

INSPECTION REPORT

ASH GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mixenden, Halifax

LEA area: Calderdale

Unique reference number: 107534

Headteacher: Mr D. C. Kirk

Reporting inspector: Julian Sorsby

14042

Dates of inspection: 17th – 20th September 2001

Inspection number: 230564

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Mixenden Road Mixenden Halifax West Yorkshire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr B. Collins
Date of previous inspection:	2 nd March 1998

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14042	J. Sorsby	Registered inspector		Information about the school The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught How well the school is led and managed What the school should do to improve further
31243	P. Dodd-Racher	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents How well does the school care for its pupils
18703	C. Canniff	Team inspector	English Geography Physical education Equality of opportunity	
30243	A. Heakin	Team inspector	Mathematics Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage Provision for pupils with special educational needs	
25778	A. Hicks	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Information and communication technology Music	
16939	M. Padmore	Team inspector	Art and design History Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Ash Green Primary School serves an extended village community four kilometres north west of Halifax. It is a large primary school with an attached nursery, situated in a significantly disadvantaged area with high unemployment. There are 340 pupils on roll, compared to the national average of 243, including 37 children who attend the nursery either part time or full time. Only three pupils are not of white United Kingdom heritage, they being from the black Caribbean community, and all pupils speak English as their first language. Twenty per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is approximately equal to the national average while 3.2 per cent have statements of special educational needs, which is above average. Just over half the pupils are eligible to receive free school meals. One quarter of all pupils joined or left the school during the past year at a time other than the normal joining or leaving time. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well below expectations for their age. The school has received a School Achievement Award for its results from 1997 to 2000.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Since the last inspection, when it was described as a developing school, this has become a very good school. Pupils enter the school with standards well below expectations for their age. In the 2000 national tests, standards in reading writing and mathematics for seven year olds and English for eleven year olds were well below the national average, while in science for eleven year olds they were below average and in mathematics they were average. Particularly in the past year there has been marked improvement in the standards being achieved by pupils. While comparative data for the 2001 tests is not yet available, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 2 and higher than expected Level 3 at 7 years old and Level 4 and the higher than expected Level 5 at eleven years old has risen significantly in all tested subjects, with the exception of Level 4 in mathematics for eleven year olds, where there was a slight decline. These results in 2001 represent very good achievement by pupils in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and good achievement in Key Stage 2. Teaching is predominantly good, with almost one in three lessons being very good or better. The school's professional leadership and management is exemplary, and the governing body is very supportive and effective. The school is providing very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching is good and often very good, resulting in good and often very good learning taking place. The school is enabling pupils to achieve well and often very well.
- Pupils' attitudes to school and learning, their behaviour in and around the school campus and their personal development are all very good. The quality of relationships between pupils and with adults is excellent.
- The school provides pupils with an enriched learning environment and curriculum.
- Provision for pupils personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- All aspects of caring for pupils' health, safety and welfare are well provided for.
- Pupils make good and often very good progress.
- The leadership and management of the school are excellent.

What could be improved

- Standards could continue to improve, particularly in English at Key Stage 2.
- The consistency with which teachers use assessment data to provide effectively for the needs of higher attaining pupils.
- Annual progress reports to parents

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been very good improvement in the school since the last inspection which took place in 1998. The following are the key areas of improvement: Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development and the quality of relationships; the quality of teaching in every subject of the curriculum in which comparisons can be made with the last inspection report; the curriculum; information and communications technology now meets statutory requirements and the balance of time devoted to each subject has been adjusted beneficially; the national literacy and numeracy strategies have been very successfully introduced; provision for pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the use of assessment data in teachers' planning; the information the school provides to parents; the school's partnership with parents; the leadership and management of the school; the quality of the school development plan, financial management and budget administration; learning resources, particularly for information and communications technology; provision for pupils with special educational needs; standards in English, mathematics and science, art and design, design and technology and most markedly in information and communications technology. It should be noted that due to a lack of evidence in some subjects during the inspection week, comparisons could not be made for all subjects.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	E	E	E	D
mathematics	D	E	C	A
science	E	E	D	C

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

Pupils join the school with level of attainment well below expectations for their age. In 2000, by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils were still achieving standards that were overall well below the national average. In reading, writing and mathematics this was as a result of fewer than the average number of pupils achieving the higher than expected Level 3 and in writing and fewer than average reaching the top of Level 2. These results had been more or less constant over a period of four years. Compared to similar schools in 2000, reading and mathematics at Key Stage 1 were below average, and writing was well below average.

However, while national comparisons and comparisons with similar schools in 2001 are not yet available, in the 2001 national tests for seven year olds, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 2 or above rose very significantly in reading, writing and mathematics and by the age of eleven the proportion achieving the expected Level 4 or above also rose very significantly. The improvement seen in Key Stage 2 results that was achieved in 2000 has been further built upon in 2001. The school has exceeded its targets in 2001 for the proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 or better in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 and pupils are achieving very well.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are proud of their school. They are keen to study, work hard and participate fully in school activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons and throughout the school campus is very good. Pupils act responsibly and adhere well to school rules and conventions.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and with adults are excellent. Pupils are very respectful and thoughtful and develop well into responsible young people.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Although the rate of attendance is below the national average, this is due to families who move away from the area without telling the school, and whose children therefore remain on register until the family registers elsewhere.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good throughout the school and literacy and numeracy are taught well. All aspects of teaching throughout the school are at least good. A particular strength is the manner in which teachers motivate and manage pupils, creating the environment in which pupils learn well. A particular strength in learning is the way in which pupils respond to teachers and apply their effort in order to succeed.

While there are no particular weaknesses in teaching, one unsatisfactory physical education lesson and another in music were observed. Other lessons observed with each teacher concerned proved to be predominantly good, and in one case, excellent.

The school is particularly skilled at ensuring that the learning needs of individual pupils are identified and incorporated in teachers planning, although the wealth of data collected and analysed is not sufficiently well used to set appropriately challenging work for higher attaining pupils. All pupils make at least good progress. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and make very good progress. Higher attaining pupils don't always make the progress of which they are capable.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides the full National Curriculum and religious education and enriches it well with additional activities such as clubs and sport before, during and after the school day. The full curriculum is well designed to meet pupils' needs.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The school values and respects every pupil and provides very well for individual needs. This continues to be a significant strength.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is a particular strength of the school and contributes significantly to their personal development and the progress they make.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a very caring school in which the care and safety of pupils has an equal priority to their academic success. Insufficient attention is paid to providing appropriately challenging work for higher attaining pupils.
How well the school works with parents	The school strongly encourages parents to be partners in their children's education. Many parents support the school well and hold it in high regard. However, a significant minority of parents fail to ensure that their children's attendance at school is uninterrupted.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Exemplary. The headteacher is an excellent manager and motivator who cares deeply about his staff, the well being and progress of pupils and the development of the community of which the school is an active part. All his key staff very ably support him.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Excellent. Led by an exceptionally well-informed and involved chairman, the governing body is fully involved in supporting the development of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school efficiently and thoroughly evaluates its performance and constantly adjusts its work to best suit the needs of pupils.
The strategic use of resources	All resources, including staffing and funds are used exceptionally well to help raise pupils' standards and meet their individual needs. The school is exemplary in ensuring that it achieves best value in all of its work.
The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	The school is well staffed and resourced to meet the needs of pupils. Although much is good, accommodation is judged to be satisfactory overall because of the inadequacy of the one temporary classroom.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• That the school has high expectations of their children• That pupils make good progress• That teaching is good• That children like coming to school• That the school helps their children become mature and responsible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The amount of homework set• The extent of the information they receive about their children's progress

The parental views expressed above were from a limited number of respondents to the parent questionnaire and participants at the parents meeting. The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views. However, inspectors judge that the school makes good use of homework and, through a combination of formal and informal means, communicates well with parents about their children's progress.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Levels of attainment on entry to the nursery are well below those expected of this age group. Provision in the Foundation classes is good and children progress very well. The curriculum is soundly based on the six areas of learning for children of this age. Appropriate priority is given to personal, social and emotional development, language and literacy and mathematical development. The good teaching has a positive effect on children's learning and they make very good progress. By the end of the Foundation Stage most children are achieving almost in line with expectations for their age. This represents very good achievement by children.

2. Standards in English throughout the school have kept pace with national improvements since the time of the last inspection up to and including the year 2000, but have not improved relative to them. Standards in the 2000 National tests for seven and eleven year olds were well below the national average and the average for similar schools. The 2001 tests show that pupils' standards achieved in the national tests for 7 and 11 year olds have improved considerably, although no comparisons are yet available either with national levels or those achieved in similar schools. In 2001 there has been a very substantial improvement in the proportion of seven-year-old pupils achieving Levels 2 and 3 in both reading and writing and of eleven-year-old pupils achieving Levels 4 and 5 in English. Current inspection findings indicate that by the ages of seven and eleven, standards are below those expected, which is an improvement on previous years. Given pupils' low level of literacy skills when they start school, pupils' achievement up to the age of seven is very good and good between the ages of seven and eleven.

3. In mathematics, standards are improving. In the Year 2000 attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was well below the national average and attainment in Key Stage 2 was close to the national average. Inspection findings show that attainment is improving with the majority of pupils reaching Level 2 or Level 4 and an increase in the proportion of pupils achieving higher levels. This represents good achievement by pupils.

4. Standards in science have improved in recent years, and are now in line with national averages by the time pupils reach the age of seven and when they leave school at the end of Year 6. Pupils develop a secure understanding of scientific investigation methods, through tasks such as growing beans and separating solutions of sugar and salt by evaporation. Throughout the school, pupils use scientific vocabulary well in speaking and writing about their work. This represents good achievement by pupils.

5. It was only possible to see a limited number of art and design lessons during the inspection. However, these observations coupled with an examination of pupils' work indicate that younger pupils make satisfactory progress and attain average standards and that the older pupils aged 7 to 11 make good progress and attain standards that are above national expectations. This represents good achievement by pupils.

6. Pupils' standards in design and technology have improved since the last inspection and are broadly in line with national expectations at the age of seven and eleven. This represents good achievement by pupils.

7. Insufficient evidence was available during the inspection to make a judgement on standards in history and geography.

8. By the age of seven, pupils' standards in information and communications technology are in line with national expectations, and by the time they reach eleven, they attain standards that are above those expected. Pupils of all ages operate computers confidently, with skills appropriate for their age while pupils in Year 6 are working at levels considerably higher than the national expectations in a range of elements of the curriculum. This represents very good achievement by pupils.

9. There was insufficient evidence to judge overall standards in music. However, the standard of singing is in line with national expectations.

10. It is not possible to make a judgement about standards at the end of either key stage in physical education because the evidence was insufficient. However, the standards of work seen in the Year 6 dance are sound.

11. In religious education, from examination of pupils' past work, wall displays and lesson observations it is clear that standards of attainment in religious education are average for pupils of all ages. This represents good achievement by pupils.

12. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress in the Foundation Stage and very good progress throughout the school. Arrangements for supporting pupils who have statements of special educational need are effective and ensure they attain standards that are in line with their prior attainments. All pupils at Stage 2 and above on the special needs register have individual plans that include their targets. Class teachers in conjunction with the special needs co-ordinator and support assistants devise the individual plans. These combined with good assessment, careful monitoring and consistently good teaching mean that pupils who have special educational needs make very good progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are keen to learn and work hard. They listen carefully, and those who have acquired sufficient language skills ask pertinent questions. Often pupils answer questions in single words or short phrases, rather than in sentences.

14. Pupils enthusiastically participate in the range of clubs offered by the school. Sporting, artistic, computer and other leisure activities broaden pupils' horizons. The extra-curricular programme, including the annual musical production, helps foster the happy community ethos that permeates the school.

15. Pupils behave very well in and out of class. They are polite, friendly and courteous. They work co-operatively when asked, although some are less effective at using their own initiative, for example, in scientific experiments. The rare instances of uncooperative behaviour during the inspection resulted from temporary lapses in teachers' ability to maintain pupils' concentration. The high standards of behaviour are reflected in the absence of any exclusions during the previous year. The simple school rules, which staff often refer to, are well understood and accepted by pupils, and help the school to function effectively as a centre for learning.

16. In the supportive school environment, pupils gain confidence, and by Year 6 the most articulate can debate issues with unfamiliar adults. They take on responsibilities, for example as door and cloakroom monitors. Some older Key Stage 2 pupils have trained as play leaders and encourage constructive play among Key Stage 1 children at break times.

17. Pupils have elected representatives to the new school council and value this opportunity to influence school life.

18. Relationships throughout the school are excellent. Adults work as a harmonious team, valuing each other's skills and experience. They provide very good role models, in and out of classrooms. Pupils respond by treating each other with respect. Incidents of bullying do occur occasionally, but staff handle them effectively. Assemblies are well used to remind pupils to think about how their actions affect others. Pupils are tolerant of other faiths and cultures, and grow to understand that other communities may have different rules and expectations from their own.

19. Pupils arrive punctually, and their willingness to learn means that little time is wasted during the day. In the last reporting school year the attendance rate was 93.4 per cent. This is judged to be satisfactory because of the high proportion of absence caused by the mobility of some pupils' families and the need to retain the pupils on roll long after their families have moved to other areas of the country without telling the school. Most other absence is for illness but more than a third of pupils had some unauthorised absence in 2000-2001. Considering these factors, the overall rate of attendance is satisfactory.

20. Pupils who have special educational needs have positive attitudes to school and are very well integrated into the school community. Pupils respond well to the caring ethos, feel valued and build meaningful relationships with adults and their classmates. As a consequence they gain in confidence and self-esteem and are keen to learn and make very good progress.

21. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development and the quality of relationships in the school have all further improved since the last inspection. The attendance rate has deteriorated for the reasons given above.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

22. There has been considerable improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection, at which time it was judged to be satisfactory overall. Teaching is now good overall, and there is much very good and excellent teaching taking place. This is having a positive effect on pupils' learning.

23. As at the time of the last inspection the quality of teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is good. Staff have a very secure understanding of how young children learn and of the importance of play and first hand experiences. This has a positive effect on the good progress children make towards the Early Learning Goals and provides a firm foundation for learning in Key Stage 1.

24. The teaching of English is good, and sometimes very good, in both key stages. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The high standard of teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning, which is good, throughout the school. The National Literacy strategy has been implemented very well. Teachers' lesson plans reflect the priority placed on developing pupils' limited vocabulary. Key words that pupils are to learn are displayed and referred to during lessons. Where teaching is very good pupils are encouraged to use this vocabulary for themselves when answering questions.

25. The teaching of mathematics is good. Classes are well managed and pupils enjoy their lessons. This is because of the very good relationships that exist between adults and pupils. Teachers question pupils well and encourage them to be confident in their number

work. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress due to the effective use of teaching assistants and work that is well matched to their capabilities. Higher achievers are well challenged resulting in an increase in the percentage of higher levels achieved in national tests. No comparison can be made with the quality of teaching at the time of the last inspection, as it was not reported on. The good quality of teaching of mathematics and the attention paid to the needs of all pupils is having a positive effect on pupils' learning, which is good throughout the school.

26. Teaching and learning in science are both good throughout the school. Pupils make very good progress from the time they start in Year 1, and they achieve well from an initial very low level of understanding. Teachers question pupils effectively to draw out their understanding and to develop their thinking, and they explain work well. They focus very clearly on the correct use of scientific vocabulary, reinforcing pupils' literacy development. Teachers ensure that lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported in lessons by classroom assistants, but teaching approaches, whilst appropriate for most pupils, do not always extend the highest attaining pupils sufficiently.

27. Insufficient evidence precluded making a judgement on the quality of teaching or learning with regard to art and design at Key Stage 1. The teaching of the subject at Key Stage 2 is very good. Specialist teaching is having the desired effects of enabling pupils to acquire skills and techniques and is motivating pupils to produce very good work. Learning in Key Stage 2 matches the quality of the teaching and is very good. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching of art and design at Key Stage 2 since the last inspection.

28. It was possible to observe only two lessons of design and technology during the inspection. However, displays of pupils' work indicate that they are taught a sufficiently broad programme of study, and teaching is at least satisfactory. Lessons are well planned. Teachers place great emphasis not only on learning design and technology, but ensure through discussion that pupils develop speaking and listening skills, and link their work to science. The teaching of design skills has improved since the last inspection due to the consistent use of a planning framework for design activities, and an increased emphasis on this element of the work. In one of the lessons observed teaching and learning were satisfactory, while in the other they were good.

29. Insufficient evidence was available to judge the quality of teaching of geography and history.

30. The quality of teaching of information and communications technology is very good and is much improved since the last inspection. This is resulting in very good learning by pupils. The co-ordinator, very ably supported by a skilled classroom assistant, teaches information and communications technology to all pupils in the school on a regular basis. Pupils benefit greatly from this consistent teaching approach, and make very good progress because teaching is of a high quality. The co-ordinator has high expectations, work is challenging, and pupils respond with enthusiasm. Each module of work is well planned, so that over a course of lessons, pupils systematically develop their skills and understanding. The school has adopted a very effective policy to teach small groups in the computer suite, consequently enabling the teacher to provide good levels of support for individual pupils.

31. Where music is taken by the headteacher, a music specialist, teaching is very good. It is also good at times when taught by others, although one lesson seen was unsatisfactory because the work was unduly repetitious and not sufficiently demanding. The headteacher uses his specialist knowledge very effectively in hymn practices. He emphasises correct singing techniques and attends to the musical details required for good singing. Pupils sing

well as a result. Teachers use specialist musical vocabulary such as “timbre” and “dynamics” effectively in developing pupils’ musical creativity. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and pupils learn very well.

32. The quality of teaching and learning in physical education have improved since the last inspection and are good. Pupils are learning well. Teachers’ planning is good. Lessons have a clear focus on the development of skills. Warm-up sessions are used well to help pupils to understand the link between exercise and a healthy body. Since the last inspection teachers have begun to incorporate more opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work and that of others.

33. In religious education, teaching is good, an improvement since the last inspection. Much of the religious education syllabus is taught through discussion and teachers are good at valuing the contributions pupils make in order to encourage them to develop their speaking and listening skills. Teachers have high expectations of the behaviour of their pupils and the consequence is well-ordered lessons. Teachers prepare classroom assistants well. They take a full part in lessons, working with individuals or groups as the need arises. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject. Their planning is good. As a consequence of the good teaching, pupils are learning well.

34. The quality of teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is good and has improved since the last inspection. It is undertaken by class teachers within the class setting. Class teachers are familiar with the process of identifying pupils who have special educational needs and follow the correct procedures. Teachers make good use of the individual educational plans to inform their planning and match the work well to the pupils’ individual needs. In the classrooms the learning support assistants are well informed and work in conjunction with the teachers to raise standards and ensure that all pupils gain full benefit from their lessons. Some language teaching is individual and when observed during inspection it was of excellent quality. All adults have a positive approach and consistently praise pupils for their efforts. This results in pupils learning well, feeling proud of their work and being ready to take on new challenges in their learning.

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

35. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good. It provides for all required areas of learning and meets children’s needs well. The curriculum is planned in accordance with the Early Learning Goals and promotes intellectual, physical and personal development and prepares children well for the next stage of their education in school.

36. For pupils aged 5 to 11 the curriculum is also good. It covers a wide range of learning targets and is well balanced between and within subjects. The appropriate statutory curriculum is in place and meets the needs of all pupils including those with special educational needs. The demands of the National Curriculum are fully met. This is an improvement on the situation at the time of the last inspection when the curriculum for information and communications technology did not meet all requirements. The provision for pupils with special needs is very good, enabling them to make very good progress.

37. The time allocated to the teaching of the curriculum for older pupils is broadly average compared to national figures. Teaching time for younger pupils, however, is lower than the national averages. The school is in the process of reviewing time allocation as it considers that an increase in the taught-time allocated will benefit the younger pupils. The time allocated to individual subjects is satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

38. Teachers' planning of the curriculum is good. The school has very effectively introduced the national literacy and numeracy strategies over the past few years and this has contributed to rising standards being achieved by pupils. The information and communications technology curriculum has also been substantially improved both in terms of its content and delivery. There is now specialist teaching of the subject and an information technology teaching assistant. These factors are having a positive effect on pupils' standards.

39. The national literacy and numeracy strategies have been very successfully promoted throughout the school. This has resulted in an improvement in levels of attainment in English and mathematics and helped the school to address the key issues from the last inspection, which were to raise attainment in these subjects.

40. All subjects have appropriate policies and schemes of work that clearly guide the planning of teaching and learning. The quality of planning is good and pupils are given a programme that successfully offers progressively more challenging learning activities as they move through the school. In the case of the foundation subjects schemes of work closely follow recently produced national guidelines. The school is rightly keeping these under review with the intention of modifying them at the end of the year when their full effectiveness is assessed.

41. The religious education syllabus complies with the locally agreed syllabus and is taught mainly through the personal, social and health education curriculum developed by the school. This is a flexible curriculum that deals with a broad range of matters and which is adapted to the wider needs of the school. Where personal and spiritual development issues coincide these are taught together. This is often through circle time, a forum in which pupils are gathered in a circle to give their personal responses, for example, to questions of belief, or to considerations of their responsibilities in school and in the community. These times are well managed and give teachers the additional opportunity to promote listening and speaking skills.

42. The personal, social and health education programme is well planned and comprehensive. It makes good use of visitors such as the school nurse and the local police who visit the school to promote greater understanding of, for example, drugs and sex education. The school has achieved nationally recognised status as a "Healthy School" due to its policy and practice in promoting health in mind and in body.

43. All pupils have good access to the curriculum. The provision for pupils with special educational needs continues to be a strength of the school. Pupils who have special educational needs are included in all aspects of the curriculum and make very good progress. Teachers have copies of individual plans and these are used well to plan suitable work to meet the needs of individuals. The school makes sure that the provision outlined in pupils' statements is in place and is reviewed in line with Code of Practice guidance. The setting system in mathematics for Key Stage 2 pupils, the introduction of the Literacy Hour and the internal organisation that allows teachers to focus on small groups, all enhance the curriculum and give lower attaining pupils good opportunities to progress well. The school states its objective to provide for 'diversity of needs' by giving 'access to a similarly wide variety of provision' and this ethos is actively promoted ensuring that all pupils have equality of access to the whole curriculum.

44. The provision of extra-curricular activities is very good and makes a very good contribution to older pupils' social and creative development. In any one week approximately half of the older pupils are involved in extra-curricular activity of one type or another whether it be recorders, chess or sports. This number increases when the school puts on its annual

musical production. Particular strengths are the breakfast and homework clubs that make a valuable contribution to the development of literacy and numeracy in the school.

45. Music adds much to the life of the school. As well as being involved in the annual school productions, many pupils go on to contribute to the work of other musical groups in the town. Pupils' learning experiences are suitably extended through various visits to museums and other educational resources. Stimulating annual residential visits effectively promote social development. Display around the school is of high quality and supports the curriculum through informing and exciting interest.

46. Provision for the spiritual development of pupils is good. There is a well planned programme of assemblies that largely follows the Christian calendar but which also celebrates the holy days and festivals of other faiths. The school fulfils all requirements for a daily act of collective worship. Opportunities are provided for pupils to contribute in various ways to assemblies. The playing of music such as that of Mozart as pupils enter and leave the hall creates an atmosphere in which pupils can prepare themselves for or reflect on their responses to the messages offered by the act of worship.

47. A strong sense of morality runs through the day-to-day undertakings in the school. Teachers and the other adults in the school share with the children their understanding of right and wrong. For example when there is a falling out children are reminded of the impact of their actions on others. Teachers and other staff act as good role models for pupils. They show good care and concern for their charges and do what they can to promote good relationships. This influences pupils' behaviour in class as well as around the school. Wider moral issues such as care for the environment or for people in difficult circumstances in developing countries are explored in assemblies and in subjects such as English and religious education. Pupils are often involved in raising money for people in need.

48. Pupils' social development is very good. Teachers and other staff work to create good relationships in the school based on openness, kindness and concern for others. An example of the way in which staff develop good relationships is to be found in the way the caretaker involves himself fully in the life of the school by joining in the football club or helping in the dining hall at lunch times. He gets to know the children well and provides another example to the children of an adult they can relate well to. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively in various subjects and this helps to promote good social skills. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in the life of the school.

49. The quality of pupil's cultural development is good. Most pupils share a common cultural background and are given opportunities to appreciate their local environment through visits and cultural activities, particularly through musical productions. Geography provides pupils with opportunities to find out more about a range of different lifestyles in different countries around the world. In history pupils learn about the changes over time in their society as well as changes in cultures from other times. English provides pupils with an insight into their literary heritage while religious education and the programme of assemblies helps pupils to explore the nature of different cultures. Staff ensure that educational resources such as books and software include a balanced representation of the range of cultures and peoples represented in our society. This contributes to the school's satisfactory preparation of pupils for life in a culturally diverse society.

50. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development have improved since the last inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

51. The care and welfare of pupils has a very high priority and is well co-ordinated by the headteacher. The breakfast club, tuck shop and school lunches encourage pupils to eat healthily, and Ash Green has received a "Healthy School" award. The dinner, midday and office staff, and the school caretaker, help create a safe, clean and happy environment. Child protection, medical and first aid procedures are very well understood and implemented. Effective co-operation between the headteacher and the education welfare service helps ensure that welfare issues are speedily brought to the attention of agencies that offer help. Pupils feel at ease when approaching adults around the school, who advise them on manners, consideration for others, and other requirements for living in a community.

52. All staff encourage pupils to behave well through praise for effort, politeness and consideration. This strategy is very successful. In addition, the high ratio of adults to children means that aggressive behaviour rarely has a chance to develop. Procedures for improving attendance are very good and when account is taken of the number of pupils who remain on register after their families leave the area and before they re-register at another school, attendance rates are satisfactory. Parents or carers are contacted swiftly if no explanation is received for a child's absence, or if a child starts to arrive late.

53. Pupils with special needs are exceptionally well integrated into the school community. The policy for support staff to work with groups rather than with individuals means that other pupils' attention is not drawn to individuals who are receiving a lot of support. This contributes to the inclusive ethos. Assessment is very well used to help pupils with special needs make very good progress.

54. Pupils' progress files in English, mathematics and science enable staff to keep track of learning in these core subjects. Self-assessment is developing in personal, social and health education, where pupils and teachers together compile records of achievement.

55. Assessment procedures are characterised by many strengths and one significant weakness and are judged to be good overall. The data collected is used to inform curriculum planning and the personal profiles that teachers build up for each individual pupil are most informative. They provide a very good picture of the progress and attainment of each child. Senior staff use assessment information very well to determine skills and concepts which teachers need to focus on during the school year. Many teachers use their knowledge of individual pupils' attainment levels to plan suitable learning tasks. However, insufficient attention is paid to providing sufficiently challenging work for higher attaining pupils.

56. Some teachers share targets for learning with their pupils. In some subjects, notably information and communications technology and writing, pupils are encouraged to assess their own work. This gives them a sense of responsibility for their own learning and provides yardsticks by which to measure their own progress. Teachers' marking is often constructive and helps pupils to improve their work. Reports to parents are not yet sufficiently focused on specific progress made, or on targets for improvement, and therefore, do not give as clear a picture of pupils' personal and educational development as they could.

57. The use of assessment has improved significantly since the last inspection, particularly as a basis for planning to raise attainment across year groups. Self-assessment has improved, especially in personal, social and health education.

58. Teachers assess children entering the nursery using local authority tests and reassess children's ability before they move into Year 1. The results confirm the good progress children make in their learning in the Foundation Stage. There are regular assessments throughout pupils' careers in the school. Reading tests are termly and pupils sit the optional standard assessments as well as those at ages 7 and 11. In most subjects

there are end of module assessments. Teachers use this information well to plan appropriate activities that meet the needs of most individuals and groups of pupils. However, the needs of higher attaining pupils are not being consistently met.

59. The school meets the requirements for those pupils who have statements of special educational need and all are well supported. There are effective links with outside agencies who support the school well and help to ensure the provision outlined in statements of special educational needs is implemented. A strength of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs is the deployment of learning support assistants into each class. This means that lower attaining pupils who do not have statements or are not on the special needs register benefit from the extra adult attention and make good progress. The positive effect of this strategy can be seen in the end of key stage test results where an increasing number of pupils are achieving at nationally accepted levels.

60. In all respects, including the assessment of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding, there has been improvement since the last inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

61. Discussions with parents, governors and staff and a scrutiny of correspondence with parents indicate that links with parents are good overall, and that the school has the will to improve them further. The school works hard to develop new initiatives which will further improve parents willingness to become involved, and these measures are beginning to impact on the local culture of parents not wishing to become involved.

62. Bright and informative newsletters, and the governors' annual report to parents in newspaper format, convey essential information clearly. Posters in school advertise events and classes likely to interest parents. Ash Green is becoming a catalyst for family welfare and learning in the community. Staff run well-supported information and communications technology classes for adults which enable parents to expand their skills. Family literacy and numeracy sessions will soon restart after an enforced break during building work. Educational developments are explained at class assemblies to which parents are invited. Parents receive full information about the work of the school, and typically more than two thirds come to open evenings to see and hear about the progress their children are making. As yet, the annual written reports lack sufficient detail on specific advances in knowledge, skills and understanding, and on targets for future learning, but the adverse impact this could have on the ability of parents to support their children's learning at home is overcome by the effectiveness of informal links between staff and parents.

63. Staff make home visits which help children's transition into the nursery. Many parents accept the school's invitation to come into school and read with their children for 15 minutes before lessons start. Teachers are present for parents to speak to at the start and end of the school day. Many parents use this opportunity, but because of the attitude of some parents towards schools in general, some remain wary of starting a dialogue with staff. The home-school reading diaries are a helpful link, because parents who look at them know which books their children are reading, and the rate at which their reading is improving. Some parents listen to their children reading at home.

64. The school works hard to develop local community initiatives and to promote the message of the importance of education with parents, but the local culture remains one of parents not recognising the importance of their involvement in their children's education. While attendance is satisfactory overall, a substantial minority of parents does not yet ensure that their children attend school on every possible occasion. Few parents completed the pre-inspection questionnaire, or attended the pre-inspection meeting, but most of those who did

participate are satisfied with the school's work. Parents give good support to the fund-raising events organised by the parents', teachers' and friends' association.

65. The school has addressed successfully many issues arising from the last inspection report, including the introduction of home-school books, a policy for homework, and more information on educational developments, including chances to see the whole school at work. Reports to parents have improved in that they now include an invitation to parents to comment, but there is still scope to improve reports as an aid to pupils' continued learning.

66. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs are well involved from the time the teacher has an initial concern and are kept fully informed about their child's progress. The school has good links with parents and provides regular opportunities for parents to discuss the progress of their children, including attending formal review meetings and less formal discussions about pupil's progress.

67. For all pupils, the significant improvement in the partnership between parents and the school, which has been achieved through much hard work, is a contributory factor to children's own achievements.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

68. Although strong at the time of the last inspection, there has been considerable improvement in the leadership and management provided by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and all management staff which are now judged to be excellent. This is an exceptionally strong and committed team with a strong and purposeful leader. All management issues reported at the time of the last inspection have been dealt with successfully.

69. This is a school where exceptionally strong leadership and management by the headship team coupled with very effective and meaningful delegation of authority and responsibility to their senior management colleagues and subject co-ordinators has had, and continues to have, a significant impact on raising pupils' standards.

70. The headteacher is a charismatic, highly skilled and effective leader and manager. He provides drive and initiative, and relentlessly steers the school towards its goal of higher attainment by all pupils. He is acutely aware of the home circumstances of pupils and of the strengths and challenges presented by the local community. Steered and guided by the headteacher, very ably supported by his deputy, the senior management team plan and develop the schools' work to meet the personal needs of pupils and their families as well as their academic advancement.

71. There has been a very good programme of monitoring teaching to help teachers identify their strengths and to improve in areas capable of development. This has contributed to a significant improvement in the quality of teaching and, consequently, learning. The headteacher is well supported by the senior management team who, in turn, support the good quality of work undertaken by subject co-ordinators. All staff, both teaching and non-teaching constitute an exceptionally strong team with a unity of approach and common goals for their pupils.

72. The school is exceptionally successful in using all available data in evaluating its own performance and taking effective action to deal with areas of relative weakness. The school is particularly clear about its educational priorities, and the senior management set a very clear and appropriate educational direction. This is reinforced and consolidated by the careful targeting of funds to support areas in need of improvement. Throughout all its work, the

management team clearly reflect the schools aims and values, in particular the valuing of every pupil and the inclusion of all. The school development plan, the budget and planning in general are exemplary, resulting in purposeful hard work by all, and the raising of standards. The coherence of the planning documentation is a significant improvement since the last inspection.

73. Acting not just as a critical friend but also as the management team's strongest partner is the chairman of the governing body, and through him, his colleagues on the governing body. As at the time of the last inspection, the Chairman provides excellent leadership. He shares with the headteacher a deep understanding of the local social environment. They recognise that to continue their relentless drive to improve the achievements of pupils some local problems need to be addressed by the school. For example, while never taking their eyes off the immediate need to continue to raise standards, and as part of the plan to do so, they are addressing the need to provide services to children under three years old to give them a better start in school.

74. The headteacher recognises and builds on the strengths of others, and supports those with weaknesses. His commitment to the staff is exemplified by the investment the school makes in the professional development of the staff.

75. The school's educational priorities are exceptionally well supported through meticulous financial planning. The headteacher and administrative staff have an excellent understanding of school finance, and work well together bringing their complementary skills to bear on the financial planning and management aspects of the school's work. The school makes very good use of information and communications technology in financial planning and management, and in its general administration. This is largely due to the unusual role of the deputy headteacher, who has led the exemplary development of information and communications technology in the school, both in terms of provision for pupils, staff development and school administration. Despite being an atypical role for a deputy headteacher, she and the headteacher bring very different but complementary skills to the school. Together they generate a productive tension that has served pupils well in the raising of standards.

76. Ash Green has a significant role in teacher training, in partnership with Leeds Metropolitan University and the University of Huddersfield. Induction for new staff is systematic and supportive. Supply teachers receive clear, concise information about the school, helping them to fit in quickly.

77. The school's investment in extra staff is having a very beneficial impact on pupils' social development, and on the progress made by pupils with special needs. The school is well staffed with teachers and support staff who have the relevant expertise to meet the demands of the whole curriculum. The balance of male and female teachers is good, and results in a good range of role models for pupils.

78. The strong and enthusiastic team of class teachers and learning support staff work in a very close partnership to ensure that all children receive a secure foundation for their future education. Subject co-ordinators play a major role in the management of the school. Through their monitoring of teaching and planning they strongly influence the teaching of their specialist subjects and hence pupils' achievements. Their respect for each other and the manner in which they eagerly seek and receive each other's support and guidance is exemplary. This is an exceptionally strong and cohesive team of middle managers.

79. A strategy for performance management has been introduced that fully meets legislative requirements. This builds well on the schools existing systems for appraising

teachers' work. All teachers have agreed targets for improvement in their own effectiveness and professional development. A process for monitoring teaching and reviewing progress towards these targets has been in place for some years and a schedule for these activities continues to be followed. The school's strategy for appraisal and performance management is excellent. This is a substantial improvement since the last report.

80. The work of the school is very strongly supported by the administrative and secretarial staff. There are good, effective systems for communicating information and ensuring the smooth running of the school. Other non-teaching staff make an important contribution. Among these are the mid-day supervisors, canteen staff and the school caretaker.

81. The school is well maintained and decorated, and classrooms are large enough for the classes in them. The lack of a suitable playing field for physical education, and of specialist rooms for science and design and technology, are drawbacks that create some difficulties for teachers but do not limit the teaching of the curriculum. Similarly, while not limiting the teaching of the curriculum, the one temporary classroom offers a far less attractive environment for learning compared to the rest of the school and, because of its shape and size, is inadequate for the number and age of pupils who use it. For example, in one science lesson observed, the teacher had difficulty demonstrating an experiment in such a way that all pupils could see it clearly, and the pupils' opportunity to carry out an investigation was made more difficult.

82. The school has excellent resources for learning information and communications technology skills, enabling pupils to practise frequently. Resources for maths, for special educational needs and for children under five, are good. The number of books in the school library is small for a school of Ash Green's size, and subject coverage is uneven. A good range of books supports personal, social and health education, but there are insufficient books about geography and the environment. While the school has a collection of information CD-ROMs, their use is not yet incorporated in curriculum planning and so full use is not made of them.

83. Resources for information and communications technology have improved substantially since the last inspection. However, there is still a need to increase the number of library books, and to expand resources for the humanities.

84. Financial management and budget administration are both excellent, an improvement since the last inspection. The school development plan sets out very clearly the school's priorities for development. These are very well focused on raising standards in all aspects of the school's work. There are very clear criteria against which developments are judged and all aspects of the development plan have been very carefully costed. Subject co-ordinators and other teachers with management responsibilities such as the special educational needs co-ordinator are responsible for managing their own budgets. This enables them to have real control over developments in their area, while working within the overall school development framework. The school is aware that falling roles have the potential of causing financial difficulties, as does the nature of the funding provided to the school. The school is planning accordingly.

85. The local education authority carries out regular audits of all finances, and their recommendations are acted upon by the school.

86. The school makes excellent use of all the additional funds it receives, for example, to enhance the school's provision for ICT and to fund staff training. This investment is having a very good impact on the quality and standards of pupils' work. The school is very effective at

attracting funds to match its development plans rather than having to adapt its plans to match available funds.

87. The management of special educational needs is very good. The school considers the provision for special educational needs to be a high priority. The experienced special needs co-ordinator along with the head teacher and special needs governor, who are both well informed, have planned the school strategy for supporting pupils who have special educational needs. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs has a good working relationship with the co-ordinator, knows the pupils well and monitors the school provision for these pupils. The judicious use of resources and the school philosophy of inclusion results in very good provision and a consequent improvement in levels of achievement. Provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved since the last inspection.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

88. In order to further improve the quality of education and build on the very many strengths of the school identified in the inspection the headteacher, governors and staff should:

- 1 Continue to raise pupils' standards across the curriculum, particularly in English at KS2, by enabling pupils to use and understand more complex language:
 - by further extending opportunities to practice the skills of listening and speaking
 - by further extending the exposure of pupils to more complex language
 - by developing a policy to ensure that speaking and listening are further embedded as activities across the curriculum
 - by continuing the school's initiatives to improve pupils' writing
 - by encouraging the use of the library for research by pupils
 - by ensuring that more able pupils are consistently fully challenged by the work set for them. (See paragraphs 105-116)
- 2 Ensuring all teachers consistently use all available assessment data to set sufficiently challenging work for more able pupils in all subjects of the curriculum. (See paragraphs 113 and 116)
- 3 Ensure that annual progress reports to parents give more detail of progress made and targets set. (See paragraphs 52, 62 and 65)

89. Further areas identified in this report which should be considered by the school are as follows:

1. Some parents are failing to respond to the school's very good initiatives to improve the rate of pupil attendance. (See paragraph 64)
2. The school's one temporary classroom is inadequate for the needs of the pupils who use it. (See paragraph 81)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	65
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	52

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	15	31	13	2	0	0
Percentage	5	23	49	20	3	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

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)	32	308
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	178

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	11
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	69

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	38
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	53

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

Unauthorised absence

%

School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.2

School data	0.7
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	17	22	39

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	8	12
	Girls	17	16	17
	Total	26	24	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	67 (77)	62 (72)	74 (85)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	12	15
	Girls	17	16	20
	Total	26	28	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	67 (81)	72 (87)	90 (87)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	23	22	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	18	19
	Girls	14	16	20
	Total	27	34	39
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	60 (44)	76 (67)	87 (67)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	15	13
	Girls	13	15	17
	Total	25	30	30

Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58 (60)	67 (56)	67 (63)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	262
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.8
Average class size	25.7

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	19
Total aggregate hours worked per week	485

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	32
Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	90
Number of pupils per FTE adult	8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	889 513
Total expenditure	865 912
Expenditure per pupil	2 347
Balance brought forward from previous year	60 081
Balance carried forward to next year	83 682

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1

Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	340
Number of questionnaires returned	50

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	46	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	36	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	50	4	4	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	52	28	14	6	0
The teaching is good.	74	24	0	2	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	38	14	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	28	2	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	30	0	2	0
The school works closely with parents.	40	46	8	4	2
The school is well led and managed.	58	32	2	4	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	42	2	2	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	42	8	4	6

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

90. Children in the Foundation Stage are taught in one nursery and two reception classes. At the time of the inspection the nursery children were not in school because the building programme was incomplete. They are due to start school towards the end of September. The reception children were in school but it was the first week of their full-time attendance, so teachers were concentrating on providing a happy learning environment, getting to know the children and assessing their skills.

91. In the nursery there is one teacher and three nursery support staff and in the reception classes there are two teachers and three support staff.

92. There is one intake of children during the school year and at the time of inspection the reception children had only been in school for two weeks on a part time basis. This pattern is usually reflected in the nursery but this year delayed because of the unfinished building programme.

93. On entry to the nursery, standards of attainment are well below national expectations. Children achieve very well and at the end of the Foundation Stage most children are achieving in line with national expectations. This is a similar picture to the findings of the last inspection.

94. A carefully planned induction programme helps children to settle into school life with ease. The school takes care to meet parents and carers in order to determine the individual needs of children. Home visits are made prior to children starting the nursery and useful parental booklets are issued. The school provides a wide range of challenging and focused experiences to promote personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is consistently good and based on detailed planning that takes account of the individual needs of the children. As a result most children achieve very well and are in line to reach the early learning goals in all six areas of learning by the end of the reception class. Children who have special educational needs are supported well and make good progress.

95. No nursery children were present during the inspection so this report cannot include any further reference to nursery provision.

Personal, social and emotional development

96. By the time they have completed the Foundation Stage, the majority of children make very good progress in their personal and social development and reach national expectations in this area. This shows very good achievement and reflects the good teaching for children in this age group.

97. Children's' personal, social and emotional development is given very high priority. Despite being only in the first week of full-time attendance children enjoy coming to school and the majority happily leave their parents and carers at the start of lessons. Children are keen to explore the wide range of stimulating activities available. They are encouraged to become independent and respond well to expectations that they should dress and undress independently and form good relationships with each other and adults in the classroom.

Relationships are very good and children play well together when they play imaginatively with dinosaurs, explore the home corner or investigate the movement of water in the water tray. They respond to instructions and questions but a significant minority do not initiate conversation. During the inspection a photographer from the local newspaper took class photographs. The children responded well, following his instructions and taking an interest in what he was doing. There are good opportunities for children to learn to concentrate with an adult directed activity for example when they listen to a story or play matching games. The adults are very good role models for the children, always treating each other with courtesy and respect. Teacher's high expectations of behaviour and their positive reinforcement of good behaviour have a positive impact on children's personal and social development. All adults work hard to ensure that the classrooms are happy places to be where children can grow in confidence and achieve well.

Communication, language and literacy

98. By the time they have completed the Foundation Stage, most children reach nationally expected levels of attainment even though they enter the school with skills that are well below average. This improvement reflects the consistently good opportunities for children to develop the spoken word and to enjoy books.

99. Teachers make good use of the National Literacy Strategy as a basis for their planning. At the time of the inspection some children spoke clearly and confidently but many still used a limited range of vocabulary speaking in short phrases rather than complete sentences. There are good opportunities for children to develop speaking and listening skills as they discuss the characters in a story, negotiate turns in using the computer or talk with their teacher about favourite fruits. Role-play opportunities are readily available and the more confident children are able to take advantage of these. Adults continually assess children and so those less self-assured children will be encouraged to role-play when it is appropriate. Teachers share books with children and encourage a desire to read. Children were enthralled as their teacher read 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' eager to see what happened next; 'out popped a butterfly!' was exclaimed by a child as he saw the last page. Children are expected to handle books with care. Children self-register using their name cards and the majority can already recognise their names. They know that writing communicates meaning and associate sounds with letters. Displays, magnetic letters, alphabet and sound friezes help children to develop early reading and writing skills. The very good relationships are a strength of the school and in the Foundation Stage the emphasis placed by teachers on developing good relationships has a positive effect on the development of communication skills.

Mathematical development

100. By the time they have completed the Foundation Stage, most children have made very good progress and reach national expectations in mathematical development. This demonstrates that the school has successfully addressed the issue from the last report, which was 'to improve the weakness in mathematical experiences'.

101. Teaching is based on the National Numeracy Strategy and is good. Children are given a wide range of activities to promote mathematical understanding. The concept of counting is supported by a number of 'counting songs', which the children enjoy. They participate enthusiastically with '1,2,3 little dinosaurs' and '5 currant buns' readily applauding class members who participate by pretending to be currant buns. Children learn positional vocabulary such as in, under and in front of, and staff regularly reinforce this knowledge as children play with construction toys or put equipment away. Children begin to gain a sense of time and order as teachers outline that first we will read a story and then we will play. Awareness of shape is introduced in printing activities and well reinforced by computer

programmes, which are available for children to use during the day. Adults use every opportunity effectively to develop mathematical skills and this has a positive impact on children's learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

102. By the time they have completed the Foundation Stage, most children reach nationally expected levels of attainment. Teaching is good and a range of opportunities is provided to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Children play competently with a variety of construction and modelling materials. Though the inspection was in the first week of fulltime reception classes, several children were able to use the mouse to successfully complete computer games based on mathematical understanding such as matching shapes. It is clear from teacher's planning and portfolios of photographs that children will be planting bulbs and will have the opportunity to discuss what will happen. Children who were in the reception class last year were excited when their bulbs flowered and intrigued to see the earlier photographs taken when they originally planted their bulbs. Children learn how to use simple modelling tools and develop their skills in cutting, folding and sticking. They are given the opportunity to use a tape recorder to listen to songs and rhymes to extend their knowledge of number. Children are given the opportunity to explore special things, such as favourite toys, and to express their feelings at the possibility of those special things being taken from them.

Physical development

103. By the end of the Foundation Stage, the majority of pupils reach the national expected levels of ability in their physical development. There are regular opportunities for children to take part in safe outdoor play. In physical education lessons children make good progress in listening to teacher instructions and concentrate well as they respond by moving to the sound of the tambourine. Teachers provide good opportunities for children to handle small tools such as pencils and paint brushes. Children are learning to be aware of the times when they need to wash their hands and staff make sure that hygiene rules are followed.

Creative development

104. By the time they leave the Foundation Stage, most children make very good progress and reach nationally expected levels of attainment in their creative development. Sand and water for children to explore, are available on a daily basis. The model dinosaurs and pebbles in each classroom provide many opportunities for children to play imaginatively. Children have great fun as they explore the texture and smell of shaving foam when they trace their letter for the week onto a surface covered with foam. The children respond well to the feel of the foam and consolidate their knowledge of the letter 't'. Children listen attentively to rhymes and join in enthusiastically as they sing 'rub a dub a boogie yeah' and make the various animal noises to augment 'Walking Through The Jungle'. Children use paint to express themselves and there was a tremendous look of pride on children's faces as they carefully took their marbling work to dry. Role-play opportunities are varied but at the time of inspection many of the children were getting used to the classrooms and not yet taking the opportunities for imaginative play.

ENGLISH

105. Standards in English throughout the school have remained constant since the time of the last inspection up to and including the year 2000. Standards in the 2000 National tests for seven and eleven year olds were well below the national average. With the exception of reading by 7 year olds in 1999, which was below the national average, these comparisons

have been the same since the last inspection. In 2000, pupils' achieved levels of attainment that were below the average for similar schools. The most recent tests show that pupils' standards achieved in the national tests for 7 and 11 year olds have improved considerably, although no comparisons are yet available either with national levels or those achieved in similar schools.

106. Current inspection findings indicate that by the age of seven, standards are below those expected. In 2000, just over half the pupils of this age reached the expected Level 2 in reading in the national tests, which is approximately equal to the national average. However, only 13 per cent reached the higher than expected Level 3, which is less than half the national average. In writing, the results were significantly worse, with 62 per cent achieving Level 2, compared to the national average of 76 per cent. Of those achieving Level 2, few achieved at the top end of Level 2. No pupils achieved the higher than expected Level 3. Speaking and listening skills were also below average. In 2001 there has been a very substantial improvement in the proportion of pupils achieving Levels 2 and 3 in both reading and writing. These test results and inspection findings reflect the clear focus the school has placed on raising standards. Given pupils' low level of literary skills when they start school, pupils' achievement up to the age of seven is very good. Information gained from analysing test results, tracking pupils' progress and assessing pupils' written work has helped the school to identify areas for improvement.

107. Current inspection findings indicate that by the age of eleven years standards are below those expected. In 2000, just over half the pupils of this age reached the expected Level 4 in English in the national tests, which is above the national average. However, only nine per cent reached the higher than expected Level 5, which is less than a third of the national average. In 2001 there has been a very substantial improvement in the proportion of pupils achieving Levels 4 and 5 in English. These test results and inspection findings further confirm the success of the clear focus the school has placed on raising standards. Given pupils' low level of literary skills when they start school and pupils' achievement up to the age of seven, these results demonstrate pupils achieving well between the ages of seven and eleven.

108. The quality of teaching, which was satisfactory at the time of the last inspection, has also improved and is good and often very good throughout the school. It is never less than satisfactory. The good quality teaching results in pupils making very good progress up to the age of seven and good progress thereafter. The increased complexity of language required at Key Stage 2 has a negative impact on pupils' progress in writing, but the school is working hard to help pupils overcome these difficulties.

109. In speaking and listening pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make greater advances in listening than in speaking. Given their poor linguistic skills on starting school and the standards they reach, their achievement is good. However, as at the time of the last inspection, standards are below average. The school is alert to this and has increased curricular opportunities to develop confident speaking skills. For example, frequent short opportunities to discuss with a partner before answering, or in circle time taking part in discussion about being part of a group such a pop group of family. Teachers share information clearly and stimulate pupils' interest by reading to them with plenty of expression in shared reading sessions and story time. Throughout the school most pupils listen carefully and do their best to understand. In one Year 2 lesson the teacher read a story about a pirate expressively. This encouraged pupils to join in the reading and answer questions and share their own thoughts about what might happen next. Pupils up to the age of seven are keen to answer question although they often use only one word or phases when answering. They do not respond using complete sentences as a matter of course. By Year 6 pupils' listening skills have improved but remain below average, as are their speaking skills.

Pupils show that they understand the questions asked because their answers are appropriate to what is being discussed. However, pupils are sometimes slow to respond, particularly when required to express their own thoughts and ideas; for instance, when discussing how an author uses adverbs.

110. The development of pupils' listening skills is well supported throughout the school. In English lessons teachers extend pupils' vocabulary and questions are used well to draw out pupils' understanding. A greater emphasis is now placed on developing their awareness of the language of different subjects, for example, in science through a discussion about the five senses, and teachers identify in their lesson plans the key words pupils are to learn. Although teachers pose questions to the whole class, they do not necessarily take positive steps to ensure that pupils, who lack confidence and find speaking more difficult, contribute. Teachers value pupils' contributions, but sometimes spend too much time talking themselves rather than giving pupils time to think and consider their answer.

111. Standards in reading are similar to those found in most schools. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be well below average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Year 6 pupils, including those with special educational needs, make greater gains in reading compared to writing. Since the last inspection the school has increased the opportunities for pupils to take books home to read. This, and the effective use of time in literacy lessons for reading and sharing the work of different writers has a positive impact on pupils' progress and their enthusiasm for reading has increased. Teachers choose books they know will interest pupils, who enjoy these sessions and become involved with the stories. For example, Year 1 pupils gasp in horror as they hear that the main character, a tiger, drinks all the drinks that are stored in the cupboard.

112. The teaching of the basic skills of reading is good because pupils are taught strategies to help them read and understand unfamiliar words. The school has developed a policy of early intervention in learning to read and this has a positive impact on the progress and attainment of lower attaining pupils. Year 1 pupils whose reading skills are progressing at a particularly slow rate are placed on the reading recovery programme. Pupils start the programme as non-readers and, as a result of the excellent teaching, grow in confidence and achieve skills similar to the average for the class. Teachers hear pupils read regularly as part of a group, and individually in guided reading sessions. Records of their progress vary in quality. The better examples indicate what pupils can and cannot do, and list words that need to be learned. This supports pupils' progress, as teachers know what is needed to help them improve.

113. By the age of seven pupils know the names and sounds of letters and use these confidently to help them read new words. Most pupils read with reasonable accuracy. Higher attainers read fluently and use a wider range of strategies when deciphering new words. They are able to talk about the story expressing their own opinion about different events and characters. Less able pupils make some use of known sounds but are more reliant on pictures and adult support to give them clues. Teachers use the school's reading scheme effectively to enable pupils to make progress in small steps. However, more able pupils could sometimes be introduced to more challenging texts. By eleven years old most pupils have a sound understanding of what they are reading. They read a satisfactory range of fiction and non-fiction, although most do not choose to read non-fiction or poetry by choice. Pupils are familiar with books by authors such as Roald Dahl and Jacqueline Wilson. Average and higher attaining pupils know how to find information quickly in books. Most pupils know how to use the index, contents page or both, and know the index is in alphabetical order. They understand how the school library is organised but do not have sufficient opportunity to select reference books for themselves and develop their research skills fully.

114. Pupils make sound progress in building their writing skills and the proportion achieving Levels 2 and 3 in the 2001 national tests, and inspection findings demonstrate that standards are improving. However, by the time they are seven and eleven pupils' attainment in writing is still below average. A strength of the school's focus on improving writing is the way in which teachers make good use of the reading texts to help pupils structure their writing and extend their use of a descriptive vocabulary. By the age of seven pupils write in simple sentences and sequence them to make stories and basic factual accounts. Higher attaining pupils show an understanding of conventional story writing and are beginning to make their stories more interesting to the reader by using adjectives, for example, "Once upon a time there was a cheeky tiger." They know how to use capital letters and full stops but do not use punctuation consistently in their own writing. More able pupils occasionally use speech marks and are beginning to use more complex sentences. Pupils make satisfactory progress in the development of their handwriting skills and many seven year olds are able to form their letters properly and neatly, although presentation varies between pieces of work. The handwriting of less able pupils is somewhat erratic, with letter of different shapes and sizes and too little spacing left between words.

115. By Year 6 pupils write for an increasing range of purposes such as stories, letters, diaries, poems and factual accounts. Teachers give good guidance during literacy lessons about different forms of writing and the use of planning guides enabling pupils to bring greater structure to their writing. The use of paired discussion with a 'response partner' enables pupils to clarify and structure their ideas before sharing with the class during shared writing sessions. Their vocabulary though is not well developed and this limits their expression. However, teachers give strong emphasis to how authors use vocabulary and pupils are beginning to create more interest for the reader. Year 6, in creating their own version of the story of George's Marvellous Medicine show that they are developing an understanding of character drawing. For example, ' "Grandma, your surprise is ready," said George with a sneaky grin.' Pupils make suitable attempts at spelling and, by the age of eleven, usually spell correctly the more common words they use. Pupils who are doing less well tend to write less, make more errors and use a more limited vocabulary. The standard of pupils' handwriting continues to improve across the key stage and most pupils are able to write in a clear joined script, although the quality of the improvement is not always reflected in their work.

116. Teachers have a good understanding of how to teach basic literacy skills and plan work that builds on what pupils have done before. Teachers' plans are thorough and map out highly structured and clearly focused lessons. For the most part tasks are matched to the needs of the different ability groups within the class, although not enough is done to present greater challenge for higher attainers. There is a keen sense of purpose among all staff in promoting pupils' English skills. This is evident in the very good lessons where teachers display an enthusiasm for the subject; all pupils are fully involved through the use of discussion partners and white boards to jot down ideas. The outcomes of the good quality teaching are positive and pupils have consistently good attitudes towards their work and behave well. Support staff have good relationships with pupils and are effective in supporting pupils during group work so that pupils are motivated and make progress with their work. Teachers are beginning to make greater use of other subjects to promote language skills and to develop writing skills. This is better established in science than in other subjects, although good examples can be seen in other subjects; for example, in design and technology where pupils are given a structured plan to help them with the writing process. Teachers identify pupils who would benefit from extra support through checking how well the pupils do in tests. Because of this, additional support in literacy is effective in improving the work of lower attaining pupils and has a notable impact on rising standards. Computers are available before school and at lunch-time for pupils to use. In this time they use an "Open Integrated Learning System (OILS)" to work on English.

MATHEMATICS

117. The school's results in the 2000 National Curriculum mathematics tests for seven year olds were well below the national average. This was because the proportion of pupils achieving the higher than expected Level 3 was only half the national average. Eleven year olds achieved overall standards that were close to the national average. This was because a higher than average proportion achieved the expected Level 4, but the proportion of pupils achieving the higher than expected Level 5 was only a third of the national average. In comparison with similar schools, attainment by seven year olds is below average, while attainment by eleven year olds is well above average. Trends over time indicate a steady improvement in levels of attainment for both age groups. Despite a slight dip in attainment by seven year olds in the year 2000, the more recent results show this improvement is being maintained. Analyses of work and lesson observations during the inspection confirm that levels of attainment are being raised. It is evident that the percentage of pupils achieving the lower levels is decreasing and a higher proportion of pupils reach the national average. In the most recent National Curriculum tests 98 per cent of pupils achieved Level 2 or above at age seven, a significant improvement. The proportion achieving the higher than expected Level 3 has doubled. In the most recent National Curriculum tests for eleven year olds, 73 per cent achieved Level 4 or above, which is almost the same proportion as in 2000, but 33 per cent achieved the higher than expected Level 5, which is three times the proportion in 2000. Inspection evidence shows that the school has been successful in continuing the improvement noted in the last report, and has addressed the key issue of raising standards in mathematics. This is due to the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, the setting system used in Key Stage 2, the effective deployment of teaching assistants throughout the school and the consistently positive climate for learning. Pupils of all abilities including those who have special educational needs make good progress and the majority of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are on track to achieve in line with national standards. Given their low level of attainment on joining the school, pupils achieve well.

118. In Year 1, pupils compare objects to see which is heavier or lighter, they develop an awareness of two-dimensional shapes such as circles and hexagons and use coins to help understand the comparative values of money up to ten pence. Pupils have a sound understanding of key mathematical vocabulary such as 'add' 'total' and 'plus'. Pupils are beginning to understand place value and this understanding deepens in Year 2 when they recognise odd and even numbers and round numbers to the nearest ten. Pupils in Year 2 continue to use their knowledge of number well to calculate half of small amounts of money under a pound and to estimate and then measure familiar classroom items in metres and centimetres. Pupils make a good start in their understanding of data handling as they record information about shoe size and eye colour on a tally chart. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 can interpret data such as traffic passing school from a frequency chart. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' knowledge of time includes days of the week, months of the year as well as telling the time from an analogue clock. Pupils are secure in their knowledge of number bonds to twenty and use this knowledge to help solve mathematical problems in their heads.

119. In Years 3 and 4, pupils achieve standards that are in line with expectations for their age. They have a firm grasp of fractions being part of a whole and can competently draw the lines of symmetry on regular shapes. Pupils can identify different types of quadrilaterals. Pupils' knowledge and skill in using tally charts and block graphs develop well. Higher attaining pupils in Year 4 understand the process of surveying and analysing data when for example, they collected views about the Governments proposal to ban the eating of chocolate and snacks in public. Pupils in Year 5 can use calculators to check their work, know the different types of angles and are able to draw accurate angles. Higher attaining pupils in Year 5 use a line graph to convert pounds to dollars and plot co-ordinates on a four-quadrant axis. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils add, subtract, multiply and divide

competently. Lower attaining pupils use their knowledge of place value and tables to solve problems. All pupils appreciate that there are several ways of arriving at the right answer and confidently explain their reasoning to the rest of the class.

120. Pupils approach mathematics with confidence and enthusiasm. They co-operate well with their teachers and respond positively to the variety of activities, which are carefully matched to their needs. They enjoy the challenge of the lively and well-paced lessons. When given the opportunities to work in groups or with a partner, pupils respond well, they do not waste time and as well as developing co-operative skills they improve their speaking and listening skills as they discuss mathematical problems. The very positive relationships that are a strength of the school mean that pupils are comfortable with each other and the adults and so they learn well.

121. The quality of teaching is consistently good in both key stages and pupils learn well as a result. More than ninety percent of lessons seen were good or very good, one lesson was excellent and there was no unsatisfactory teaching.

122. There are consistently good features in every lesson. A strength of the teaching is the thorough planning based on the National Numeracy Strategy. This enables teachers, with good help from support staff, to prepare challenging and imaginative work. Lessons have clear objectives, which teachers share with their class. Teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations of pupils' attitudes to their work. This coupled with good classroom management means that pupils behave well, are keen to learn and enjoy the good quality learning opportunities provided in mathematics lessons. A noticeable feature of many lessons was the warm and friendly approach of teachers who make their lessons into happy experiences where pupils increase their self-esteem, become confident and enjoy the mathematical challenges of the lesson. Teachers throughout the school use good questioning techniques that encourage pupils to explain their reasoning and show the knowledge they have gained. Lessons in Key Stage 2 are taught in a setting system that is based on prior ability. This has worked very well as teaching groups are smaller and teachers are able to focus on the individual needs of all pupils. This has resulted in the majority of pupils achieving the nationally expected level and an increase in the number of pupils who exceed this level. A further feature of the good teaching is the organisation within lessons and the expectation that groups of pupils from Year 1 upwards will work independently during part of the lesson. This means that the teacher and assistant can focus on specific groups in the class without being distracted by the independent workers. Teachers are able to make good use of these opportunities to assess pupils' progress and make sure that pupils are meeting their mathematical targets. Teachers are very positive, they frequently remind pupils of the 'good learning' that is taking place in the lessons and at the end of lessons pupils are visibly proud of their achievements and keen to face the next challenge.

123. Numeracy is promoted in other subjects such as science where pupils use their knowledge of measuring, reading scales and understanding of line graphs in their scientific investigations. Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to support their mathematical learning by using information and communications technology, and this has a positive effect on standards being achieved in mathematics. During the week of inspection small groups of pupils consolidated their mathematical knowledge as they worked sensibly and independently in the computer suite.

124. Teachers mark pupils' work and write encouraging comments to help them improve. They modify lessons when necessary to go over work to clarify misunderstandings. Good learning is well supported by relevant classroom and corridor displays that summarise recent mathematical topics.

125. The newly appointed co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has good subject knowledge. The previous key issue of raising standards has been achieved. This is due to the consistently good teaching and the commitment of the co-ordinator and colleagues in raising standards. The co-ordinator will be monitoring teaching and the head teacher monitors planning. The school is well equipped with resources to teach the National Numeracy Strategy. There are good assessment procedures; these include pupil profiles that are completed half-termly and very good use of ongoing assessment that allows teachers to plan appropriately for their pupils. This means that in Key Stage 1 pupils work towards class targets and in Key Stage 2 pupils have individual mathematics targets. The school has achieved considerable improvement in mathematics since the last inspection.

SCIENCE

126. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in science are in line with national averages by the time pupils reach the age of 7 and by the time they leave school at the end of Year 6. At the time of the last report they were well below national standards overall, and pupils' scientific investigation skills were particularly poor throughout the school. Since then, good curriculum development, improvements in assessment and changes in teaching have been introduced. Standards across the whole school have risen as a result.

127. Current Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are on target to reach nationally expected levels by the end of the school year. Pupils make very good progress across the school as a whole, and achieve well from, initially, a very low level of understanding. There are no differences between the standards attained by boys and girls.

128. In 2000, teachers assessed pupils' standards in Year 2 as average compared to other schools nationally and above those of pupils from similar backgrounds. Standards rose in 2001, with very nearly all pupils reaching the level expected for seven-year-olds. However, data is not yet available to judge how this result compares to other schools.

129. The school's results in the national tests for eleven-year-olds have improved each year in recent years. In 2000, overall standards were below national averages, although they were in line with standards in similar schools. Results improved again in 2001, but once again, data is not yet available to enable comparisons with other schools to be made.

130. Science teaching is good throughout the school, and pupils learn well as a result. The curriculum is well planned, and teaching ensures that pupils develop sound knowledge and understanding of science facts and investigation techniques as they get older. Teachers make good links with the teaching of Literacy throughout the school. They emphasise the use of correct scientific vocabulary in class discussions, practical work and written tasks, and lessons contribute effectively to the development of pupils' speaking and writing skills.

131. In Year 1 and Year 2 pupils use vocabulary such as "attract" and "repel" when studying magnetism, "diet" and "molar" when studying growth. They understand basic principles for healthy living, and write sentences such as "Chips are not good for you when you eat them a lot." Pupils make predictions and record investigation results in simple tables and graphs, to show for example how the length of a shadow changes over a period of time. Teachers, ably assisted by classroom support staff, assess much of pupils' work orally, through good questioning in lessons. In a lesson on the five senses, for example, questions such as "What does this (curved) mirror do to you?" encouraged careful observation and good subsequent discussion of what pupils saw. This is an effective way to assess understanding that takes into account the pupils' limited writing skills.

132. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, they know how to carry out science investigations and understand the principle of a “fair test”. For example, a group of pupils explained that when they experimented with growing bean seeds last year, they varied the amounts of water, heat and light each received, but used sufficient samples so that the effects of each variable could be investigated independently of the others. Pupils’ investigation skills have improved well since the last inspection, due to an increased teaching emphasis on this strand of the work, including the adoption of a standard investigation procedure using a written template.

133. Teachers have a good understanding of what they teach. Good questioning develops pupils’ logical thinking well. Teachers explain work well and engage pupils in interesting discussions. For example, the explanation that when a substance dissolves in a liquid it does not actually disappear, and can be recovered by evaporation developed well pupils’ understanding of how to separate mixtures. The class then set up an experiment to recover salt and sugar from water solutions by evaporation. The lesson was a good extension of earlier work, where pupils had learned to separate solid mixtures by sieving, and suspensions, for example sand in water, by filtration.

134. Pupils have a secure understanding of plant and animal life cycles and food chains, and they know for example, how plants adapt to the habitat in which they live. They understand the principles that govern electrical circuits, and know for example, that adding extra bulbs into a series circuit will make them glow less brightly.

135. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make very good progress in science throughout the school, because they are well supported in lessons and teaching methods meet their needs effectively. However, teachers could make more demands of higher attaining pupils. Too frequently they set the same work for all pupils in the class, and rely too often on the use of worksheets that require just the completion of missing items, which do not stretch the higher attaining pupils sufficiently. This is reflected in the test results each year, where fewer than average pupils reach the higher levels of attainment. In 2000 for instance, the proportion was well below average, and was the principal reason why standards overall were below national averages.

136. Teachers manage classes well and relationships with pupils are very good. Teachers’ praise and encouragement motivates pupils to work well and do their best. Pupils respond positively. They enjoy science, they behave very well in lessons and work hard.

137. Since the last inspection there have been significant improvements in science. The school has adopted a new scheme of work, and has set up a thorough and effective system for tracking pupils’ progress. The science co-ordinator leads development of the subject well. She analyses assessment data to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils’ standards, the curriculum and teaching. She monitors colleagues’ teaching, and the feedback given contributes well to increasing teacher confidence. The school has sufficient learning resources to support all aspects of science, but teachers are only just beginning to use information and communications technology as an integral part of teaching and learning. This development is, however, already helping to raise standards.

ART AND DESIGN

138. It was only possible to see a limited number of art and design lessons during the inspection. However, these observations coupled with an examination of pupils’ work indicate that pupils in Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress and attain average standards and that pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress and attain standards that are above national expectations. The attainment of older pupils is largely due to effective specialist teaching.

Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to the others in their age group. Standards in the subject have improved in the older age group since the last inspection.

139. It was not possible due to time tabling difficulties to observe any teaching of art and design in Years 1 and 2 and so no judgement can be made on the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1. The planning in these years is appropriate and follows national guidelines. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is very good. Lessons are very well planned and organised. Work is challenging and gives pupils a real sense of achievement. The specialist teacher gives clear instructions often added to by expert demonstration. This brings to pupils a much more immediate understanding of what they can achieve if they master the skills shown. Behaviour is very good and this means that the teacher can offer a wide range of activities to pupils. For example in one lesson several pupils worked together on a number of large paintings while others worked with pencil to explore perspective. The teacher successfully encourages pupils to take responsibility for their learning and their behaviour. She trusts them to be responsible, as when she invites pupils take a digital camera around the school to produce a good range of different views of the building.

140. From examination of the work of pupils in Years 1 and 2 it is clear that standards for these pupils are in line with national expectations. Pupils experiment with colour and mixed media. There is good use of information and communications technology to generate patterns that are then printed and displayed. Pupils are encouraged to develop their ideas with pencil and paint and produce interesting landscapes. Older pupils use sketchbooks appropriately to explore their ideas. The marking of these sketchbooks and other work by the teacher is very good and gives very good guidance and support for pupils. Pupils experiment by studying and exploring with paint the characteristics of well-known artists such as Klee and Van Gogh. The work they produce, especially the large paintings worked on by a number of pupils taking turns, is often very good. Several pieces are on display around the school. Their work on cave paintings using pastel and charcoal demonstrates good awareness of colour and style.

141. The subject co-ordinator has only recently taken up the post that was previously held by the deputy head teacher who built up the subject to the high profile it now enjoys in the school. The curriculum is designed to reach out beyond the classroom. As well as a playground project in which pupils worked with specialists to paint murals, pupils paint scenery and make artefacts for a local pantomime company. The display of art around the school considerably enhances the environment.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

142. Standards in design and technology are broadly in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. They have improved since the last inspection, when pupils' design skills in particular were limited. The improvements are due to the introduction of a new scheme of work and staff training, which has improved their confidence and understanding of how to teach the subject effectively. It was possible to observe just two design and technology lessons during the inspection, but displays of pupils' work show that they are taught a sufficiently broad range of topics. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily. The evidence available indicates that the quality of teaching and pupils' learning is satisfactory overall.

143. In Years 1 and 2 pupils make small finger puppets. They draw illustrations to show what they intend to make, they list the materials they will require, and how they will join them – "I will sew and glue". Finished articles are well made using running stitch and over stitch. A "Dragon" display in a corridor shows good links between design and technology, science and English. Pupils investigated what materials they would use to make various parts of the

dragon and concluded, for example, “My favourite material for the dragon’s scales is this one (foil) because it is shiny.”

144. The Year 2 lesson observed was well planned, deliberately exploiting these cross-curricular links, as pupils explored a variety of fruit and vegetables. Good questions such as “How does the skin feel?” encouraged pupils to talk about an orange in the early part of the lesson. In later discussions pupils observed closely the interiors of apples, cabbages and other items of food and wrote about what they saw. Close support for each group ensured that pupils of all abilities were well supported and learned well. Good oral assessment through discussion, with sensitive correction of work, motivated the pupils well, and they consequently worked hard.

145. In Key Stage 2, pupils follow a standard procedure when designing and making products. This has been introduced since the last inspection specifically to address the weaknesses identified at that time. It is beginning to be effective in raising standards of work. Pupils work to a design brief, draw labelled diagrams to show what they intend to make, and indicate details such as methods of fixing and construction. They list the materials they will need and how they intend to proceed. Finally they evaluate the quality of their work. In the Year 4 lesson seen, and in a wall display of work by younger pupils in the key stage, drawings were not sufficiently developed to show more than the merest outline of intentions. However, the quality of drawings improves as pupils get older, and is at the standard expected by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6. For example, drawings of motor-powered vehicles were detailed, included plans and other views, and were drawn with a good sense of proportion and scale.

146. Pupils make a range of products such as hats, wheeled vehicles that include a cam mechanism to make a head nod, and biscuits. Products are well constructed. Pupils measure and cut materials accurately, and assemble work neatly and robustly. Products are finished with appropriate decoration and are attractive.

147. Pupils evaluate satisfactorily the products that they make. A display of hats for example, made by Year 5 and Year 6 pupils, was accompanied by comments such as “I found it easier to make a cone shape than I would if I made a rounded shape”. Discussion with a group of pupils revealed how they had had to alter their designs in the light of their ongoing work, although these changes were not recorded at the time.

148. The co-ordinator works effectively to raise standards. She has supervised the changes in the curriculum that have been introduced, and has supported teachers by observing their lessons, providing feedback, and arranging for in-service training. These developments have contributed well to the rising standards in pupils’ work seen since the last inspection.

GEOGRAPHY

149. Only one lesson in geography was seen during the inspection. No geography lessons are taking place in Key Stage 1 or Years 3 and 4 until after half term. Too little evidence was available at this stage in the term to form a secure judgement about pupils’ attainment in either key stage. However, there was sufficient evidence of pupils’ previous work, displays and planning to show that geography is appropriately planned into the curriculum.

150. The last inspection report identified areas that needed to be developed in the subject. There was no planned programme of work and resources to support teaching were insufficient. The school has made satisfactory progress in these areas. It is making use of the national guidance for geography to support teaching and ensure all areas of the

curriculum are addressed. Although there are now more resources, these need extending. In particular there is a need for more up-to-date atlases.

151. By the end of Year 2 pupils have been introduced to the concept of Great Britain and locate the four countries on a map. Through the travels of Barnaby Bear, they are becoming increasingly aware of places beyond their own locality. They draw simple maps showing features of the local area. Pupils continue to develop their mapping skills as they move through the school and by the end of Year 6 they are extensive. They locate places and geographical features on maps using simple grid references. They know how to use a key and use atlases to name and locate some of the world's tallest mountain ranges and longest rivers. Their learning is put to good use on the visit to Scarborough. Pupils learn about rivers and the effects of flooding and drought. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the water cycle and use the terms 'condensation' and 'evaporation' appropriately.

152. As only one geography lesson was observed during the inspection it is not possible to make a judgement about the quality of teaching. The quality of teaching in the one lesson seen was satisfactory. Pupils began to collect evidence to support a study of the local environment. They collected data about traffic in Mixenden Road to help them answer the question "Is traffic a big issue in Mixenden?" They were motivated by the opportunity to work outside the classroom and carried out the survey enthusiastically. Their behaviour was very good. The teacher made clear her expectations and used a good balance of questioning and telling to develop pupils' understanding of the need for sufficient and reliable information if a survey was to have validity.

153. The quality of pupils' written work is not sufficiently high. Some tasks are undemanding, such as colouring a map, and information is often superficial. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding through personal research.

HISTORY

154. Due to the timetabling of the subject, it was only possible to observe one history lesson during the inspection. The quality of teaching in the lesson observed was satisfactory. Due to the stage of the school year there was little work in pupils' books for examination. It is not therefore possible to make judgements on the quality of teaching or pupils' attainment in history.

155. Planning for history follows recognised national guidelines and is good. The subject is well resourced and there is good use of specialist teaching in Years 5 and 6. Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to go on an annual residential visit that makes good use of the historical resources offered by Whitby Abbey and Scarborough Castle. Overall, the leadership and management of history by the subject co-ordinator is good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

156. At the time of the last inspection, pupils' standards in information and communications technology were below national expectations throughout the school, due to lack of resources and restricted opportunities for teaching. Since then, within a space of three years, the school has made exceptional progress in raising standards. Standards are now in line with national expectations by the time pupils reach seven years of age, and Year 6 pupils' standards exceed national expectations.

157. This rapid improvement is due to three main factors. A new co-ordinator started at the school shortly after the last inspection. She has led the development of the subject with

exceptional drive and vision. She has gained both local and national recognition for her curriculum development work. Alongside this dynamic leadership, and as a direct consequence of it, the school has invested heavily in developing teaching resources for information and communications technology. They are now excellent. A decision was made to provide specialist teaching by the co-ordinator in small groups throughout the school. This ensures that pupils benefit from consistent, high quality teaching. A skilled support assistant, who takes almost equal responsibility for teaching, very ably assists the co-ordinator.

158. By the time pupils reach seven, they have learned to use computers confidently. They use the mouse and keyboard to “logon” to the computer network, and to choose different options when running computer software. They have a secure knowledge and understanding of terminology such as “menu bar” and “clipart”. Limited literacy skills inhibit the production of lengthy items of word-processing, but pupils write short poems about “butterflies”, for example, and learn how to combine text with pictures when adding captions to illustrations. They explore simple computer simulations and models, for example by “dressing” the on-screen Teddy Bear, and by adding name labels to parts of the body on a picture of a young child on the computer screen. Pupils have a good rudimentary knowledge of control technology, gained through operating a range of equipment such as tape recorders, and by programming a “robot” to move around the floor following simple instructions.

159. By the age of eleven, pupils have developed good information and communications technology skills as a result of challenging and interesting work. With the school year barely started, Year 6 pupils are already producing work in some aspects of the subject at a standard beyond that expected by the time they leave the school. Discussion with a group of pupils shows that they already use the Internet to find information and to send electronic messages. They choose topics such as “road safety” and “the body” in developing multimedia presentations for younger pupils. They skilfully combine text, pictures (including those from a digital camera that they use themselves), and sound clips into attractive slideshows for their young audience. They use a wide range of technical effects such as animation to enhance their work. In work on control technology, they write sequences of instructions to “program” a washing machine or to operate a car park barrier controlled by traffic lights.

160. Work in the data handling and modelling strands of information and communications technology is less well developed, but standards are in line with those expected for this stage of the school year. Pupils use databases and spreadsheets to analyse simple sets of data. They use terminology such as “record” and “field” correctly. They enter data into the computer and carry out simple “searches” for example, to identify likely suspects for a crime from a file of criminals. They know how to use formulae in spreadsheets to help them for example in planning a shopping expedition with a limited budget.

161. The quality of teaching and learning are both very good throughout the school. Sometimes teaching is excellent. The co-ordinator has high expectations of what pupils can achieve, and very skilful teaching enables pupils to achieve well. All pupils make very good progress, starting from a very low initial level of understanding. The policy to teach half class groups using the computer suite is very effective. It ensures that all pupils have good individual access to a computer, and enables the teacher and support assistant to provide a good level of support in lessons. However, despite this, there are times when pupils are unable to make progress because they have to wait for help when they are stuck. In one lesson seen, pupils were unable to develop their newspaper advertisements because they did not know what to write. Although they knew how to operate the program, and how to use technical devices to manipulate the text and pictures they had loaded, they were unable to develop their ideas without help due to their limited literacy skills. Consequently, they had to wait their turn for help from the teacher, and they made less progress over the course of the lesson than they might.

162. The curriculum is well planned, and is underpinned by a good system for assessing and recording pupils' progress. Because teaching is undertaken by the information and communications technology specialist, the curriculum is taught consistently effectively. Lessons have a clear focus, they are practical and "hands-on". Each module of work is carefully planned to build skills and knowledge in a progressive manner. Because of the high standards expected, pupils of all abilities are challenged well by their work. They are expected to work hard to reach the highest standards of which they are capable. Pupils respond very well to these challenges. They concentrate extremely well, which enables the teacher to focus on teaching without distractions, and contributes very well to the progress they make.

163. Although the scale of information and communications technology development is already impressive, it is set to continue. The school is recognised as a "lead school" within Halifax, and the latest curriculum development initiative in which the school is involved centres on using information and communications technology as a tool to develop pupils' writing. This is in recognition of a real school need, and is to be supervised by the Durham based Education Action Zone team.

164. The school has taken very good steps to develop the information and communications technology knowledge and expertise of all the staff. All teachers are allocated a laptop computer for their personal use. They have all undertaken a programme of professional development, including observation of lessons taken by the co-ordinator to demonstrate good practice.

165. These initiatives are beginning to bear fruit. Increasingly teachers use computers to prepare teaching materials. Having established good standards among the pupils through effective specialist teaching, the next planned step is for teachers to give pupils opportunities to use their skills in subjects across the curriculum. All pupils receive a weekly lesson in mathematics time, using an "Open Integrated Learning System (OILS)" that manages the work they do and monitors their progress. Computers are available before school and at lunch-time for pupils to use. In this time they use the same OILS system to work on English. Opportunities to use information and communications technology in other subjects are beginning to develop.

166. The enthusiasm for information and communications technology is not confined to the school alone. It makes its facilities available to parents and others in the local community. There has been an encouraging response to courses to learn how to use the Internet, and currently there is a small group working towards the "European Computing Driving Licence", an internationally recognised qualification.

MUSIC

167. It is not possible to judge overall standards in music at either key stage because of insufficient evidence being available for inspection. However, the quality of singing is broadly in line with that expected nationally. Pupils sing hymns such as "All Things Bright and Beautiful" and "When Your Father Made the World" in tune, with a satisfactory tone. Singing is enthusiastic but unforced. The video of "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang", the latest school production, was good. The performance was well rehearsed, and singing was lively, with good attention to diction and rhythm.

168. Singing is taught well in hymn practices by the headteacher, who is a music specialist. Good attention to singing technique, such as correct breathing, adds significantly to the quality of singing that pupils achieve. He sets high standards, and engenders enthusiasm amongst the pupils. Consequently they join in well and they are keen to do well.

169. Class music is taught by the headteacher and by class teachers. No lessons were seen in Key Stage 1. Three lessons were observed in Key Stage 2. The overall quality of teaching and learning in this key stage is good. It is very good when lessons are taken by the headteacher. However, one lesson seen was unsatisfactory, because the work was undemanding, unduly repetitious, and did not lead to significant development of pupils' musical knowledge or standards of performance.

170. In other lessons, and in the hymn practice, pupils made good progress as a result of lively teaching and demanding work. A very good lesson seen covered all aspects of music most effectively. Pupils explored how music can be used descriptively to represent different animals. Skilful combination of listening and composing activities, in a carefully organised and briskly-run lesson, resulted in pupils making good progress in their musical creativity. Throughout, teacher and pupils made good use of musical terminology such as "timbre" and "dynamics" to explain their thinking. The lesson very effectively built well on pupils' earlier work, and set the scene well for future development of pupils' compositions in subsequent lessons.

171. The headteacher coordinates and leads the development of music, and does this well. He takes demonstration lessons for teachers, so that they can observe good practice. He organises the annual musical production and celebrations of special events, such as Christmas and Harvest Festival, training all the pupils who take part. As a result of their enjoyment of school music, several pupils have joined local theatrical societies and take part in their productions. Participation in school and other productions contributes well to pupils' personal development.

172. The scheme of work for music is satisfactory. It meets National Curriculum requirements, and is currently under review so that improvements may be made. There are sufficient learning resources for class teaching, although insufficient use is made at present of information and communications technology to support teaching and learning.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

173. Owing to the organisation of the different physical education activities and the arrangement of the timetable it was not possible to observe gymnastics in either key stage, dance in Key Stage 1 or games in Key Stage 2. Only one physical education lesson was seen in Year 1 and three dance lessons Key Stage 2. There is, therefore, too little evidence to make an overall judgement about standards. However, attainment in dance is on course to be in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6.

174. Pupils in all year groups understand the purpose of the warm-up and cool down sessions. Given the opportunity to choose warm-up activities Year 6 pupils demonstrated a good understanding of the type and purpose of activity. In the lessons seen achievement was generally good. Year 1 pupils showed that, with advice and practice they could improve their underarm throwing skills. They began to develop an understanding of defending skills and extend their first attempts by making themselves wider, moving from side to side and back and forth to obscure their partners' view of the goal. The teacher's lively and enthusiastic approach motivated pupils who greatly enjoyed the activities and co-operated well with their partner.

175. Opportunities to evaluate each other's work helps Year 6 pupils to understand the features that make for good performance in dance. They recognise the importance of good listening and getting to know the music so that they can anticipate changes and match their

movements accordingly. They realise the importance of using a range of movement to create interest.

176. During the lesson pupils improve their use of space, extend the range of movement using large and small gestures. In the best performances pupils watch their partner carefully to ensure that their movements are synchronised and matched to the music. Teachers' positive and encouraging manner helped pupils to overcome any initially self-consciousness. Pupils enjoyed the activities and worked hard to meet the teachers' expectations. In only one lesson was pupils' reaction to the music and activities rather silly and some were inattentive throughout the session. Management of these pupils was unsatisfactory and pupils did not achieve what the teacher had intended.

177. Physical education is taught in appropriate units of work that cover gymnastics, games, swimming and dance. The school has a well-planned programme of swimming, which begins in Year 3. Teachers make good use of the national guidance for physical education to plan interesting and enjoyable lessons. The quality of teaching in the lesson seen was good. Lessons were well planned and teachers' clear explanation of what pupils were to do and achieve helped them to understand the tasks and achieve well. Where teaching was very good, the teacher knew the music well and used his musical knowledge to explain and demonstrate the relationship between the music and movement. The lesson was very well structured so that pupils build up their dance in small manageable steps. Since the last inspection teachers make greater use of pupils' evaluation of their own work and that of others to focus attention on what they do well and what improvements could be made.

178. In all lessons classroom assistants are used well to support pupils with special educational needs. The encouragement and guidance provided ensures that these pupils are able to take a full and successful part in physical education lessons.

179. Although the school endeavours to provide pupils with a full programme of games, they are restricted due to the lack of access to a playing field. The school has developed links with local football clubs that have made a positive contribution to the teaching of skills. As at the time of the last inspection, there are good opportunities for extra-curricular activities, which also give pupils an opportunity to play competitively.

180. Physical education is well managed by the subject co-ordinator. There is an effective programme of monitoring pupils' achievement in the subject and taking effective action to modify work as required. The school has very good plans for further improving pupils standards and under the guidance of the co-ordinator, staff are working effectively as a team to implement change.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

181. From examination of pupils' past work, wall displays and lesson observations it is clear that at both key stages standards of attainment in religious education are average for pupils of all ages. All pupils including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.

182. By age 7 pupils know that there are special days in the calendar when Christians and followers of other religions such as Jews and Hindus celebrate aspects of their faith. During the inspection they learnt about the Jewish New Year, which took place during the week. They have satisfactory knowledge of some stories and events linked with these celebrations. In discussion they show they appreciate the importance of belonging to a family. They are aware that people belong to a range of communities of different faiths. They understand that the Bible is a special book for Christians and others and can relate some well-known stories

from it. They are aware of a range of figures such as Florence Nightingale, who provide examples of spiritual and moral values.

183. By Year 6 pupils' knowledge and understanding increase as they continue to study the themes begun in Years 1 and 2. They gain in knowledge of Islam and can recall some of the stories and identify some of the key figures and symbols of a range of faiths. They learn about the way prayer can be used to voice the aspirations of communities like theirs and individuals like them. They know that the Bible and other religious texts offer common sense rules that can be used to advise on behaviour. They also grasp more firmly the concept of conscience and the need for individuals to take responsibility for their actions.

184. The quality of teaching of religious education is good, an improvement on the situation during the last inspection. Much of the religious education syllabus is taught through discussion and teachers are good at valuing the contributions pupils make in order to encourage them to develop their speaking and listening skills. Teachers have high expectations of the behaviour of their pupils and the consequence is well-ordered lessons. Teachers prepare classroom assistants well. They take a full part in lessons, working with individuals or groups as the need arises. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject. Their planning is good. They effectively run the sessions where adults and pupils sit in a circle to discuss matters. Teachers have developed good relationships with their pupils who listen well, take turns to speak and present their thoughts and feelings in a mature and well thought out manner. Pupils are co-operative and are keen to contribute. They listen very intently to the messages they receive in assemblies.

185. The leadership of the subject by the co-ordinator is good. It is planned well in harmony with the school's personal, social and health education curriculum and the programme of acts of collective worship. The consequence is a rounded and rich experience embedded in the context of personal and social development.