Year 6.

**Strengths of teaching:** there is very good teaching of pupils with special educational needs, particularly in reading and writing and many pupils catch up with their learning ~ teachers are good at teaching the basics of literacy and numeracy and this increases pupils' understanding ~ the methods used by teachers are generally effective and extend pupils' learning ~ teachers manage pupils very well and as a result most pupils concentrate and are able to get on with their work.

**Weaknesses in teaching:** pupils of different ability are sometimes asked to do the same work and cannot progress at their own speed ~ teachers do not always use the information from assessment to plan work ~ in the small number of lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory pupils did not make fast enough progress.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	COMMENT
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and relevant. It is enriched by a wide range of after-school activities and very strong links with the local community and other schools in the area.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is one of the strengths of the school. The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Carefully planned work and additional support results in these pupils making good progress, particularly in reading and writing.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school's provision for pupils' social development is very good and pervades all of the work of the school. Pupils' moral and cultural development is also promoted strongly and spiritual development is promoted to a satisfactory level through lessons and assemblies.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The procedures for promoting pupils' health, safety, welfare and child protection are very good. Arrangements for monitoring pupils' behaviour and attendance are good. Though the procedures for assessing pupils' academic performance are good teachers do not always use them well enough.

A weakness of the curriculum is that lower and higher attaining pupils are sometimes asked to do the same work and do not always get an equal opportunity to progress at their own rate. Teachers often fail to use the information they have gained from assessments to plan work that is pitched at the right level for these pupils.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher is a strong and conscientious leader who provides firm educational direction for the work of the school. The leadership and management of senior teachers and co-ordinators are good and have helped the school run smoothly without a deputy head.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are knowledgeable about the school and fulfil all their legal responsibilities. They are closely involved in planning the school's development and in managing its finances.
The school's evaluation of its performance	A firm understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses helps the headteacher, staff and governors to continue to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards.
The strategic use of resources	Particularly good use is made of the time and talents of teachers and support staff to provide help for pupils with special educational needs. The school uses all of its resources well and for the benefit of pupils.

There are sufficient staff and resources to teach the curriculum and support pupils with special educational needs. The accommodation provides an attractive and interesting place for pupils to learn. Governors and teachers make thorough comparisons of pupils' performance in tests with local, similar and all other schools. They try hard to ensure that they get the best possible value for money from spending, particularly when it is large amounts, for example, on replacing computers. Parents' views about the school are sought on important matters, such as homework.

## 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>• Parents are pleased that their children like school.</li> <li>• They believe that their children are making good progress in school.</li> <li>• Parents think that most of the teaching is good.</li> <li>• They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems.</li> <li>• Parents feel that the school works closely with them.</li> <li>• They are glad that their children are expected to work hard and do their best.</li> <li>• They are pleased that teachers help their children to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parents would like a more interesting range of activities outside lessons.</li> <li>• Several parents would like more homework for their children.</li> </ul>

Inspection findings support parents' positive views of the school. There is a substantial amount of good teaching and many pupils, especially those with special educational needs, make good progress. Parents are encouraged to work in partnership with the school to help their children learn. Teachers and the headteacher are always available to speak to parents about their children's progress. Teachers expect pupils to work hard and encourage them to behave in a mature and responsible manner. The school provides a good range of after-school activities though these are mostly aimed at juniors and there is not as much on offer for infants. Teachers generally set homework in English and mathematics, although some do this more regularly than others.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

- 1 When children start nursery, their achievements vary widely but are mainly well below what is usually found in children of their age. A few know about books and numbers and have a wide experience outside of their own home and family. Most are unsure how to react to new situations and lack the confidence or vocabulary to speak to adults. Inspection findings show that children make very good progress in all the areas of learning in the Foundation Stage. Consequently, by the time they are five, most achieve the levels expected for their age in personal, social and emotional development, reading and writing, mathematics, in their knowledge and understanding of the world and in creative and physical development. However, despite a growing confidence and widening vocabulary, few reach the standard expected of five-year-olds in speaking.
- 2 There are some important factors that affect the school's results in National Curriculum tests. The school has a high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs. Often these are linked to learning difficulties but a significant number of pupils have emotional and behavioural problems. In the past, this has prevented some pupils from completing their test papers, even though they have been at school. Finally, the number of families who move into and out of the estate is very high. This means that many pupils in Years 3 to 6 start part-way through the juniors.
- 3 Standards in English are improving because of better teaching and very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The results of National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in 1999 showed that standards of reading and writing were below the national average. Fewer pupils than in most other schools reached a higher level in reading and no pupils reached a higher level in writing. In response to these results, teachers of pupils in the infants were quick to change the way that writing was taught and by the year 2000 the proportion of pupils who reached a higher level was above most other schools. The results of National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds in 1999 showed that standards were below the national average and fewer pupils than in most other schools reached a higher level. However, a real success for the school is that pupils perform better than those in similar schools. The school exceeded the targets it had set for the year 2000. Inspection findings confirm the school's results in tests; standards are below expectations for seven and eleven-year-olds.
- 4 Standards in mathematics are improving steadily as a result of better teaching and the greater emphasis given to mental mathematics. In National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 in 1999, standards were well below the national average and no pupils achieved a higher level. As teachers began to use the National Numeracy Strategy more effectively, a fifth of pupils in the following year reached a higher level. Inspection findings show that standards are continuing to rise in the infants and that by the time they are seven pupils' achievements match those expected for their age. The results of National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds in 1999 showed that standards were in the lowest five per cent of schools and no pupils reached a higher level. The reason for this is that teachers are not yet using the information they get from assessment to pitch work at the right level for higher attaining pupils. Only one pupil reached a higher level in tests in 2000 and this remains a key area for the school to develop. When compared with similar schools, pupils' performance is below average by the end of Year 2 and well below average by the end of Year 6. The school failed to meet the target it had set for the year 2000 because a small number of pupils did not complete the test and this brought the school's overall results down. Inspection

findings confirm that standards are well below the levels expected of 11-year-olds by the end of Year 6.

- 5 Standards in science continue to be well below the national average and test results have fluctuated over the last four years. Teachers' assessments of pupils at the end of Year 2 in 1999 showed that standards were well below the national average and no pupils reached a higher level. This remained the case in 2000, although a small number of pupils reached a higher level. Inspection findings confirm that standards remain below average by the end of Year 2. They are not improving at the same rate as in English because teachers do not use assessment to ensure that work matches the needs of lower and higher attaining pupils. The results of National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds in 1999 showed that standards were well below the national average and this picture did not change in the following year. Pupils in Simpson's Lane do not perform as well in science tests as pupils in similar schools. Inspection findings confirm that standards are well below average by the end of Year 6.
- 6 There is no pattern to whether boys or girls perform better in National Curriculum tests. In some years girls do better than boys but this is not always the case. The school's own analysis of test results indicates that girls often do better at reading because they are more interested than boys in reading books.
- 7 When judged together, standards in all three subjects are improving at a similar rate to the national trend. This means that despite changes to the school population, and the high number of pupils with special educational needs, the school is managing to overcome the challenges presented by each of these situations and help pupils achieve the standards of which they are capable.
- 8 As a result of good teaching and support from all staff, pupils with special educational needs make good progress in all aspects of reading and writing. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make significant leaps and bounds in their reading as a result of the intense help they get from the school's programme of *Reading Recovery*. Those in Year 3 benefit from additional support in literacy and pupils in Year 6 are given a further push from booster classes.
- 9 Standards in information technology are below what is expected of seven and 11-year-olds. They are lower than they were at the time of the previous inspection because of the advances in technology. Older pupils have a lot of catching up to do in their use of computers to communicate information as graphs, spreadsheets and databases. Younger pupils are becoming familiar with many of the programs on the school's computers but their progress is limited by the amount of time they get to work on computers. This is a key area for the school to develop.
- 10 In religious education, standards meet those prescribed by the locally Agreed Syllabus for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. The only gap in pupils' learning is that pupils in junior classes do not have a deep enough knowledge of religious beliefs to be able to consider the influence of religion on communities. Greater emphasis on this aspect of pupils' learning would make the school's provision for pupils moral and cultural development better than it already is.
- 11 One of the things the school does well is to ensure that pupils gain high standards in art. From an early age, pupils produce paintings, drawings and craftwork of good quality. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils have a wide knowledge of artists and their work and are familiar with specialist techniques for printing, making collage pictures and creating models.

- 12 In all other subjects, standards match the levels expected of seven and 11-year-olds. In geography, pupils have a firm understanding of the local area and the countries they study. In history, pupils know about Tudor England, the ancient Egyptians, the Victorians and the events of the Second World War by the time they leave the school. In both subjects they are beginning to develop skills of researching facts from books and other sources. In music, pupils benefit from the many first-hand experiences they have to listen to and play musical instruments and compositions from around the world. In physical education, standards have improved since the time of the previous inspection. Many pupils are good at games and nearly all swim the recommended distance by the time they are in Year 6. They are competent gymnasts and enjoy athletics and dancing.

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

- 13 Pupils' attitudes to school are as good as they were during the previous inspection. Children in the Foundation Stage know the rules and routines of the nursery and school and respond enthusiastically to new experiences. They quickly form friendly relationships with other children and are kind to each other. They enjoy playing and more formal group activities and readily share equipment. Most pupils in both key stages enjoy going to school and are happy to talk about their favourite lessons. They are particularly keen to take part in the wide range of sporting, musical and computer activities that go on after school. When teaching is good and lessons are challenging, pupils are eager to volunteer answers and ideas, and work well at tasks, whether or not they are closely supervised. Pupils with special educational needs are confident and have positive attitudes to their work because of the extra support they get and the success they enjoy from activities planned to match their needs.
- 14 Behaviour varies from excellent to poor. Most pupils behave satisfactorily in lessons, assemblies and at lunch and break times. This is due in most part to the effective systems that the school has to maintain discipline and promote good behaviour. In some lessons behaviour is very good and occasionally excellent. This is a result of very good teaching where teachers have high expectations and set challenging tasks. As a result, pupils are highly motivated and try hard to meet the standards required. The number of fixed-term exclusions continues to be well above the national average for primary schools. These result mainly from incidents of poor behaviour by a small number of boys, some of whom have severe emotional and behavioural problems and need additional support from the school. The number of exclusions is high because the school's policy of excluding pupils for a short period of cooling off time is followed rigorously. A feature of the school is that it welcomes pupils who have been excluded permanently from other schools because of their extremely disruptive and difficult behaviour.
- 15 The school has maintained the high standards of personal development and relationships previously reported. Because of the good or very good relationships that exist between pupils and teachers, pupils work hard to meet the standards that are expected of them. They are not afraid to offer their opinions because they know that their contributions will be valued. For example, in a Year 5 numeracy lesson, the rapport between teacher and pupils led to good progress in their understanding of the relationships between fractions and decimals and in understanding what they had learned. Pupils with special educational needs are integrated fully into the life of the school and form good relationships with their teachers, support staff and other pupils. No incidents of bullying were seen during the inspection.
- 16 Throughout the school, pupils take responsibility for getting out materials they need in lessons and handle books and equipment carefully. As they get older, pupils take more

responsibility for a range of important jobs, such as leading the house system and setting up the hall for assemblies. They show maturity in the way they deal with younger children both in acting as a *buddy* at play times and as they share reading activities with infant pupils.

- 17 Levels of attendance are below the national average. This is because of the high numbers of families who move in and out of the area. Sometimes parents fail to inform the school that their children are leaving and this contributes to high levels of unauthorised absence. The school has an effective working partnership with the Education Welfare Service. Together they are developing ways of communicating with parents the importance of their children attending school regularly.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 18 Teaching has improved since the last inspection. Just over half is now good or better. Twenty-nine per cent is good and a further 25 per cent is very good. Forty-two per cent is satisfactory and four per cent is unsatisfactory. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is always at least good. Some consistently high quality teaching by a temporary teacher is helping raise standards in Year 6. Teachers' knowledge of the curriculum has increased. As a result, weaknesses in physical education have been addressed through clear guidance for teaching and learning. The school is at a stage where it has a good idea of strengths and weaknesses in teaching; because of this, it is well-placed to keep the improvement going.
- 19 A particular strength of the teaching is the very good provision made for pupils with special educational needs. This is most noticeable in the way they are given extra help and support with their reading and writing. Pupils' difficulties are diagnosed very early in the Foundation Stage and prompt intervention, using techniques such as *Reading Recovery* in Year 1, means that many pupils catch up with reading and writing. Further up the school, additional support for small groups helps lower attaining pupils in Year 3 to improve their reading and writing and often re-awakens their interest in books. Later on in the juniors, pupils in Year 6 are given the extra push needed to help them do as well as they can in National Curriculum tests through *booster classes* which focus on English and mathematics. All pupils benefit from these, not just those with special educational needs. Alongside these initiatives pupils with special educational needs are also given a lot of help in their lessons. Teachers make good use of the time and talents of classroom assistants to ensure that pupils, whose special educational needs arise from emotional and behavioural problems, do not disrupt the lesson for others and that groups of pupils with learning difficulties have someone at hand to help them with their work. Very often this is planned meticulously and is based on each pupil's targets in their individual learning programme. As a result of all this support, pupils with special educational needs make good progress and a significant number are removed from the school's register. Classroom assistants make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching. Without them, pupils' acquisition of skills, the effort they make and their pace of working would not be anywhere near as good as it is.

- 20 Teachers use the National Literacy Strategy to good effect in both key stages. Their good knowledge of how to teach the basic skills of literacy is evident in lessons throughout the school. In literacy lessons, infant pupils are taught how to use pictures or sound out letters to help them read unfamiliar words. This gives them the confidence to have a go at quite difficult texts and pupils are pleased when they finally get the words right. In both infants and juniors, teachers emphasise the importance of punctuation and spelling in written work. What makes this effective is that it is reinforced in lessons other than literacy.
- 21 Teachers are also good at teaching the basic skills of mathematics and are increasingly successful in implementing the National Numeracy Strategy. In mathematics lessons, time is given to mental arithmetic and teachers ensure that pupils of different ability are asked questions that test their knowledge. Pupils generally enjoy this part of the lesson because it is fast and pacy and they all join in. As a result of these sessions pupils recall number facts such as multiplication tables.
- 22 Teachers use good methods to raise standards in most subjects. In a very good lesson in Year 6, the teacher's intervention allowed pupils to understand why they needed to evaluate their designs for Victorian samplers and improve on their original ideas. Similarly, in a good art lesson in Year 5, the teacher extended pupils' creativity and knowledge by giving them lots of objects to draw and giving his own thoughtful observations about where they might make a start. By allowing pupils in Year 2 to discuss the story of Grace Darling the teacher helped them realise that not all historical accounts are accurate. Methods are less effective when teachers expect lower and higher attaining pupils to do the same work. This happened in lessons in several subjects, and often involved pupils completing worksheets, which prevented them from progressing at their own speed. Lower attaining pupils sometimes struggle because the work was too hard and higher attaining pupils were not challenged sufficiently well.
- 23 There are some gaps in the teaching of information and communication technology and science that prevent pupils from learning as well as they could. In information and communication technology, teachers do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to use computers and are not yet teaching all aspects of the subject in sufficient depth. For example, there is not enough work on control technology or using databases and spreadsheets. In science, not enough emphasis is given to experimental science, which restricts the progress that pupils make in this aspect of their learning.
- 24 A further strength of the teaching is the way that teachers manage pupils. Their success is built on the very good relationships that all staff have with pupils. Because teachers treat pupils with respect and are concerned about their well-being, most pupils respond by trying hard to please their teachers. Those pupils who have problems behaving well are dealt with firmly but sensitively so that the disruption to lessons is always minimal. A good example of this was seen in a class of pupils from Years 3, 4 and 5. When one boy had trouble joining in the lesson, the class teacher arranged for him to have some time with a classroom assistant to get over his outburst. Her calm manner in dealing with a volatile situation meant that the rest of the class followed her example and continued with their discussion quietly and without fuss.
- 25 Weaknesses in teaching arise from the fact that teachers do not always use the information they have from assessments to plan work at the right level. So, while termly plans are good and ensure that all aspects of the National Curriculum are studied, weekly plans often fail to set different tasks for lower and higher attaining pupils. In addition, the quality of day-to-day marking varies considerably. Pupils in Year 2 are given a very clear idea of what they need to do to improve because the marking is particularly helpful and detailed. However, in other year groups marking is less

purposeful and does not help pupils improve their work. For example, teachers do not always say what it is that pupils are doing wrong in mathematics or make specific references to techniques for spelling words correctly in writing. In addition, teachers do not always use the results of tests in mathematics and science to fix a starting point for pupils work. This is one of the reasons why it is occasionally pitched at levels that are too easy for some pupils and too difficult for others. Teachers keep thorough records of what pupils can do in English. This is not the case in all subjects and this is one of the reasons why teachers are sometimes unsure about where to pitch the level of work.

- 26 All teachers set homework that is relevant to what pupils are learning in school, although some do this more regularly than others. From reception class onwards, pupils are encouraged to take books home to read with parents or carers. Reading at home also encourages pupils to want to read. Older pupils are given spellings and multiplication tables to learn at home. Each week they are tested on what they have learned and it is evident from results that pupils benefit considerably from help at home.

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

- 27 The school meets statutory requirements to teach all subjects of the National Curriculum and effectively promotes most pupils' learning and their physical and moral development. The newly introduced National Curriculum 2000 is used as the basis for teachers' termly plans and changes in what is taught are already evident after only a few weeks. For example, in art and design lessons, there is a greater emphasis on pupils evaluating and developing their work than previously. The curriculum for religious education meets the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. The school has effective strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy. The school's provision for health education is good. Sex education and awareness of the misuse of drugs are part of the science curriculum and there is also a carefully planned programme for personal, social and health education.
- 28 A key issue at the time of the previous inspection was that the school lacked the schemes of work that would ensure pupils' work was progressively more difficult as they got older. Teachers have dealt with this successfully by introducing good quality schemes for all subjects. This is beginning to have a positive impact on teachers' planning so that in subjects, such as history, pupils study a wide range of periods and cultures.
- 29 An area of weakness is that the curriculum does not ensure equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. This is because teachers' planning does not cater suitably for lower and higher attaining pupils. Too often the work that they are given is the same, which means that it is difficult for lower attaining pupils or too easy for higher attaining pupils. Consequently, they do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- 30 School staff give generously of their time to provide a good range of extra-curricular activities. These include seasonal clubs for football, netball and cricket, and guitar lessons, recorders, line dancing, computers and crafts. As a result, pupils' sense of responsibility, self-esteem and co-operation are strengthened. They gain greater confidence and skills in different subjects. Educational visits in the area and to a residential field study centre extend the range of pupils' experiences and contribute to their learning and personal development.
- 31 The school has very good links with the community and they are used well to support learning. For example, pupils visited a local glassmaker and heard how the company

tries to conserve the earth's resources in its production process. Strong links have also been established with other local schools. As a result of joint initiatives, such as visits to the secondary school, older pupils make the transition from juniors to secondary school confidently. Access to the Internet has enabled pupils to exchange information with partner schools and obtain information from museums, libraries and new providers. The school takes every opportunity to be involved in local cultural and sporting events and these make a significant contribution to pupils' social development as well as raising standards in art, physical education and music.

- 32 The school's provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Daily worship provides opportunities for pupils to consider issues such as *belonging* in a calm and reflective atmosphere. They are given time to pray and are encouraged to think about themselves and how their actions affect others. If pupils were given more opportunities to consider how religious beliefs effect individuals and communities in religious education and during circle time, standards would be higher in religious education and the schools' provision for pupils' spiritual development would be improved.
- 33 The school's provision for pupils' moral development is good. Teachers provide a strong moral code. They set clear guidelines for acceptable behaviour and promote moral values positively. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong from the time they enter nursery. Teachers discuss unacceptable behaviour with pupils and encourage them to apologise. Pupils in Year 1 discussed rules with their teacher before formulating them into a simple code for all to follow. This gives them a feeling of ownership. They provide pupils with opportunities to discuss moral issues in regularly timetabled *circle time*. The quiet, intimate atmosphere encourages all pupils to take part, so they can all gain in moral development. Staff are very good role models and make a point of being polite and considerate to each other and to pupils.
- 34 The school makes very good provision for pupils' social development. The programme for personal, social and health education makes a valuable contribution to this, aiming to promote pupils' ability and motivation to work together co-operatively. The school works hard to develop pupils' sense of community. Pupils are encouraged to care for others and also to take responsibility for themselves. Lunchtime staff promote good manners at dining tables, where pupils sit in friendship groups headed by Year 6 monitors. At morning registration the greeting *good morning* is customary. Pupils help to raise funds for the charity NSPCC<sup>2</sup>. They themselves sometimes organise fundraising, for instance, selling jumble. All classes have a class monitor system, which encourages their sense of responsibility. When they are in Year 6 they take on further duties, such as looking after younger pupils during playtimes. Older pupils gain in confidence and social attitudes in the school's annual visit to a residential field study centre.
- 35 The school's provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils are given many opportunities to learn about their own and other cultures. The curriculum provides them with positive experiences. For instance, in history and geography lessons and on fieldwork outings, pupils develop their knowledge of their locality and of the wider world. They learn of famous artists and see original works of art in the school corridors. Pupils visit the theatre in Leeds and Wakefield. An intensive programme of events is planned for the annual *book week*. Visitors to the school tell stories, and engage pupils in dance and musical events that fascinate pupils and increase their knowledge of a multi-cultural society. The curriculum in religious education and informative displays of interesting objects show pupils something of a range of beliefs. In assemblies multi-cultural education is promoted through story, music and drama.

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<sup>2</sup> NSPCC is the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

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

- 36 The procedures for promoting pupils' health, safety, welfare and child protection are very good. Fire safety, first aid and medical arrangements are very good and pupils are confident that they will be well cared for. The school meets the legal requirement to have a health and safety policy and risk assessment procedures are in place. The designated governor for health and safety works closely with the headteacher to produce a detailed audit of the premises, which enables the prioritising of repairs and maintenance. Arrangements for child protection are very good and reflect the caring nature of the school.
- 37 The school has good systems for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. A range of sanctions and rewards supports a thorough behaviour and discipline policy, which also includes a policy to deal with bullying. Good behaviour is praised and is given recognition by mention in the merit book, the reward of certificates and the lunchtime cup. These awards are prominently displayed around the school. The school has amended the timing of the lunchtime break following the monitoring of poor behaviour by a small number of pupils. This has been effective in reducing the number of more serious incidents and outbursts of poor behaviour. Clear systems for monitoring unacceptable behaviour are in place and are followed and understood by teaching and non-teaching staff. Records are kept of serious or persistent incidents of misbehaviour.
- 38 The school has good procedures for monitoring and improving pupils' attendance. The headteacher together with the Educational Welfare officer acts swiftly to resolve individual cases of absence and analyses any emerging patterns of absence. Despite this, levels of attendance remain below the national average, and unauthorised absence in particular, is too high. The school is doing as much as it can to reduce these figures, but is often prevented from doing so because of the high numbers of families who move in and out of the area, making use of emergency housing. Very often a family can have moved before the pupil is taken from the school's register.
- 39 Since the last inspection, the school has improved procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' academic performance. Assessment is a regular feature throughout the school. Pupils' progress is checked carefully through a variety of school and national tests. A thorough analysis is made of test results to identify trends in attainment but this is not extended to look for gaps in the curriculum, particularly in mathematics, where pupils do not do well in national tests. An issue from the previous inspection involved teachers in developing the use of assessment procedures to establish precise targets to improve the attainment of each pupil. They have done this and set targets for infants and juniors. However, although the targets set for pupils in English are always based on detailed records of their progress, this is not always the case in other subjects. In mathematics and science teachers do not always use assessments well enough to plan the next stage of learning or ensure that work is more closely matched to the needs of lower and higher attaining pupils. The school needs to resolve this issue with some urgency in order to raise standards in mathematics and science.
- 40 Although there is no formal system for recording personal development, teachers know their pupils well and work hard to develop their confidence and self-esteem in all areas of life. Teachers use the school merit system very effectively to encourage and celebrate significant achievement, especially good behaviour. They plan helpful discussions to teach personal skills and to strengthen relationships. These take place with pupils sitting in a circle and having a chance to speak in turn.

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

- 41 Only a very small number of parents gave their views of the school. Those who did are generally pleased with the efforts made on behalf of their children. They feel that teaching is good and that their children make progress because they are expected to work hard. Everyone said that they feel comfortable going to teachers or the headteacher with any problems or concerns and that the school works closely with parents. Most parents feel that the school is helping their children become mature and responsible. A very small number expressed concerns that there are not enough after-school clubs for children and that children do not get enough homework.
- 42 Inspection findings support parents' views that children are expected to work hard and that they learn to behave in a mature and responsible way. Several parents visited the school during the week of the inspection and the headteacher made time to speak to all of them. Others were seen chatting informally to teachers at the start and end of the day and a small number attended a course for parents. Parents' concerns about homework and after-school clubs are largely unfounded. From reception class, children are encouraged to take books home regularly. Older pupils get spellings to learn at home. However, some teachers set homework more regularly than others and parents are right to want to see this done more consistently. There are several after-school sports clubs that are well attended by older boys and girls. These are mostly aimed at pupils in classes in Years 3 to 6. Parents rightly feel that there are not as many activities for younger pupils.
- 43 The information provided for parents is very good. High quality newsletters help to keep parents informed about the topics their children study each term and about school events. Written reports, sent to parents at the end of each year, give detailed information about pupils' achievements and the progress they have made in each subject. They do not always set targets for future learning, which means that parents cannot help at home.
- 44 The school tries very hard to encourage parents to play a part in their children's learning. They have achieved some success with initiatives where parents of pupils in infant classes are encouraged to come into school to develop a range of activities to enable them to support their children's learning at home. A small minority of parents have responded positively to this opportunity and this has had a positive impact on the standards achieved by their children. Following this success, the headteacher intends to extend the project to include parents of children in Years 3 to 6. This improves the school's potential to strengthen the links between parents and school. However, despite the hard work of staff, the impact of parents' and carers' involvement with the work of the school is limited. Very few parents help although more help their children with reading and spellings at home. Currently only one parent supports the work in classrooms by regularly listening to pupils read. Although many parents attend school concerts and assemblies, very few go to meetings about the curriculum or take up opportunities to meet more formally with teachers to talk about their children's progress.

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

- 45 One of the main reasons for the school's continued improvement is the very good leadership provided by the headteacher. With the help and support of a knowledgeable governing body, the headteacher has successfully guided the school through some difficult decisions regarding the budget and staffing. Costs have been pared to a minimum and the large overspend inherited from the previous headteacher has been systematically and greatly reduced. Teachers and non-teaching staff are employed

thoughtfully and given plenty of opportunities for training. Everyone understands their role in contributing to the work of the school and is an effective member of the team. This has helped boost the confidence and morale of staff who share a common purpose and work hard to achieve the aims of the school. This commitment to succeed puts the school in a good position to continue to improve.

- 46 Governors fulfil their statutory duties in helping to shape the direction of the school and are very much involved in decisions about staffing and spending. They anticipated the problems that the long-term absence of the deputy headteacher would cause and appointed a capable temporary deputy headteacher to help the school through the inspection. As a result, the school continues to be managed well by the headteacher and a competent team of senior teachers. There have been some changes to the governing body since the time of the previous inspection. This has not impeded the school's progress towards achieving the targets set out in the action plan made following the previous inspection. In addition, the new chair of governors and a finance committee keep a very close eye on spending in order to prevent any increase of overspending. Getting value for money is one of their priorities and they are monitoring the effectiveness of the money spent on new computers very closely.
- 47 Teachers, governors and headteacher share the same aim to continue to raise standards. To this end the quality of teaching and the curriculum are monitored systematically. In the main this has been successful, which is evident in the increased amount of good teaching and the successful way the school has tackled the issue of providing schemes of work for each subject. However, co-ordinators' monitoring was too general to reveal the fact that teachers' planning did not take sufficient account of the spread of ability of pupils in many lessons. Similarly, while the senior teacher had identified some weaknesses in the way information from assessment is being used, this had not led to changes in teachers' practice. In mathematics and science, monitoring is not specific enough to identify gaps in pupils' learning or to increase the number of pupils who reach the expected level in National Curriculum tests for seven and 11-year olds.
- 48 Planning for school improvement continues to be good. Priorities are based on a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Knowledge of the community the school serves, and the prior attainment of pupils, helps set realistic targets for raising standards in English and mathematics. Governors are ready to set performance targets for the headteacher and co-ordinators have their own plans for improving provision in their subjects.
- 49 Financial planning is good. The success of improvements to financial planning is measurable in the sharp reduction of the deficit in the school's budget. The finance committee confidently examines and discusses budget proposals before the full governing body approves and sets the final budget. After identifying priorities, governors allocate funds towards planned improvements to ensure they are achieved. The school makes good use of funds for specific purposes such as, for example, booster classes, to raise standards in Year 6. Funding for training teachers and governors is used effectively to increase teachers' knowledge of the curriculum and governors' understanding of their responsibilities. Administrative systems are computerised and through the conscientious work of the school's secretary, financial administration is efficient and unobtrusive.
- 50 Funding from the national project aimed at raising standards in designated Educational Action Zones has enabled the school to employ more teachers and support staff. This is money well spent because they have been instrumental in raising standards in English and in helping pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The school's procedures for helping teachers develop their skills are appropriate and have

worked well in increasing teachers' competence in teaching physical education. The way the school supports new members of staff was praised by a temporary teacher who said that the help she had received from colleagues had enabled her to settle quickly into the school's routines.

- 51 The school has good, spacious accommodation for effective learning to take place. Classrooms are sufficiently spacious for the number of pupils in each class. Shared areas enhance the learning environment. The grounds are extensive, with a good-sized field for sport and play. A hard play area with marked games and suitable walls for ball play cater for pupils who wish to run about but there is little quiet space for those who simply wish to talk or sit.
- 52 The school has sufficient resources to teach all subjects and uses them to good effect on pupils' learning. It makes good use of visits to places of educational interest in the local area to increase pupils' understanding of subjects such as geography and history. Visitors to the school help stimulate pupils' imaginations by telling stories, dancing and playing musical instruments.

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

Governors, headteacher and staff should

- (1) ensure that work matches the capabilities of all pupils by**
- a. using the information from tests in mathematics and science to set a starting point for work in these subjects,
  - b. making sure that lower and higher attaining pupils are not asked to do the same tasks in subjects such as geography,
  - c. planning more challenging work for higher attaining pupils in all lessons
  - d. keeping a close check on pupils' progress in order to determine how well they are achieving the targets set for them.

*(Paragraphs 82, 83, 85, 90, 91, 114 of the main report)*

- (2) raise standards in information technology at both key stages by**
- a. timetabling the computer suite to be used more regularly by all classes,
  - b. using computers to teach literacy and numeracy,
  - c. providing training for teachers so that they have sufficient knowledge and confidence in teaching all aspects of ICT,
  - d. making sure that each aspect of the curriculum is taught in sufficient depth,
  - e. emphasising the reasons for using computers in all lessons.

*(Paragraphs 92 - 97 of the main report)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	49
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	38

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	25	29	42	4	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	25	200
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	74

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	12	66

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	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	1.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		1999	12	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	11
	Girls	11	10	10
	Total	20	19	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (65)	79 (70)	88 (84)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	10	10
	Girls	10	11	10
	Total	19	21	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (65)	88 (84)	83 (63)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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
		1999	12	10

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	6	7
	Girls	<sup>3</sup>		
	Total	14	9	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	64 (35)	41 (40)	50 (25)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	7
	Girls			
	Total	13	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	59 (40)	55 (40)	55 (40)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

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

<sup>3</sup> Test information is omitted because the year group size is ten.

### **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	0
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	12	1
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)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28.6
Average class size	28.6

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

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	205

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	25

Number of pupils per FTE adult	12.5
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	424773
Total expenditure	420807
Expenditure per pupil	1838
Balance brought forward from previous year	-46932
Balance carried forward to next year	-42966 <sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> This overspend has been further reduced to -£29681 in the current year.

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	225
Number of questionnaires returned	11

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	78	22	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44	56	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	33	11	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	11	33	33	11	11
The teaching is good.	44	56	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	44	11	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	44	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	44	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	11	89	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	22	78	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	22	78	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	0	44	11	11	33

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

### AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATIONSTAGE

- 53 Children enter the nursery at the age of three and transfer to the reception class at the beginning of the year in which they are five. At the time of the inspection, 25 children attended the nursery in the mornings and 17 in the afternoons. Not all of the children from the nursery join the reception class as some leave to attend reception classes in other schools in the area. Twelve children attend the reception class full-time. Most children's attainment on entry to the nursery is well below the level expected for their age.
- 54 The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage has been maintained since the previous inspection with over half of it being very good and the remainder good. During their time in the nursery and the reception class, children make good or very good progress in everything they do, with the result that most are likely to reach the expected standards in literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world by the time they start in Year 1. However, few are likely to reach the expected standard in speaking.
- 55 Personal, social and emotional development are very strong features of all activities planned. With very good support and guidance, children settle quickly into the nursery's routines and clearly enjoy friendships with each other and adults. Teachers and support staff are patient and understanding. They explain instructions clearly so that children know exactly what is expected of them and, as a result, there is usually a calm working atmosphere in the nursery and the reception class. Children are encouraged to work together, help each other and share equipment good-naturedly. They are beginning to show initiative in being helpful to others. A boy in reception, who could see that his teacher had her hands full of outdoor equipment, immediately asked *can I help you?* Whatever they do, children's behaviour is very good. They behave sensibly during discussions, show an interest in all that is happening and can be trusted to get on with their work. Much of this confident behaviour results from firm management and from interesting and enjoyable activities that allow children to make very good progress towards targets for their learning. The high levels of good behaviour and social development established by staff during the Foundation Stage have a continuing impact on pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning throughout the school.
- 56 Teachers and support staff have a thorough knowledge of how to develop early communication, language and literacy skills by using the *stepping-stones* that lead to the early learning goals for children. They promote the development of language in everything children do. The teacher in the nursery makes very good use of role-play to help children use a widening range of words and language. She encourages conversation and helps children to respond to the contributions of others in role-play as they take on the characters in the story of the *Three Billy Goats Gruff*. However, many still have a long way to go before they talk about themselves or their work with confidence. A small group of pupils in the reception class *read the pictures* of a story they have practised with their teacher. This skill represents good progress towards the levels of reading expected of five-year-olds and is supported effectively by the teacher in the regular opportunities she provides for children to share books with an adult. All children take books home on a regular basis, which further promotes their interest in reading.
- 57 A lot of hard work goes on in both classes to ensure that children have sufficient understanding of the names and sounds of letters to enable them to write independently. By writing for the whole class, teachers successfully demonstrate how

writing works. Because children are given many opportunities to put this into practice, by the time they are five, the brightest children write short sentences without help.

- 58 Carefully planned activities and daily opportunities to count and use mathematical language help pupils make very good progress in understanding number. As a result, by the time they are five, most children count to ten and the brightest to twenty. Because of the number games used in both classes, many children recognise some of the digits from one to ten. Teachers make learning mathematics fun. Enjoyable activities, such as singing and performing the actions to number rhymes give children an understanding of adding and taking away. Practical activities, such as fitting a teddy into the right size of box, help children learn the difference between *smaller* and *bigger*. Opportunities to choose different shapes of paper for their paintings help children in the nursery to identify common shapes such as *square*, *rectangle* and *triangle*.
- 59 Teachers plan a very good range of activities and opportunities to widen children's knowledge of the world. A good example of this was when children in the reception class went on an imaginary picnic in the woods. As they pretended to travel by bus, they imagined the sounds and sights they would encounter and the activity ended with them smelling and tasting orange juice and cherry cakes. Teachers are good at asking open-ended questions to encourage children's natural inquisitiveness. In the nursery, children are asked *What makes the balloon rise?* They are excited to hold an ice balloon and make comparisons with a balloon filled with air. With good support, they predict that the one with air will not bang if the air is let out. All of this helps them to understand about the properties of different materials. Through regular opportunities to use the computer, children know how to use a computer mouse to move objects round the screen, for example, to dress a teddy.
- 60 Very good teaching of physical development ensures that children gain confidence and agility in sports, games and play and become competent at using pencils, paintbrushes and scissors. They easily achieve the skills expected of five-year-olds by the end of the reception class. By praising children for their efforts, the reception teacher encouraged children to progress from simple movements to a wide variety of more imaginative ones with good control and co-ordination when moving to contrasting styles of music.
- 61 Children make very good progress in creative development because teachers provide many activities where they can explore colour, texture and shape and ensure that children are taught skills such as mixing paint. Using these skills, children in the nursery paint pictures of themselves that are vibrant with life and colour. Children's enjoyment of music is apparent in their attentive listening to pieces chosen to support the themes of assemblies. They are taught to hold percussion instruments properly and are taught the words and actions of traditional songs and rhymes. Children in the nursery are enthralled as their teacher sings and taps out the rhythm of their names using an agogo. With very good support from the teacher and nursery nurse, most pupils begin to tap out the rhythm for themselves. Progress in singing is not as marked for nursery children when they become overwhelmed by the presence of so many older children during a weekly singing lesson with children from the infants.
- 62 Very good organisation of the available space results in a nursery that is vibrant and exciting. It is enhanced by the use of drapes and curtains that help to minimise noise and also keep areas discrete. In both classes, display is colourful and available for children to interact with. It includes good examples of children's work. A strength of the teaching in the Foundation Stage is the way teachers assess what children can do. New procedures in the nursery ensure that activities are more precisely matched to each child's needs than was the case in the past. Detailed records of each child's achievements help parents to measure progress. In the reception class, good use is made of the information from tests in the term children start school, to ensure an

accurate starting point for planning work. Plans to review the policy for the Foundation Stage to ensure a match with the new early learning goals places the school in a good position to maintain standards.

## ENGLISH

- 63 Standards achieved by 11-year-olds in National Curriculum tests continue to be below the levels expected for their age. Over the last four years pupils' performance has been almost a year behind those in most other schools, although standards have risen sharply in the last two years and the school exceeded its target in 2000.
- 64 It is a similar picture for pupils in Year 2. Standards achieved by seven-year-olds in National Curriculum tests in reading and writing remain below the levels expected for their age. However, test results have risen sharply in each of the last three years and are now closer to the national average.
- 65 A success of the school is that pupils in Simpson's Lane do better than those in similar schools. This is partly due to the very good provision made for pupils with special educational needs in reading and writing, the additional support given to pupils in Year 3 who are behind with their reading and the *booster classes* that provide an extra push for pupils in Year 6. As a result of these initiatives, more pupils than ever before are reaching a higher level in tests and more pupils with special educational needs reach the level expected for their age.
- 66 There is no pattern to whether boys or girls perform better in National Curriculum tests. Most years, girls do better than boys but this is not always the case. The school's own analysis of test results indicates that girls often do better because they are more interested than boys in reading books. This was confirmed during the inspection when girls were generally more enthusiastic about reading and talking about their favourite authors. Boys who are good readers often read books and comics when encouraged by their parents and this has a marked effect on their interest in books.
- 67 Inspection findings confirm that standards are below the levels expected of seven and 11-year-olds. The gap between what is expected and what pupils achieve is not too wide by the end of Year 2. This is partly because children make good progress in the nursery and reception classes. Consequently, when they start in Year 1 they have made considerable gains in recognising letter sounds. Another factor is that pupils' difficulties with literacy are identified quickly and they are given very good support using a programme of *Reading Recovery*. This helps many of them to catch up with other pupils and prevents them from falling too far behind. Between Years 3 and 6 the number of pupils who leave or start school is much higher, so that of the pupils who entered National Curriculum tests in 2000 only five had been at this school all the way through the juniors. This has a tremendous effect on the school's results and means that despite much of the teaching being good, standards are likely to remain low. The school is doing as much as it can to help these pupils. Most of them also have special educational needs and they are given additional support both in lessons and small groups. While this helps them make good progress there is not generally enough time for them to catch up with their learning and reach the levels expected for their age.
- 68 Teaching is never less than satisfactory and there is some very good teaching in the junior classes. In this subject teachers make good use of assessments and tests to group pupils according to ability and to ensure that work is pitched at the right level.
- 69 A strength of the teaching is the very good provision made for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers take great pains to spot pupils' difficulties early on and

they are given individual help and support. The *Reading Recovery* programme for pupils in Year 1 is successful in helping pupils learn a range of strategies for reading unfamiliar words and the focus on handwriting gives them the confidence to write short stories and accounts. Classroom assistants also play an important part in helping pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Their time and talents are put to good use to work with small groups and individuals.

- 70 Throughout the school, teachers are good at teaching the basic skills of literacy. The effective use of the National Literacy Strategy has a positive impact on reading, so that average and higher attainers in Year 2 read a range of texts accurately and higher attainers use contents, indexes and glossaries to research information. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 gain from reading a wider range of information books, poetry and fiction. Higher attainers read fluently and with expression but average and lower attainers often lack understanding of what they have read and do not pick out important bits of text when explaining the plot or sharing information.
- 71 Greater attention to writing and handwriting has helped increase the proportion of pupils in Year 2 who reached a high level in National Curriculum tests in 2000. Pupils are already confident writers when they start Year 1 and they continue to make steady progress with handwriting and spelling throughout the infants. By the end of Year 2, higher attainers write stories that start in the traditional way, for example, *One day there was a snowman*. They have a good stab at spelling difficult words, such as *flower* and get more spellings right than average or lower attaining pupils, who often spell words the way they sound. Teachers in Years 3 to 6 continue to emphasise the need for neat handwriting and this has raised standards of presentation in several other subjects. By the end of Year 6, higher attaining pupils write in a good fluent style, though the work of lower attainers often has many crossings out and mistakes. Average and higher attaining pupils use imaginative words and descriptions in their stories. They choose to use phrases such as, *like a ship within a glass*, while lower attaining pupils make more use of simple words such as *and* or *then* to link sentences.
- 72 Another feature of teaching, which underlies good learning, comes from well-planned opportunities for speaking and listening. Very positive relationships between teachers and pupils give pupils the confidence to join in discussions and to get the maximum benefit from activities. Infant pupils learn to take turns and listen to what others have to say and by the time they are in Year 6, most pupils listen attentively and are willing to talk about books, poetry and Shakespeare's plays.
- 73 The English co-ordinator provides a strong lead for the subject. By monitoring teaching, the co-ordinator and senior management team are improving teaching and learning. Plans to extend monitoring provide scope for raising standards even further. While there are sufficient resources to teach the curriculum, lower attaining pupils and those on the *Reading Recovery* programme would benefit from a wider selection of books at their level. With the support of the co-ordinator and the successful use of the National Literacy Strategy, the school is in a good position to improve standards.

## MATHEMATICS

- 74 Standards achieved by 11-year-olds in National Curriculum tests in 1999 were in the lowest five per cent of all schools. Over the last four years test results have fluctuated but overall, pupils' performance has been more than a year behind those in most other schools. The picture is slightly better in Year 2. Standards achieved by seven-year-olds in National Curriculum tests were well below the levels expected for their age but results have been improving steadily over the last three years. When compared with pupils in similar schools, the performance of seven-year-olds was below average. The performance of 11-year-olds was well below average. Results were brought down by the fact that no pupils in either Year 2 or Year 6 achieved a higher level in National Curriculum tests.
- 75 Results were also affected by the high proportion of pupils in both year groups who had special educational needs. In addition, a significant number of pupils in the Year 6 class had joined the school part way through the juniors and a small number of pupils did not complete their test papers, even though they were at school on the day of the test. As a result, the school failed to meet the target it had set for raising standards.
- 76 The results of tests in 2000 show an improvement over the previous year, particularly in the number of pupils reaching the higher levels. This is mainly due to the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. Inspection findings show that standards match those expected of seven-year-olds but remain well below the levels expected of 11-year-olds.
- 77 A good feature of the teaching is that all teachers are confident in using the new approaches and more structured curriculum of the National Numeracy Strategy. As a result, there is a good balance between whole-class teaching, practical activities and discussion. Because many pupils do not have fast enough recall of number bonds and multiplication, facts teachers concentrate on developing pupils' skills in using number in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division during mental mathematics.
- 78 During these sessions, teachers are good at asking questions, which make pupils think and then explain their methods. This was evident in a very good lesson in Year 6, taken by a temporary teacher, when the pupils were asked to explain how they had added 64 and 49 in their heads. As they described how they worked out their answers, as well as developing their understanding, the teacher reinforced the fact that a mental mathematics problem can be solved in different ways and emphasised that no one way is the correct way to work out an answer. On the other hand, she also stressed the need to work methodically through a series of logical steps when pupils worked out how many numbers can be made from a given set of digits. This enabled more capable pupils to discover the formula to solve the problem and less capable pupils to work out the correct answers for three and four digits.
- 79 Teachers have a good understanding of mathematics and use it to explain ideas simply to pupils. In Year 5, when pupils were confused about which was the bigger,  $1/10^{\text{th}}$  or  $1/100^{\text{th}}$ , the teacher used a fraction board to demonstrate effectively the size of fractions. As a result, most pupils understood that  $1/100^{\text{th}}$  is smaller than  $1/10^{\text{th}}$ . As he emphasised the value of each digit in decimal numbers, more able pupils quickly learned that  $1/100^{\text{th}}$  is ten times smaller than  $1/10^{\text{th}}$ . Another good feature of the lesson was the teacher's good use of mathematical vocabulary so that pupils used *numerator* and *denominator* with confidence.

- 80 Teachers expect pupils to behave well and to do their best. They are good at managing the behaviour of a small number of potentially disruptive boys. This ensures that no time is wasted and pupils work to the best of their ability in most lessons. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and this helps create a pleasant, co-operative atmosphere. They continually praise pupils for their efforts, which encourages them to *have a go* without fear of making mistakes. These open, business-like relationships are a key factor in helping the pupils to make good progress. In Year 2, pupils estimating the length, width and height of objects in the classroom and corridor, were not afraid to commit themselves to an estimate and, with the effective support of their teacher and classroom assistant, made sensible estimates of the width of the corridor or the height of a paint easel.
- 81 A further strength of teaching is the very good support given to pupils with special educational needs. Pupils' individual educational plans contain practical and achievable targets which teachers use effectively to enable these pupils to make good progress. They are given additional help from support assistants who ensure that they concentrate and understand their work.
- 82 Although teaching is often good, there are some aspects that could be improved. While teachers check pupils' progress regularly and have a sound understanding of what pupils know and can do, they do not use this information consistently to plan the next stage of learning. This means that tasks are not matched to each pupil's ability. If the school is to raise standards in mathematics, greater emphasis must be placed on differentiating between the needs of less capable and more capable pupils rather than pitching the work at the level of the middle band of pupils. With the exception of Year 3, marking is unsatisfactory in junior classes. Teachers do not mark pupils' work in a sufficiently constructive or supportive way to move them on. Another aspect of teaching that could be improved is that teachers do not make enough use of computers to support pupils' learning. Although some teachers are confident users of information communication technology, the subject is not established sufficiently to use it in mathematics throughout the school. A particular gap is in the use of computers to teach pupils about spreadsheets and databases.
- 83 The subject is managed satisfactorily. The co-ordinator gave effective support to teachers as they implemented the National Numeracy Strategy, and ensured that there were sufficient resources to teach mathematics. Efficient procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching have made all teachers aware that there is a need for work to be pitched at the right level if pupils are to make the same good gains that they do in English. With the support provided by the leadership, and the school's intention to examine the results of national tests to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning, the school is in a good position to improve standards.

## SCIENCE

- 84 Standards are lower than those expected of seven and 11-year-olds. In 1999 teachers' assessments showed that by the end of Year 2 pupils achieved results below the national average. The national tests showed that by the end of Year 6 pupils achieved results well below the national average. This is because a large number of pupils joined the school part way through the juniors and the class also had a higher number of pupils with special educational needs. Teachers are very quick to assess what these pupils know and provide them with additional support in lessons and small groups. However, many of them fail to achieve the levels expected for their age because they do not have the time to catch up on what they have missed. The results of the tests in 2000 show a slight fall compared with 1999. However, the results of the

last few years show a generally rising trend in standards. Inspection findings confirm the test results.

- 85 The school has given high priority during the past year to the development of science. Planning has improved since the last inspection. Under the influence of planning for the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, planning for science is now more thorough. This is because teachers follow national guidelines for science to make sure they cover all the work required. As a result pupils make steady progress. However, as at the time of the last inspection, teachers do not provide a suitable challenge for all pupils. They expect all pupils to attempt the same work. This means that some pupils struggle because the work is too hard. However, pupils with special educational needs benefit from good support provided by classroom assistants and this enables them to cope and make progress. Teachers do not provide sufficiently challenging work at a higher level for the cleverest pupils, so they do not learn at the faster rate of which they are capable.
- 86 Much of the teaching is focused on learning scientific facts. Older pupils recognise the differences between solids, liquids and gases in terms of flow and maintaining the same shape and volume, but have difficulty explaining why this happens. They know the effect of exercise on the heart and pulse rate, but do not show this effectively in how they record the results of an investigation. Teachers do not develop pupils' skills in recording their work in a scientific method sufficiently well. Often, pupils' recorded work is basically identical, though more thoroughly completed by more able pupils. Teachers do not systematically promote the use of tables, bar charts and line graphs to present results. However, in Year 3 the teacher's more rigorous approach to teaching scientific method results in those pupils making better progress than others in developing investigative and recording skills.
- 87 The teaching of experimental science in most classes is a weakness, which prevents pupils gaining a suitable scientific understanding and is a significant factor in why standards in science are not as high as they are in English. Most teachers do not have the confidence to provide the conditions for pupils to plan experimental work, and obtain and consider evidence. They tend to demonstrate investigations and draw in pupil participation in turn, rather than to provide opportunities for pupils to learn how to set up and conduct an investigation themselves. In one lesson younger pupils sat for a lengthy period while the teacher conducted an investigation into how far a toy would travel in relation to the steepness of a ramp. While she made sure pupils began to understand the need for a fair test, she missed the opportunity to exploit their interest to conduct an investigation themselves.
- 88 Teachers expect pupils to work hard and to behave well. This strength allows pupils to work productively and harmoniously. Teachers create a calm atmosphere and prevent pupils from calling out answers to questions and discouraging others. They make the subject interesting and explain scientific ideas sufficiently well so that pupils are enthusiastic and want to learn. Pupils particularly enjoy the parts of lessons where teachers draw them into practical investigations, and it is this aspect of science which teachers do not exploit well enough.
- 89 In one lesson, the teacher gave suitable emphasis to the need for fair tests and to predicting the outcome of an investigation about the permeability of soils. She kept up a continuous dialogue that kept pupils interested, as most were spectators at any one time. Although she involved most pupils as *soil scientists* to carry out various duties, the investigation was teacher controlled and directed. Thus it did little to promote pupils' skills and understanding. They found it very difficult to explain why their predictions were largely incorrect. Nevertheless, they enjoyed the lesson and were interested throughout because of the teacher's active and positive approach. In a

lesson where the teacher's planning and management were not effective, on the other hand, pupils lacked enthusiasm because they were not sufficiently motivated or involved. Consequently they made little progress.

- 90 There are good procedures for assessing what pupils know in science. However, these are not always used effectively. Thus the challenge of work is usually not suitably pitched for the more able and the less able pupils. This affects the progress they make. Teachers' assessment of what pupils know and have learned from a previous lesson is not always accurate. For instance, work was planned for younger pupils about sequencing the life cycle of plants when their practical knowledge of this was too limited. The teacher then had to take them back to the correct stage by actually growing plants from seed. With better use of assessment this would have been known for planning purposes.
- 91 Recently the headteacher has taken over the role of science co-ordinator. She monitors teachers' planning for its effectiveness, but does not yet check teaching and learning in the classroom. She recognises the weaknesses in science and has given priority to the development of the subject. Action to improve pupils' skills in investigative science has recently been put to the governing body, because the school recognises that insufficient progress in this has been made since the last inspection. Given her good leadership, the school is in a good position to improve standards in science.

## **INFORMATION and COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

- 92 Standards are lower than they were at the time of the previous inspection and are below the levels expected of seven and 11-year-olds. There are gaps in pupils' knowledge because teaching has not kept pace with technological developments in recent years. This is a key area for development for the school.
- 93 The main reason for these gaps is that despite having a good quality scheme of work, teachers have not yet begun to teach all aspects of information and communication technology in sufficient depth. For example, the oldest pupils have a reasonable understanding of how to use computers and word processing. They know how to write, edit and add clip art and pictures. They do not know how to add sound or images from other technology such as digital cameras. Their knowledge of how to use databases and spreadsheets is limited and they do not understand why computerised versions would be preferable to other types. Younger pupils have no knowledge of how to programme a moveable toy or give the computer instructions to use a similar system. Teachers' lack of knowledge is partly because they have not had the software or hardware long enough for them to gain familiarity with the programs they need to do this. In order to overcome this lack of expertise, the co-ordinator has arranged for teachers to have training in how to use each program before they are due to teach it to pupils. This is likely to keep teachers one-step ahead of the game but they will continue to need training if they are to raise standards.
- 94 The recent installation of a computer suite puts the school in a strong position to raise standards. However, at present this is timetabled for only one session a week for each class and computers are often standing idle for much of the remaining time. The time that pupils have to work on computers is not long enough for them to make the gains in familiarity with programs and computer technology to be able to reach the expected standards. This is further exacerbated because there are not enough computers for pupils to work in pairs and in most classes a small group of pupils do not get a turn. This means that it could be two weeks before pupils get another turn on computers.

- 95 Teaching was often good in the lessons observed during the inspection. Teachers explained how to use a program clearly and pupils quickly learned to use the menu and icons to change the style of their names on screen. Most could remember how to save their work and all knew how to print it out. In a good lesson for pupils in Year 3, the teacher had planned similar work for the group of pupils who were not having a turn on computer. They were drawing their names in range of styles. As a result of this, these pupils had some idea of why they would choose to use a computer rather than pencil and paper for this purpose. On the whole, however, pupils rarely consider the plausibility of using information and communication technology over other methods.
- 96 Some teachers use computers well to teach literacy and numeracy. For example, in a Year 1 class, a small group of pupils read a book with their teacher and then re-read the same book on computer. They were able to take their time with the pages and listen to the words they did not know over and over. As a result they enjoyed the task tremendously and made good progress in their reading. This is not always the case in other classes. Often it is made more difficult because some classes do not have computers. This means that pupils do not get regular opportunities to develop skills in word processing or communicating data as graphs or charts. Consequently, many older pupils still type with one finger and those in Years 5 and 6 have a lot of catching up to do. They are familiar with the school's software, although some of this is at a superficial level. For example, they know that a music program allows them to compose tunes but could not remember how to do it. Similarly, although they know how to access the Internet and talk about sending electronic mail and visiting chat rooms, they are unsure of the procedures for doing this.
- 97 The newly appointed co-ordinator has already got a good grasp of what needs to be done to improve the subject. Her enthusiasm and fresh ideas about how to tackle the problems presented by not having computers in classrooms puts the school in a good position to be able to make the changes necessary to tackle this key issue.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 98 Standards in religious education have been maintained since the last inspection. They meet the standards prescribed by the locally Agreed Syllabus. As a result of the co-ordinator producing a new and coherent policy and scheme of work, teachers feel more confident to teach religious education. This represents an improvement in the consistency of teaching in different classes and year groups.
- 99 A strength of the teaching in religious education is the very good use made of discussions where pupils consider social, moral and religious issues. In Year 6, the teacher challenged the pupils to argue the case for believing that the wealthy Victorians were good Christians because they went to church every Sunday. Her use and style of questioning gained a good response from the pupils and encouraged them to think more deeply and look at social and moral aspects of Victorian society. Very good relationships with their teacher encouraged pupils to share their thoughts openly and to listen attentively to others.
- 100 Teachers plan activities that involve pupils studying unfamiliar festivals and traditions. Resources are used very well to stimulate interest. In Year 3, pupils used palms, willow branches and sprigs of myrtle to make a *lulav* in preparation for *Succoth*, the Jewish celebration of thanksgiving. The teacher's very good knowledge of Judaism helped pupils to understand the meaning of some of the symbols of Jewish worship and the significance of the escape from Egypt. Their understanding is further increased by their building of a *Sukkah*, a shelter similar to the ones used by the Jews during the escape.

As they wave their *lulavs* and sing Jewish songs of thanksgiving, they enter fully into the spirit of the joyous occasion.

- 101 Teachers in Years 1 and 2 are good at developing pupils' awareness of the basic concepts necessary to the understanding of religions, such as feelings of being *special* and *belonging*. In Year 1, the teacher's interesting descriptions and good use of resources enabled pupils to see similarities and differences between the Christian and Muslim rituals used to welcome babies into belonging to their religions.
- 102 An issue of teaching which remains unresolved from the previous inspection is that pupils in junior classes do not have a deep enough knowledge and understanding of major world faiths. Because they do not explore religious beliefs and practices in sufficient depth they are unable to consider the influence of religion upon individuals and communities.
- 103 The management of religious education is satisfactory. The co-ordinator gives helpful advice and practical support to other teachers. There are now sufficient resources to represent each of the faiths taught. With a new scheme of work in place and plans to develop the use of information technology in religious education, the school is in a good position to improve pupils' attainment.

## **ART AND DESIGN and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

- 104 Pupils' standards in art show that the subject is a strength of the school and are above those reached by most 11-year-olds. The school has maintained high standards in art since the last inspection. This is because of the influence of the leadership of the art co-ordinator who advises teachers and classroom assistants about the development of techniques and skills and the use of tools and materials. Teachers thus feel confident in what they plan and teach. As a result of good teaching, pupils bring great enthusiasm and pride to their work. They gain confidence in experimenting and are especially good at drawing and painting.
- 105 Teachers give younger pupils a wide range of experiences to develop their knowledge and skills in art. They introduce pupils to paint, pastel, pencil, biro and felt pens, collage and printing. Teachers use the works of famous artists such as Bruegel and Van Gogh to inspire pupils to paint in a similar style. By the time they are seven, some pupils produce work of an exemplary standard, such as pastel drawings, first sketched on a visit to a local hall, then completed in lessons. Teachers build well on these solid foundations during pupils' later years, as shown, for instance, in their paintings in the style of Claude Monet. A good feature of the teaching is the way that pupils are encouraged to explore and develop their own ideas and say what they think about the art of others. Teachers make best use of display in art throughout the school, of pupils' own work and also of original works of art, to raise pupils' sights of what can be achieved. Their high expectations of pupils' performance in art were well rewarded recently with the school's commendable success in the *Yorkshire Regional Art Exhibition*.
- 106 In art lessons, teachers give confident demonstrations of the techniques and skills they want pupils to acquire. They provide challenging activities and take care to explain to pupils how to produce particular effects. Thus, for instance, pupils in Year 2 created carefully observed and executed drawings of a halved cabbage using a pastel and finger technique; pupils in Year 5 produced interesting effects of still life objects using charcoal and white pastel. On the other hand, teachers do not have such knowledge and understanding of design and technology to inspire pupils to high achievement. In one lesson, jointly organised with art, the teacher was unable to give effective support

to the few pupils making models. Thus they made no gains in learning or in developing their models.

- 107 Standards in design and technology by the time pupils are 11 have not improved since the last inspection and remain below expectations for their age. This is because teachers do not have sufficient confidence and expertise in the subject. The school has acted since the last inspection to introduce new national guidelines, which enable teachers to plan more effectively what pupils are required to learn and do in each age group. This has not yet had an effect on standards achieved by pupils, as they have not had sufficient opportunities and time to develop their skills.
- 108 Teachers have given pupils insufficient experience in designing and making for them to produce reasonable products. By the age of seven pupils select from only a narrow range of materials and use given techniques and tools to shape, assemble and join. By the age of 11, their experience of measuring, marking out, cutting and joining is limited. They have begun to gather information independently to help generate ideas, for instance, to make a Victorian sampler. Pupils' learning throughout the school is slow.
- 109 The co-ordinator for design and technology is aware of the weaknesses and has a clear view of how she intends to develop the subject. She has introduced a new scheme of work which will give better coverage of the subject in every year group. Recently she attended useful training in the subject. The main obstacle to progress is teachers' lack of knowledge and confidence in teaching design and technology. Nevertheless, with recent developments and present effective leadership, the school is in a satisfactory position to raise standards.
- 110 Art remains a high profile subject in the school due to good leadership. This puts the school in a good position to raise standards.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

- 111 The school has maintained satisfactory standards since the last inspection. By the time pupils are 11, their work in the subject is typical for their age and their knowledge and understanding of all aspects are satisfactory. Teachers have improved the way they plan what pupils learn and do by using national guidelines which enable pupils to learn more effectively step by step.
- 112 A good feature of teaching is the use of fieldwork in the locality and further afield. As a result, pupils enjoy the subject and gain an understanding of its relevance. Younger pupils use large-scale maps of the locality to follow routes. They identify the school and the streets where they live. They are able to draw their own imaginary maps with features such as roads and a river. Teachers promote pupils' concern for the environment through a useful link with the *Groundwork Trust*. They have helped plan the nearby shopping square and the improvement of local gardens near the canal. Teachers build on pupils' knowledge of land use and local industry when they visit a glassworks. By the time pupils visit a residential field study centre, where they extend their study of geography, they have a sound basis to build on.
- 113 Most teachers have secure knowledge and understanding of the subject, which they use to make lessons interesting. Recently the school was involved in a *balloon race*, which teachers exploited to develop pupils' knowledge of the map of Europe as information came in about balloon landings. In a Year 3 lesson, the teacher's imaginative introduction led pupils to participate enthusiastically in sorting articles into suitcases to take to either a hot or a cold country. She was then able to use the opportunity to develop their use of correct vocabulary, such as *equator* and *pole*. By

contrast, in a lesson where the introduction lacked pace, pupils lost concentration and were not sufficiently informed or motivated to tackle the initial task effectively, until the teacher remedied the situation by specifying exactly what had to be done. From that point pupils worked quickly and with interest.

- 114 There are some weaknesses in the teaching of geography. Teachers normally set the same tasks for the whole class, so some pupils find it too easy and others find it too difficult. This adversely affects their rate of learning. When teachers assess pupils' work they mark it often with simply a tick, usually without a useful comment. This does not give pupils an awareness of how well they have learned and it does not encourage them to do better. Pupils in Year 6 can interpret graphs about the climate of hot deserts and younger pupils use the program *My World*. However, teachers do not use numeracy or information technology sufficiently to support pupils' learning in geography.
- 115 The co-ordinator has taken suitable steps since the last inspection to develop the subject. She checks teachers' planning regularly but has no opportunity to check the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. An audit of resources has not yet been undertaken to judge whether they match what is needed to teach the new scheme of work. Nevertheless, based on current action, the school is strong enough to move ahead and improve provision.

## HISTORY

- 116 Attainment in history is typical of that expected of seven and 11-year-olds. This means that standards have been maintained since the last inspection. An improved programme for teaching, which caters for the needs of mixed-aged classes, enables teachers to take pupils through interesting and challenging work. This allows them to make steady progress so that by the time they leave school, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, have a sound understanding of the periods and people they study. They know about periods of history from ancient times to the recent past including the Ancient Egyptians, Tudor England and the Second World War.
- 117 By the time they are seven, pupils begin to understand about the passage of time as they use objects and facts about their families as an introduction to the past. Teachers choose topics that are interesting to pupils and ensure that there is a wide range of resources available to them. A good example of this is the way pupils in Year 2, as part of their *Seaside Holidays* topic, designed a questionnaire, which invited their parents to describe their own holidays as children. Pupils' enjoyment of finding out about the past through examining photographs and post cards from their families, and those of their class-mates, is evident from their colourful booklet showing, for example, changes in transport and clothing.
- 118 In Years 1 and 2, teaching is good and teacher's high expectations of what pupils can achieve leads to good learning. In Year 2, after watching a video about the bravery of Grace Darling, the pupils rose to the teacher's challenge to put a number of picture cards in the correct order to retell the story. The *tricky* pictures caused much conversation and debate before the pupils reached an agreement. For example, *this is next because she was younger here and it goes afterwards because she's on her own now*. Another good feature of the lesson was the way in which the teacher guided pupils towards checking the authenticity of the story by asking *Is this a true story? How do we know?* Following on from the pupils' answers such as *the lighthouse may still be there and people told each other and it spread around*, the teacher stressed the importance of factual evidence, such as the journal of Mr Darling to verify evidence from the past.

- 119 Teachers use their good knowledge of history to enable pupils to focus clearly on the events or circumstances that brought about changes. For example, pupils in Year 6 wrote about how the Industrial Revolution affected the lives of many Victorians as they moved from the country to work in the grim conditions of the factories. A further strength of teaching is the way in which teachers develop pupils' skills of empathy. A boy in Year 6 described his feelings on hearing Chamberlain's announcement of war as *this feeling of fear hit me and overwhelmed me when I saw Mr Tom's face*. A girl, also in Year 6, writing about how it felt on the first day at a *ragged school* wrote *I hated it there, children smelt horrible like rats from a sewer*.
- 120 Teachers enrich pupils' understanding of the reality of the past by visits to museums and historic buildings. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 visit Brodsworth Hall where they experience for themselves the everyday life of a servant in Victorian times. Pupils in Year 6 add to their knowledge about the Industrial Revolution during a visit to the Bradford Industrial Museum while pupils in Year 5 visit Eden Camp to see the harsh conditions experienced by prisoners of World War Two.
- 121 The co-ordinator has improved the range of resources since the last inspection and there are now sufficient to support all the topics studied. A start has been made on monitoring teachers' planning and the co-ordinator recognises the need to check the quality of teaching in order to ensure that there are no gaps in pupils' learning. The enthusiasm of the co-ordinator, together with an improved scheme of work, places the school in a sound position to be able to raise standards.

## MUSIC

- 122 Overall, standards in music are similar to those expected of seven and 11-year-olds. Although standards have been maintained in Years 3 to 6, they have fallen in Years 1 and 2. This is because at the time of the last inspection, the music co-ordinator taught music throughout the school. Now, music is taught by other teachers in Years 1 and 2 and they do not have the musical expertise of the co-ordinator.
- 123 During a weekly lesson for pupils in the Foundation Stage intended to improve their singing and awareness of musical instruments, pupils perform a range of songs and hymns from memory. Their singing is mostly tuneful and they vary the pitch and dynamics. However, many lack clear diction and they are not taught how to improve this. Pupils make good progress in learning a challenging new song because they are able to copy the teacher's own voice as she sings short phrases and claps out the rhythm of each line. They enjoy playing percussion instruments and tap rhythms accurately to accompany their singing. Equal opportunities issues arise in meeting pupils' needs in a large group of different aged pupils. Most of the nursery pupils were overwhelmed by the situation and did not join in, even during songs they had learnt in the nursery. Although invited to use the percussion instruments, only one pupil took up the offer.
- 124 Most of the lessons in Years 3 to 6 are taken by the music co-ordinator. In Year 6, she used her considerable expertise to improve pupils' harmonisation of a two-part song. Because she demonstrates clearly with her own voice how to control phrasing, tempo and dynamics, pupils improve their own singing. The resulting performance was of beautifully sweet and tuneful singing yet with a sombreness to fit the mood of the song. This is enhanced by the accompaniment of a C drone played on a metallophone by a pupil.
- 125 As a result of enthusiastic teaching, pupils generally have good attitudes to music and enjoy their lessons and musical activities. They listen carefully to the teachers and

behave well when singing or listening to music. They take care when playing instruments and remember to go round rather than step over any that are on the floor.

- 126 Teachers make good use of the school's resources to encourage pupils to listen to music and think about the feelings it evokes. Pupils enter assemblies to a variety of recorded music, which is discussed at the beginning of the week. Listening to music by composers from many parts of the world makes a significant contribution to pupils' cultural development. This is strengthened by a number of visiting musicians, including a Japanese drummer and a group of gospel singers. In addition, the school is taking part in the Yorkshire Youth and Music's *Sounding Out* project that will bring musicians into school to work with each Year 4 group over the next three years. Currently they are working with an Australian musician to learn to play the didgeridoo.
- 127 Visiting specialists have a positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning and make a significant contribution to their achievements with string, percussion and woodwind. The co-ordinator runs both recorder and guitar clubs while the headteacher runs a beginners' recorder club. All members of the clubs are very keen to make good progress in playing a musical instrument.
- 128 The subject is managed well. The co-ordinator gives practical advice to teachers and at present takes music lessons with Years 5 and 6 teachers as part of the school's training programme to increase the expertise of all teachers. Resources are adequate and are used well in lessons. The co-ordinator has prepared a new scheme of work for infants and one for juniors is planned for next year. This places the school in a sound position to increase standards.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 129 Standards in gymnastics, games and athletics match the levels expected of seven and 11-year-olds. Nearly all pupils swim the recommended distance by the end of Year 6. More pupils achieve these standards than at the time of the previous inspection when this was identified as a key issue for improvement.
- 130 As a result of training in all aspects of teaching physical education, teachers' knowledge has increased since the previous inspection and most of the teaching is now good. Photographic evidence shows that pupils in infant classes perform forward rolls and other gymnastic movements gracefully and older pupils use what they have learned to make up sequences of movements using the floor and apparatus.
- 131 In games and athletics, teachers ensure that pupils know the rules and understand the importance of working as a team. Younger pupils learn to throw, catch and bat balls and run in team events on sports day. Through the regular opportunities they have in lessons, play and after-school sports clubs, pupils in junior classes develop considerable control and accuracy when running, dodging and changing direction in games such as football. Good coaching in games by the physical education co-ordinator helps junior boys and girls to gain a sense of competitive spirit and learn to play together as a team.
- 132 The quality of teaching seen in infant classes was very good. This was because the teacher made good use of poetry to provide a stimulus for a dance lesson. The words of the poem helped pupils be creative in their interpretation of the wind and provided a natural rhythm to their movement. Older pupils learn traditional and country dancing. There is some good teaching of gymnastics in junior classes and pupils who attend after-school sports clubs, such as football, benefit considerably from good coaching by the co-ordinator.

- 133 A feature of the good teaching is the firm control that teachers' have over pupils' behaviour. This ensures that they behave in a safe way when moving at speed around the floor or with apparatus. Teachers are quick to praise pupils for their successes and this motivates them to try even harder. This was evident in a good lesson with pupils in the class in Year 6. Pupils were praised for trying different ways of travelling around the room and encouraged to watch the performance of others. As a result, they quickly gained the confidence to try more adventurous moves and devised their own elaborate sequences of movement involving balance and a start and end pose.
- 134 Lessons are generally planned satisfactorily and include warm-up activities and time to cool down. As a consequence of the emphasis teachers place on being healthy, pupils understand the importance of these times and of the effects of exercise on their bodies. The very good relationship that pupils have with their teachers ensures that pupils behave sensibly when getting out and using equipment. The only exception to this was in an unsatisfactory lesson when pupils became so excited they had little regard for their own safety as they moved around the hall.
- 135 The subject is managed well by the co-ordinator, who checks teachers' planning but has not yet been given time to monitor teaching in the subject. Following improvements in the knowledge and confidence of teachers, the next priority has been identified as ensuring that changes to the National Curriculum are reflected in what is taught and to produce a system of record keeping that will help teachers keep a track of progress. These targets are relevant and when achieved are likely to improve the school's provision further.