

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ACKTON PASTURES PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Castleford.

LEA area: Wakefield

Unique reference number: 108241

Headteacher: Mr R Jaggar

Reporting inspector: Mr J J Peacock  
25344

Dates of inspection: 11 - 14 March 2002

Inspection number: 244653

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, Junior and Nursery

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3-11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: College Grove  
Whitwood  
Castleford

Postcode: WF10 5NS

Telephone number: 01977 723030

Fax number: 01977 723030

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr G Atkinson

Date of previous inspection: 6 October 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members |                |                      | Subject responsibilities   | Aspect responsibilities  |
|--------------|----------------|----------------------|--|--|
| 25344        | Mr J J Peacock | Registered inspector | Mathematics<br>Physical education  | What sort of school is it?<br><br>The school's results and pupils' achievements<br><br>How well are pupils taught?<br><br>School improvement                               |
| 12674        | Mr R Collinson | Lay inspector        |  | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.<br><br>How well does the school care for its pupils?<br><br>How well does the school work in partnership with parents? |
| 16447        | Mrs R Grant    | Team inspector       | History<br>Geography<br>Religious education<br>Foundation Stage  | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?   |
| 8420         | Mrs V Roberts  | Team inspector       | English<br>Art<br>Design and technology<br>Equal opportunities<br>Special educational needs<br>English as an additional language | Assessment   |
| 27679        | Mrs S Twaits   | Team inspector       | Science<br>Information and communication technology<br>Music   | Leadership and management  |

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London WC2B 6SE

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This Community Primary School is in an Education Action Zone. It was formed by the amalgamation of two smaller schools in 1993 and moved into a new building in 1994. It caters for pupils from three to eleven years of age and is about the same size as other schools nationally. There are 230 pupils on roll, 127 boys and 103 girls in 9 classes. In addition, there is a full-time nursery with places for 60 children on a part-time basis. Numbers are almost the same as they were at the previous inspection. Pupils come from the immediate area of the school, which is situated on the western outskirts of Castleford. It is a former mining area and there are high levels of unemployment. The attainment of most children when they start in the nursery is below average. A significant proportion has behavioural problems as well as learning difficulties.

About 55 per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals but not all take them. This is well above the national average. The school has 94 pupils with special educational needs, which is well above average and nine have a statement of special educational needs. There are five pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds but only one speaks English as an additional language. Pupil mobility is significant with 20 joining and 9 leaving during term time in the last full academic year.

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

Against a background of erratic attendance, pupil mobility, a higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs and a small but significant number with behavioural difficulties, the school faces an uphill battle to improve its low standards. It is important, therefore that good consistent strategies are in place to enable all staff to work together as an effective team. Although the quality of teaching is satisfactory, the pace of change under the guidance of the headteacher, appointed just after the previous inspection, has not been rapid enough to bring about much improvement in standards. However, governors and parents agree that the atmosphere for learning has vastly improved, along with the behaviour of the majority of pupils. Attendance levels remain below the national average in spite of school-based initiatives and careful monitoring. Weaknesses in leadership and management, which still need to be resolved, include developing an effective role for the deputy headteacher and subject co-ordinators. When all factors are considered, along with the average level of funding for each pupil, the school is providing satisfactory value for money.

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

- The nursery gives children a good start to school and they make good progress throughout the Foundation Stage, which covers their time in the nursery and reception class.
- Computer skills are well taught in Years 2 and 6 and all pupils, including those with special educational needs have good access to modern technology in their lessons.
- Standards are above average in physical education.
- Links with parents and the community are good.
- Pupils' welfare is well catered for in school.

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

- Standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
- Aspects of teaching such as teachers' expectations of pupils, planning and marking, in order to raise standards.
- Leadership and management to increase the pace of change.
- Attendance.

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

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

The level of improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory, overall. This is reflected in a more orderly learning environment in classrooms and much better behaviour of pupils around the school. Although attendance figures have not improved significantly, good procedures exist to monitor absence and encourage and reward pupils for attending school. Three key issues were identified in October 1997. The school staff and governors have worked hard to bring improvement in each. However, the many difficulties they face means that progress in some has not been rapid enough to bring about a significant level of improvement. Teachers' management and control of pupils in lessons, for example, has improved a great deal along with the pace of lessons.

However, their expectations of pupils and the presentation of pupils' completed work remain as weaknesses. Standards remain well below average in national tests for 11-year-olds but have clearly improved in information and communication technology and physical education. The School Development Plan identifies the correct priorities and sets detailed targets for improvement. However, the role of subject co-ordinators remains underdeveloped and monitoring procedures for the evaluation of the quality of teaching are not sufficiently rigorous. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented and these are helping to improve standards in English and mathematics. The school is well on course to meet its own targets set for English and mathematics in the tests for 11-year-olds in 2002.

## 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 |
|                 | 1999          | 2000 | 2001 | 2001            |
| English         | E*            | E    | E*   | E*              |
| mathematics     | E*            | E*   | E    | E               |
| science         | E*            | E*   | E*   | E*              |

| Key                |    |
|--------------------|----|
| well above average | A  |
| above average      | B  |
| Average            | C  |
| below average      | D  |
| well below average | E  |
| Very low           | E* |

The above table shows clearly that standards in comparison to all schools have not improved in English and science but that there is a small improvement in mathematics. In English and science, the results are in the lowest five per cent nationally. The comparison with similar schools is based on those with a similar number of pupils taking free school meals; 35 to 50 per cent. However, about 55 per cent are eligible for free school meals and when this is taken into account the similar schools comparison is at least one grade higher. Girls tend to outperform the boys. Many boys lack motivation as they get older and there is also a much higher proportion of boys on the school's register for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils are set individual targets for English and mathematics following an early assessment of their potential and their progress towards these is carefully tracked each term.

A detailed scrutiny of pupils' completed work and lesson observations confirms pupils achieve satisfactorily against the individual targets set for them throughout the junior department of the school. Standards in English, mathematics, science are below those normally expected by the time pupils are aged 11. This judgement takes account of the 46 per cent of pupils in the current Year 6 who have special educational needs. The progress of these pupils is satisfactory with all achieving as well as they can.

By the time children are at the end of their reception year, all have made good progress and most achieve well to attain the Early Learning Goals in the six areas of learning which make up the Foundation Stage curriculum. Their creative development is a strength. Inspection evidence shows that pupils' achievements are also satisfactory in the infant classes; standards of attainment for seven-year-olds are in line with the national average in English and mathematics and below average in science.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect                  | Comment  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Satisfactory. This judgement reflects some very good attitudes and some negative attitudes shown by a small number of pupils. Most pupils enjoy being at school and show a genuine commitment and desire to learn. |



|  |   |
|--|---|
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms    | Satisfactory, overall. No oppressive behaviour was observed during the inspection. This accurately reflects the school's aims for good behaviour from all pupils. A few pupils lack self-control and behave badly. There have been 11 fixed-term exclusions so far this year. |
| Personal development and relationships | Satisfactory. The relationships between pupils and with teachers are satisfactory, helping to build mutual respect and trust.   |
| Attendance                             | Unsatisfactory, as the rate is 2.2 per cent below the national average. Pupils are usually punctual. Unauthorised absence is well above average.  |

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

*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.*

In the 1997 inspection, the quality of teaching was satisfactory, overall with one in five lessons being unsatisfactory. Much work has been undertaken to implement procedures to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and improve the quality but as yet, these are not covering all subjects well enough. As a result, the overall quality of teaching is still satisfactory but with far fewer unsatisfactory lessons. Half of the sixty lessons seen on this inspection were either good or very good and only two were unsatisfactory and one was poor. This represents a significant improvement and is beginning to have a noticeable impact on the standards pupils achieve in the classroom. In the Foundation Stage, the overall quality is good. This is giving children a good start to school and helping all to make good progress towards the Early Learning Goals.

Most aspects of teaching are satisfactory. As a result, the climate for learning is satisfactory. There is strong commitment to give all pupils the best possible chance to succeed. All are fully included in all activities and most work hard in lessons. A strength is the way teachers and support staff manage and control pupils, particularly those with challenging behaviour. This minimizes the disruption to lessons, benefiting all pupils. Other strengths are how well computers are used in lessons and the quality of teaching in physical education. The teaching of higher-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs is satisfactory, overall. Weaknesses exist in teachers' planning, their expectations of pupils, and marking. Too often pupils of all abilities are given the same work to do, completed work is poorly presented and marking gives little indication about possible improvements.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect  | Comment  |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum   | Good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory elsewhere. Statutory requirements are met. Extra-curricular provision is satisfactory. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is good. The time allocated to each subject varies from year to year and needs reviewing. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs   | Good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory elsewhere. Pupils are too often given the same work as more able pupils.   |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Satisfactory provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Provision for their cultural development is good. Pupils understand and appreciate the similarities and the differences between world religions.   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Very good procedures exist for ensuring pupils' personal well-being. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and attendance are particularly thorough. |
|--|---|

The school actively develops the partnership with parents and they are supportive. Parents' views of the different aspects of the school are mostly positive.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect   | Comment   |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Unsatisfactory. The dedicated headteacher works extremely hard and has achieved much in four years. However, he now needs to delegate more responsibility to key staff and clearly define their roles and responsibilities. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities             | Satisfactory. Some governors carry out their duties well with the best interests of pupils in mind but meetings are often not well attended.  |
| The school's evaluation of its performance                       | Unsatisfactory. Standards of attainment and the quality of teaching are not rigorously monitored, allowing weaknesses to go undetected. More decisive action is needed to quicken the pace of improvement.                  |
| The strategic use of resources                                   | Satisfactory. Financial management is sound and best value is sought in all expenditure. The school makes good use of new technology.   |

The above average number of support staff make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. The accommodation is good and resources are plentiful. Attractive displays celebrate pupils' work and enhance the quality of the learning environment.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most  | What parents would like to see improved   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils like school and they make good progress.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• Parents feel comfortable about approaching school.</li> <li>• Pupils are expected to work hard.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The school helps pupils to become more mature.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour in school.</li> <li>• The amount of homework.</li> <li>• Information about pupils' progress.</li> <li>• The school working closer with parents.</li> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul> |

Inspectors fully agree with most of parents' positive responses. The school is well led and managed by the headteacher but weak aspects such as the delegation of duties to senior staff and procedures for monitoring teaching make leadership and management unsatisfactory, overall. Inspectors disagree with all but one of the negative responses. Compared to similar schools, homework is satisfactory and there are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to take part in activities outside normal lessons. Behaviour has improved markedly and good links exist with parents. Inspectors agree that reports on progress could be better.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The previous inspection in 1997 reported that standards for eleven-year-olds were in line with the national average in English and mathematics and below average in science. The national test results for eleven-year-olds in 1997 and every year since then show standards to be either well below average or very low in all three subjects, with most being very low. The headteacher, appointed after that inspection, has faced an uphill battle to improve standards. Recently, the Local Education Authority has offered additional support to the school by way of advice from its education staff. They have helped the school to contend with well above average numbers of pupils with special educational needs, a significant level of pupil mobility amounting to thirteen per cent of all full-time pupils, challenging behaviour from a small minority and a lack of motivation or interest shown by some older boys. There is some evidence of improvement. However, the pace of change has been slow. Inspectors are, nevertheless, reassured by the determination and commitment of the headteacher and the improving behaviour which results in little disruption to lessons. The determination to raise standards is shared by all who work in the school. The stability of staffing, with only one new teacher joining the school and none leaving since it was opened, means that teachers know the pupils well and can build mutual respect and trust, so improving the climate for learning.
2. Children enter the nursery with a wide range of attainment but for most it is below average. Many begin the nursery with below average skills in speaking and listening. Good teaching enables all children to quickly settle into school routines and approach their learning positively. The part-time teacher is supported very well by the conscientious nursery nurses, parent volunteers and, on occasions, students. Children transfer to the reception classes having made good progress in most areas. However, because of the low starting point, many still experience difficulty with their writing skills and with their knowledge and understanding of the world. The good quality of teaching is maintained in the reception class. During the Foundation Stage, which covers children's time in the nursery and reception class, all children make good progress. Most are well placed to attain the Early Learning Goals in their personal and social development and in their mathematical and physical development by the time they are ready to transfer to Year 1. Their creative development is a strength and many achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area well before the end of their reception year. In the case of their writing skills, which are an important aspect of communication, language and literacy and their knowledge and understanding of the world, many do not attain the Early Learning Goals set for them in the Foundation Stage curriculum before moving to Year 1 and the National Curriculum.
3. Inspection findings show that attainment for seven-year-olds in English and mathematics is in line with the national average, and in science it is below average. This is the same as in the previous inspection in October 1997 for English and mathematics, but a decline in standards for science. The school has consistently tried to improve standards in all three subjects, with some success. The introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and an improvement in aspects of teaching such as class discipline and the assessment of progress are beginning to have an impact. The school's results are largely dependent on the proportion of pupils in each year group with special educational needs.
4. In the 2001 national tests for seven-year-olds, pupils results compared to all schools nationally were in line with the national average in reading, well above in writing and well below in mathematics. The above average absence rate and pupil mobility may be two additional factors causing the widely fluctuating results. The trend in results from 1997 is consistently below the national trend. However, in 2001 there is a marked upturn in pupils test results in reading, writing and mathematics. When the school's performance is compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, the extent of pupils' achievements can be appreciated more as their performance was well above average in reading and writing but remained below average in mathematics. Teacher assessments in science show the number achieving the expected Level 2 or above was very high, being in the top five per cent nationally. The proportion achieving at the higher Level 3 was in line with the national average. On inspection, the overall attainment in science for seven-year-olds was judged to be below the national average mainly because of the number of pupils with special educational needs in the year group.

5. In English, current work in Year 2 shows that standards are in line with those expected nationally. Pupils are provided with regular opportunities to express themselves in class discussions. The lack of self-discipline by many has a negative effect on their speaking and listening skills as they fail to pay attention to what others are saying. Reading is taught effectively, enabling pupils to develop their phonic skills well. They have good strategies for reading unfamiliar words. The close liaison between home and school, with parents regularly hearing their children read, is most certainly helping to improve standards. Pupils are provided with sufficient opportunities to write in most subjects, and teachers are following a clear action plan, aimed at improving spelling and sentence structures in an attempt to raise standards. In the literacy sessions, pupils are provided with a good range of writing opportunities such as re-telling stories and composing letters or poems. Most form their letters correctly using a joined style of handwriting. However, the standards achieved when practising handwriting are not transferred to other work and written work is often untidy.
6. In mathematics at Year 2, attainment is in line with the national average with pupils achieving well in relation to their prior attainment. This is mostly due to the effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, which has had a marked effect on standards in mental mathematics in particular. Pupils work out sums involving addition and subtraction, multiplication and division of numbers up to ten quickly. They count forwards and backwards in twos, threes, fives, and tens accurately and have a good grasp of the qualities of regular two-dimensional shapes such as squares, triangles, and circles. Much work of a practical nature is undertaken in science. In Year 2, for example, pupils know the names of different types of mini-beasts and are able to sort insects into groups by observing their characteristics. The overall standard of pupils' work is below that expected nationally.
7. Pupils attain standards, which are in line with those normally expected for seven-year-olds in information and communication technology (ICT), art and design, geography and music. The effective use of computers and a suitable range of programs available for pupils to use as part of their work in most subjects account for the improvement in standards in information and communication technology since the previous inspection. In art and design, a scrutiny of pupils completed work shows that they maintain the good creative start in early years through sound opportunities for observational drawing. Teachers are guided well by a clear scheme of work for music. Pupils sing enthusiastically in assemblies and in music lessons and most can pick out a simple rhythm and maintain it. During the inspection there was no opportunity to evaluate how well pupils listen to and appraise music. The standards achieved in geography are due to sound planning and teaching, giving pupils a clear understanding of their area. There was insufficient evidence to form a reliable judgement about standards in design and technology and history. This was also the case in religious education. The school does however, plan the curriculum to take close account of the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Standards in physical education are above expectations mainly because of the very good facilities, which exist at the school along with the very good resources and good quality of teaching.
8. The satisfactory achievement of pupils after starting Year 1, and the standards they attain by the age of seven, are a reflection of the improvements in teaching and pupils' behaviour. Almost all parents (97 per cent) who returned the questionnaire believe that the school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. The inspection team recognised the strong impact that the headteacher, supported by his staff, is having on pupils' attainment. All school staff are deeply committed to improving standards and in this section of the school, when national test results are compared with those for similar schools, they are succeeding.
9. The impact of school initiatives has begun to show on the standards achieved by eleven-year-olds. However, considering the above average number of pupils with special educational needs, accounting for 46 per cent of the current Year 6, the school will have difficulty in achieving standards that are in line with most other schools nationally. Pupils' level of achievement, taking account of the way most pupils with special educational needs meet their targets, is satisfactory, overall. Few of the standards reported in the previous inspection have been maintained. Parents reported at the meeting prior to the inspection that some disruptive behaviour still persists but things are very much better than they were. Nearly all agree that their children like coming to school. In the current Year 6 class, inspection evidence confirms that attainment in English, mathematics and science is below average. The level of low attainment has persisted for the past four years and it is largely responsible for the present arrangements with additional support from the Local Education Authority.

10. When the school's results since 1997 are averaged out, the trend in the school's average National Curriculum points for all core subjects is below the national trend. It is difficult to compare the results with those achieved when these pupils were in Year 2 because of the number of pupils who have arrived or left each year since then. This mobility accounts for about 30 per cent of pupils in the present Year 6 class, for example. Taking into account the high proportion with special educational needs in the class, the standards attained reflect the difficulties experienced in many of the junior classes. In a Year 4 class, for example, 70 per cent of pupils are on the school's register for pupils with special educational needs but not all of these have learning difficulties. It includes pupils with medical or behavioural problems.
11. The results of National Curriculum tests for 11-year-old pupils in 2001 show that attainment was very low compared to the national average in English and science and well below average in mathematics. When these results are compared with those of pupils from similar schools, they show a similar picture. However, the comparison with similar schools has been made using the wrong banding for the school. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals, the basis for the comparison places the school with others in the 35 to 50 per cent category. In actual fact, it should be with schools in the over 50 per cent band. This effectively raises the comparative grades by at least one grade for all subjects. Positive steps have been taken to bring about improvement. Following advice from the Local Education Authority, the school is concentrating all its efforts on improving standards in literacy and numeracy. The successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies will have a positive effect on standards for all pupils.
12. The good procedures to improve behaviour are having a significant effect on the level of improvement most pupils make as they move up the school. In English well-chosen texts and the teachers' skill in drawing pupils' attention to important differences in writing styles and content improve pupils' reading skills and widens their vocabulary. The partnership between home and school in reading remains strong and this also contributes effectively to the achievement and progress pupils make in reading. Lower-attaining pupils, however, are often uninformed in their choice of books and their lack of progress in reading as a result of this inhibits their ability to cope in other subjects requiring them to read. The majority of pupils have much ground to make up in writing. Higher-attaining pupils show enthusiasm for writing and use punctuation and paragraphs correctly. Much of pupils written work is untidily presented. In mathematics, the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has undoubtedly helped to raise standards, particularly in mental mathematics. Pupils can work out sums with fractions and decimals, handle scientific data and solve problems involving numbers up to 1,000 successfully. In 2001, boys actually out-performed girls in mathematics, but the difference was not significant.
13. In science, there is insufficient opportunity for pupils to make predictions, plan and record their work themselves. By the age of 11, they know how to make a burglar alarm using their knowledge of electrical circuits, devise a fair test when dissolving substances and about a healthy diet. All teachers are guided effectively by the good programme of work. Boys and girls both enjoy the practical approach and work hard in lessons to complete their work. Science was another subject where the boys did better than the girls in the national tests in 2001, though the difference was small.
14. Standards of attainment, by the age of 11, are above those normally seen in physical education. Pupils are enthusiastic in lessons and behave well. In art and design and in information and communication technology, standards are in line with those expected nationally. Pupils transfer skills learnt in the computer room well into their class work and making effective use of computers features in most lessons. The range of programs is good with the exception of history and geography where a greater range is needed. In geography, history and music, standards of attainment are below expectations. This, in part, reflects the varying amount of time devoted to these subjects in the different year groups and the low emphasis on teaching them caused by the concentrated effort to raise standards in English and mathematics. In geography, pupils are sometimes set narrow unchallenging tasks and often given the same worksheet to do. In Year 6, for example, all had to do the same work on extreme weather, following a video. In history, there are too few opportunities to write and little work was in evidence as a result. There was little progression evident in pupils' knowledge in music from Year 2. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils do not have a satisfactory knowledge of notation and technical vocabulary. In religious education, standards are below those required in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. No judgement on standards was possible in design

and technology as few lessons were seen. Overall, the effectiveness of the school is satisfactory as the vast majority of pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. A detailed scrutiny of pupils' completed work and lesson observations confirms pupils achieve satisfactorily against the individual targets set for them in English and mathematics throughout the school.

15. The provision for special educational needs [SEN] is satisfactory and registered pupils make satisfactory progress overall against the targets set for them. Their individual education plans have clear achievable targets and careful planning by class teachers means that these are taken into account when they plan lessons. Effective support is provided by the teaching assistants, helping most pupils to meet their targets. In all classes, those with recognised behavioural difficulties are fully integrated in lessons. Teachers' high expectations of behaviour and good levels of class control and discipline ensure that they make satisfactory progress.
16. The school has only just begun to identify gifted or talented pupils. In the nursery, for example, any children identified are provided with suitably challenging work. Preliminary arrangements are in place to plan additional work in lessons for pupils of exceptional ability or with special talents in any particular subjects in the infant and junior classes. All pupils, whatever their ability, are fully included in all aspects of school life with teachers ensuring equality of opportunity for all. This includes the few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. As a result, most feel valued and this in turn encourages them to do their best in lessons. This is just one of the reasons why the junior department of the school is now witnessing little disruption to lessons caused by poor behaviour.

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

17. No overall judgement was given in the previous inspection but positive comments about pupils' enthusiasm, concentration and high interest were recorded. Evidence also showed that there were quite a number of challenging pupils with poor behaviour. The majority of pupils now have positive attitudes to their work and to learning. They are enthusiastic and hard working, well motivated and respond well to encouragement and praise. When teaching is good, they co-operate successfully in pairs or groups, listening to each other thoughtfully, and offering constructive criticism. Most pupils follow instructions diligently, begin work quickly and meet set deadlines. They treat resources with care, tidy away efficiently after lessons and are sensible when engaged in practical tasks. Their commitment and enthusiasm for learning are apparent in their sustained application to their work. They clearly enjoy the opportunities presented to them in all areas of the curriculum. There is still a significant minority of pupils throughout the school who have difficulty in sustaining concentration and in some cases display negative attitudes and a general lack of interest in their work. At times this has an adverse impact on other pupils. The increased incidence of temporary exclusions in the current year, involving some pupils on more than one occasion, reflects the school's determination to improve behaviour.
18. The attitudes of pupils with special educational needs to their learning are satisfactory overall and they develop well as a result of the trained support they receive. The majority of pupils with behavioural targets respond to the targets set for them and teachers manage pupils well overall. Periodically the attendance of some pupils does affect their progress.
19. The personal and social development of children under five is good. Children settle quickly into their class and establish good relationships with their teachers and peers. They work happily in groups and sustain interest in their tasks. They behave well inside the classroom and around school and have a good sense of right and wrong.
20. The behaviour of most pupils is of a satisfactory and in many cases high standard, both inside the classroom and in other aspects of school life. During assemblies and at lunchtime they display a sensible approach and respond appropriately to the mood of the occasion. At break times they play happily together and older pupils show due regard for the needs of younger ones. Most pupils are courteous at all times and extend a warm welcome to known visitors. A minority of pupils display some lack of self-control and at times behave badly. In the main this challenging behaviour is effectively managed by teaching staff.
21. Relationships throughout the school are largely positive and result from mutual respect and trust between pupils and staff. Most pupils readily acknowledge one another's achievements

and show respect for different points of view. Many pupils display an awareness and concern for the interests and feelings of others. In practical science activities for example higher-attaining pupils show maturity and care in helping those of lower ability. There are satisfactory opportunities for older pupils to show initiative and take responsibility, for example in overseeing milk distribution, setting up and putting away audio-visual equipment for assembly and acting as class monitors.

22. Since the previous inspection the school has implemented a range of strategies aimed at improving attendance. These have included the appointment of an attendance co-ordinator, regular monitoring of attendance records and thorough investigation of unexplained absences. As yet, these measures have failed to deliver improvements in levels of attendance which were 91.7% in the most recent reporting year, which is 2.2 % below the national average. Unauthorised absence was 1.7%, compared with a national average of 0.5%. A detailed examination of registers shows that there is a high incidence of parents taking pupils out of school for holidays during term time. It is also clear that a small number of families account for a disproportionate amount of unauthorised absence. Punctuality is generally satisfactory and the school has effective arrangements for recording late attendance.

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

23. During this inspection, the overall quality of teaching was satisfactory in the infant and junior classes. The proportion of good or better teaching was virtually the same in each section of the school. The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in almost all the lessons observed. It was good or very good in half the lessons seen. It was very good in seven lessons. Only two lessons were unsatisfactory and one was poor, which shows teaching has improved since the previous inspection when almost one in five lessons was unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage, which covers the nursery and reception class, is good with particular strengths in the nursery. Teachers, nursery nurses and teaching assistants form high quality teams in both classes. The additional space both indoors and outdoors in the nursery and exceptionally detailed planning enhances the quality of provision, giving children a good start to school.
24. Elements of teaching, criticised previously, included low expectations of pupils by teachers, the slow pace of lessons, poor presentation of pupils' work and weak discipline resulting in some poor behaviour in classes. Much has been achieved by the headteacher, appointed just after the previous inspection, and his staff to correct the behaviour of pupils in class and around the school. The management of pupils is now a strength. Consequently, most lessons now progress well with little disruption. As part of the strategy to improve behaviour, praise is used well throughout to motivate or raise pupils' self-esteem. This was evident in the supportive comments attached to pupils' marked work and the way in which all were fully included in all activities in class. However, inspectors found that teachers' expectations of what pupils were capable of doing was still too low and the presentation of work was untidy in many cases.
25. Most aspects of teaching in the infant and junior classes such as teachers' knowledge, teaching of basic skills, the use of time, support staff and resources and use of homework, are satisfactory. To bring about further improvement, subject co-ordinators need time to monitor and evaluate regularly the effectiveness of teaching in the classrooms and all teachers need to evaluate more closely the quality of work pupils are producing. Particular areas, which still need improving in some classes, are the planning of tasks to more closely match pupils' capabilities and the quality of marking. All teachers' lesson planning has clear learning objectives and effective links are made between subjects. In a Year 2 science lesson, for example, pupils used computers and the Internet to compare the results of their mini-beasts survey with other schools. The lesson also involved them in using skills from mathematics and English lessons as they completed charts showing the number and type found. However, planning overall is unsatisfactory because higher-achieving pupils are often given undemanding tasks and lower-achieving pupils are frequently given the same worksheets to fill in as other, more able, pupils. This was particularly noticeable in science and, along with the high number of pupils with special educational needs, accounts for the low standards in that subject. Few teachers include guidance on how pupils can further improve when marking their work. In spite of these shortcomings, there is a strong determination by all staff to raise standards, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.

26. The quality of teaching in the literacy hours and during numeracy sessions is at least satisfactory throughout the school. The one exception was in an infant class where a temporary teacher had not had sufficient opportunity to consolidate her limited training on the format of the National Numeracy Strategy and, as a result, the mathematics lesson was poor. All teachers teach mental mathematics well, showing that on the whole, the National Strategy has been implemented well. However, teachers often do not effectively use the skills that pupils have learned in these sessions when teaching other subjects. Little evidence was found in the inspectors' scrutiny of work, for example, of pupils using their writing skills in history or religious education. In geography, narrow unchallenging writing tasks were noted. Writing has been highlighted as an area for improvement by the school in view of pupils' performance in the national tests for seven- and 11-year-olds and children's difficulty in achieving the Early Learning Goals in this skill in the nursery and reception class. The scrutiny of pupils' work confirms that pupils' access to and use of computers to support their learning in literacy and numeracy lessons is satisfactory. In the Year 5 and 6 mixed-age class, for example, a rota of pupils had to solve number problems using a number games program. In Year 3, the recently acquired interactive whiteboard was used well to help pupils solve problems involving money.
27. The improving quality of teaching and the emphasis the school is placing on English and mathematics, on the advice of the Local Education Authority advisers in an attempt to raise standards, is beginning to have an effect on the standards pupils achieve. Nearly all pupils achieve the individual targets set for them and many exceed them by the time they leave the school. However, due to the high proportion of pupils with special needs in Year 6, (46 per cent of the year group) standards in national terms are below average in English and mathematics. An analysis of the gains pupils make from the age of seven to 11 in the national tests shows that all improve to some degree and nine out of ten make satisfactory progress. This is mostly due to the quality of teaching and successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. In science by the age of 11, in spite of the satisfactory quality of teaching throughout the school, standards are below the national average, again largely because of the higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs.
28. In physical education, pupils achieve better than average standards by the ages of seven and 11. This is a direct result of the good quality of teaching they receive from reception to Year 6 and the very good facilities and level of resources available at the school. Parents recognise sporting activities as a strength and reported this to the inspection team at the meeting for parents. In information and communication technology, pupils' average achievements reflect the effective use teachers make of computers in classrooms and good variety of programs they make available to pupils. In Year 4, for example, pupils select the type of graph to record the growth of an Amaryllis plant and in Year 6, use light and temperature sensors linked to a computer in science lessons. The quality of teaching ICT is satisfactory throughout the school.
29. The quality of teaching in religious education, music and geography is satisfactory. This is in line with the findings of the previous inspection. In geography, teachers find it difficult to motivate older boys and their planning does not always effectively meet the needs of lower-attaining pupils. Teacher confidence varies in music but the scheme of work gives all clear guidance on teaching music and most manage to fully cover the statutory curriculum. In design and technology, art and history, insufficient evidence was gathered to form a reliable judgement about the overall quality of teaching. Pupils enjoy the practical nature of design and technology and activities are well planned, with teachers providing a wide variety of resources for pupils to use. Only one history lesson was seen because of timetabling arrangements. Teachers cover the statutory curriculum through a series of topics, spread over the different year groups. This arrangement is satisfactory. However, where there are mixed-age classes, planning needs to be refined so that pupils in these classes do not needlessly repeat work. Teachers make good use of modern technology in art and attractive displays around the school celebrate the quality of pupils' work.
30. All teachers work hard to establish a good working atmosphere and promote effective learning. Classroom support staff are used well to support individual or small groups of pupils in lessons. Their contribution is instrumental in helping to raise standards. The quality of learning is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory elsewhere. Teachers have developed good strategies to maintain good behaviour and ensure that pupils maintain their level of concentration. In most classes, for example, pupils are given strict time limits to finish tasks. Pupils obviously enjoy the calm, orderly atmosphere in lessons and most usually behave well showing a satisfactory attitude towards their learning. However, on occasions, the concentration and work rate of



higher-attaining pupils suffers when they are set the same work as other pupils and lose interest in the undemanding tasks. This adversely affects the amount of work they produce. Low expectations by some teachers over the amount of work pupils can reasonably be expected to do means that the productivity, particularly in the junior classes, is unsatisfactory. When the same task is set for all pupils, lower-attaining pupils find the work too difficult and often lose their concentration. This is particularly noticeable with boys in the upper junior classes. Pupils' performance in science is a typical example. The disruptive behaviour of a small minority reported previously has virtually been eliminated.

31. Teachers use assessment in a satisfactory way to guide their planning and this helps them to plan work for the majority of pupils in their class, which builds effectively on previous learning. All pupils' work is marked thoroughly but few teachers add helpful comments to give pupils guidance on how to improve their work further. There were no gifted pupils identified to the inspection team. However, the school has very recently begun to identify these pupils with a view to making special provision for them as part of its drive to raise standards. Teachers are well prepared for their lessons with a good range of resources readily available for pupils. This helps to maintain most pupils' interest and encourages them to use their initiative and choose suitable materials when working independently. Most pupils sustain satisfactory levels of concentration. As a direct result, the overall quality of learning is satisfactory in lessons.
32. The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage, which comprises of the nursery and the reception class, is good. Planning the curriculum is a team effort, with the nursery nurses fully included. All staff show a high level of care for all children. Support for children identified with learning difficulties is good in each of the six areas of learning throughout the Foundation Stage enabling them to achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. In view of the difficulties faced with writing by most children, teachers should plan more opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage to write.
33. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory throughout the infant and junior sections of the school. Staff make use of expert advice on occasions and those pupils on the register for pupils with special educational needs have clear individual learning plans. These identify appropriate and achievable targets but often these are too extensive to cover within the termly period of time set. Targets set for individual pupils are mainly connected with improving literacy skills or behaviour. Teachers take full account of these individual targets in their lesson plans. They work closely with teaching assistants to ensure that the best possible use is made of their time and talents. As a result, these pupils consistently receive the help they need to make satisfactory progress in relation to their personal targets. Special educational needs support assistants work effectively with small groups to give additional support in literacy and numeracy to lower-attaining pupils. Booster sessions, which focus on English and mathematics, give pupils in Year 6 the extra push they need to achieve the best they can in National Curriculum tests. Teaching in these contexts is characterised by clear targets, well-planned activities, and caring relationships.
34. A small number of parents, in their responses to the questionnaire sent out prior to the inspection, were unhappy with the amount of homework their children were expected to do. At the meeting for parents, some said pupils were given too much homework, and others felt that the tasks set were not well matched to pupils' capabilities. Inspection evidence shows that the amount and quality of homework is satisfactory. The school's policy statement gives clear guidance to teachers and parents on homework. Teachers are generally making satisfactory use of homework as part of their commitment to raise standards. As a result, homework is effectively supporting pupils' learning.

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

35. Curricular strengths outweigh weaknesses. The curriculum, including religious education meets statutory requirements and is satisfactory overall. Improvements since the previous inspection have also been satisfactory.
36. Planning for the children in the nursery and the reception class is good and helps them to make good progress. It provides a good balance of directed work and exploratory activity. Work is stimulating and makes children keen to learn. Work is well planned to help children acquire

early reading, writing and numeracy skills. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection.

37. There are strengths in curricular provision in numeracy and information and communication technology, where national initiatives have been implemented well. Improvements in numeracy are leading to better standards in mental mathematics. Good provision for information and communication technology has helped to raise standards markedly. The literacy hour has been implemented satisfactorily. The introductory part of lessons is generally planned effectively, but group work is not always well matched to the pupils' differing needs. This results in some lack of challenge for the more able pupils and too little demand being made of those with lower attainment. Planning that does not take enough account of the wide range of ability within the classes is also an issue in science and contributes to the low standards found in the subject. The strong curricular provision for physical education, supported by very good facilities and a good quality of teaching results in standards throughout the school that are above those normally seen.
38. All required subjects are taught, but the time given to them varies from one year group to another. Too few steps have been taken to monitor and address these inconsistencies. Teachers in Years 3 to 6 are aware of the need to ensure adequate coverage of all subjects and work has begun to review provision. In some subjects, for example geography, this is complete and there are sufficient, well-planned, units of work to enable pupils to acquire knowledge, understanding and skills in a systematic way. In other subjects, including history and religious education, planning is not good enough and has an adverse effect on teaching and pupils' subsequent learning. Progress in preparing schemes of work for these subjects in Years 3 to 6 has been too slow.
39. Provision for special educational needs is satisfactory and has some good features. Both specialist and teaching staff identify suitable targets for pupils to work towards in their individual education plans. The provision for pupils with formal statements of need meets requirements. Pupils are fully included in all lessons, and work is suitably adapted for pupils with physical needs. Additional work for pupils lagging behind their peers in reading is effective, and helps them to make good progress. This includes the individualised reading programme for Year 2 pupils and the additional literacy support for groups of Year 4 pupils. Where physically handicapped pupils have statements of need, inclusion is very good. Good attempts are made to ensure that all pupils with special educational needs, such as the physically handicapped and visually impaired, are able to participate satisfactorily. This is achieved well through the good support given to pupils by non-teaching and support service personnel. The present support service teacher not only provides high quality guidance to staff but also contributes significantly to the teaching and learning of pupils who are registered for special educational need. Pupils make good progress as a result of her input.
40. Provision for personal, health and social education is satisfactory and the school has plans to develop this further. The main vehicle at the moment is 'circle time' when pupils learn to take turns and to discuss their views and feelings in a safe environment. A lesson seen in Year 4 was well managed by the teacher and achieved this objective. Sex education is taught in Year 6. Education about the dangers of smoking and alcohol is covered in health education. There is no formal teaching about drug abuse, even though this is a social problem in the area around the school.
41. Provision for pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Assemblies make a sound contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Pupils are given time to pray and to reflect personally. All pupils know the school prayer and join in well. A particularly good moment of reflection was provided by the Year 4 pupils when they led their peers in a brief meditation as part of their assembly about Buddhism. Times when pupils reflect in a sensitive way in lessons are less evident, though opportunities are provided in 'circle time'. Quiet music is also played in some lessons as part of the accelerated learning project. Children in the reception class respond well to this. Children in the nursery responded with wonder to their nursery nurse when she painted a picture for them. They were spellbound, and one boy couldn't stop himself from calling out 'oh, that's good'.
42. Provision for pupils' social and moral development is satisfactory, and has a sound impact on pupils' behaviour and attitudes. Class rules are displayed around the school, but not referred to consistently by staff. Some pupils find it difficult to conform to rules and routines, and teachers

mostly deal with this well on an individual basis. They provide good role models in their respectful treatment of pupils, even when faced with challenging behaviour. Moral messages are clearly conveyed in assemblies and by teachers in lessons. Much of the work in religious education stresses the need to care for one another. The school's policy on the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs helps the pupils to put this into practice.

43. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils learn about their own locality in history and geography, for example about the area's history of coal mining. The inter-cultural education project is widening pupils' knowledge of other countries. A link with a school in Africa has recently been established. E-mail links with schools in other parts of the world have been forged in the past. The school has a link with a school with a high multi-ethnic intake and plans another visit in the Summer term, during which pupils will visit a mosque. The study of major world faiths is well covered in religious education. Visitors from overseas are encouraged to talk about their cultural backgrounds. Visitors from the Dominican Republic and Hong Kong have visited so far.
44. Extra-curricular provision is satisfactory, overall. It is limited to a marching band and a choir this term, though other activities, including football coaching, netball and needlecraft, are offered at other times of the year. The school is looking to strengthen this provision. Positive aspects are the residential visits held annually for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 and the after-school club held in the school.
45. Community links are good. Members of the community group support the school in a variety of ways, including running the marching band. There are good links with an amateur theatrical group, the local library, local churches and a large supermarket chain that has helped to sponsor the accelerated learning project that the school has recently begun. The Education Action Zone is also funding this.
46. Links with other institutions are good. The school is an active member of its local group of schools, spearheaded by the High School. There has been a recent focus on developing work in the arts. Students from two colleges are placed regularly in the school for teaching practice.

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

47. The school makes satisfactory provision for the personal support, welfare and guidance of pupils. Care and concern for all pupils are apparent in all aspects of the daily life of the school. This was also recognised as a strong feature previously. Teachers know their pupils well and are able to provide a level of support and guidance that contributes to pupils' well-being. Positive reinforcement and praise of pupils' academic and personal achievements are strong features of the school. Teachers show genuine kindness and concern for their pupils. Monitoring of pupils' personal development is satisfactory. It takes place both informally by class teachers and through the use of Individual Pupil Records, which are maintained for each pupil throughout their time at school.
48. The school has good, well-developed, measures to promote good attendance, including close monitoring of attendance figures and thorough follow-up of all unexplained absences. This shows that the criticisms in the previous report have been acted upon. There is now effective liaison with other agencies with regard to persistent unauthorised absences. Inter-agency meetings take place every two months and the educational welfare officer is present in school on a regular basis. There is effective promotion of behaviour and discipline in school with a positive approach through praise and example and the use of a system of rewards and sanctions which is well known and understood by the majority of pupils. There is, however, some inconsistency of approach in managing a minority of pupils with particularly difficult behaviour and pockets of good practice in this respect are not shared coherently throughout the school.
49. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. This is a significant improvement from the previous inspection. There is a clearly written health and safety policy, which is kept up to date. Fire drills are carried out half termly. A member of the governing body is responsible for health and safety matters and the headteacher carries out regular safety inspections with the caretaker. A full health and safety audit was carried out last year by the local authority. This raised a number of health and safety issues, which have

already been addressed. Several members of staff have received first-aid training and well-stocked first-aid boxes are maintained throughout the school.

50. There is a clearly defined child protection policy and the headteacher very effectively carries out the duties and responsibilities of child protection co-ordinator. Along with several other members of staff, he has received relevant and recent training in this important aspect. The school is very successful in promoting the health, safety, care and protection of its pupils.
51. Procedures for assessment have been satisfactorily developed since the previous inspection. The procedures for the Foundation Stage are good. Teachers continue to use ongoing observations as part of their assessment procedures and an early assessment shortly after children enter the school makes a good contribution to this. However, there is much ground to cover in making assessment procedures consistent across the school. The headteacher is aware of the need to make better use of the assessment data. A positive start has been made and assessment procedures are more finely tuned in literacy and numeracy. National test results are used mainly for Years 2 and 6 and a satisfactory range of optional tests are used for checking the level of pupils' work in other years. Teachers have recently set up systems for tracking individual pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy and in information and communication technology. They also collect samples of work for each child termly and these give a clear picture of progress made. As a result of the regular staff meetings comparing the standards of pupils' work, curricular targets are developed in literacy, which aim to adapt planned work for pupils. This has given useful information for setting targets for individual pupils, which is shared with pupils and parents. Most pupils understand the nature of the target they are expected to achieve but such detail is not always shared with parents. The absence of monitoring partly contributes to inconsistency in procedures across the school. Assessment for all other subjects is variable in quality. Assessing the core subjects of literacy, numeracy and science have been highlighted as priorities.
52. Day-to-day assessment is not as effective in providing information to teachers or pupils. Often marking is brief and there is little information fed back to pupils on how they could further improve their work. However the assessment of pupils with special educational needs is sound and particularly good where the Local Education Authority Support Service is involved with individual pupils. Clear targets are set to match individual needs and good resources are provided to support a variety of special educational needs. The Code of Practice is satisfactorily in place and all policy documents have reference to the learning needs of registered pupils. Identification of pupils begins at an early stage.
53. Much of the monitoring of pupils' development is carried out informally by teachers who know their pupils well and have good relationships with them. They show a high level of commitment to improving attitudes to learning and social skills. Whilst there is no whole-school system for monitoring pupils' personal development, records for those pupils whose needs are social, emotional or behavioural are well kept.

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

54. In the previous inspection report, the school was praised for its determined and successful links with parents. These links are now well established and contribute positively to pupils' learning in school and at home. Parents' responses in the questionnaire, sent out prior to the inspection were generally positive about the school. Ninety-nine per cent, for example agreed that they would feel comfortable about approaching the school with a problem or question.
55. Some information provided to parents is of a very high standard, for example, the regular newsletters and the information about the transition from the nursery to the reception class. There is however some variability in the quality of reports to parents. The clarity has been improved since the previous inspection but some lack information about future targets for pupils. Parent consultation evenings are held twice yearly, in line with most other schools. Parents are welcomed in school at any time to discuss their children's progress informally. Their involvement with their children's work at home mainly takes the form of helping with reading. Parents are encouraged to share books with their children at home and communicate regularly with the class teacher via the reading record booklet.

56. Targets for pupils with special educational needs are communicated clearly to parents and they are encouraged to reinforce these targets at home. All formal responses to parents regarding reviews are carried out satisfactorily and most parents of statemented and Stage 3 pupils attend.
57. A number of parents are involved in helping in the classroom in a variety of ways, particularly with reading. Parents also help with practical activities; for example during the inspection a parent was helping with practical science activities involving electrical circuits. This help provides a significant contribution to the work of the school. Parents also accompany classes on educational visits.
58. The school has an active Parents, Teachers and Friends Association which is successful in organising a range of social events and providing valuable additional resources through fund-raising. In the past year over £2000 has been raised by the PTFA. This has been used to provide a range of new equipment for the school.

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

59. The headteacher is deeply committed to the school and shows strong dedication to his role and responsibilities. Since his appointment just after the previous inspection, he has made many improvements to the school. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agree that the school is well led and managed. The current School Development Plan, for example, is now thorough, clear in its intention, and is annually reviewed. Staff and parents recognise that pupils' behaviour has improved markedly throughout the school. Strategies to monitor teaching and learning have started to be implemented and the senior management team and governing body are now beginning to work together towards a common goal. The headteacher has a clear understanding of the way forward, but the pace of change has been too slow to have an impact on raising standards and to fully address the issues identified in the previous inspection. Although improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory overall, some important aspects of leadership and management such as delegation and effective procedures for monitoring and evaluating teachers' performance are weak. As a result, the overall quality of leadership and management is unsatisfactory.
60. The School Development Plan is thorough, involving the views of the senior management team and governing body, and is monitored carefully. However, there has been insufficient focus on key priorities to ensure the maximum impact on learning and raising standards at the end of Key Stage 2. The role of the deputy headteacher is underdeveloped and this weakens the impact of the relatively new senior management team. Roles have begun to be more clearly defined and the Key Stage 2 co-ordinator has been rigorous in her monitoring of planning, although this is in the early stages of development and has not yet had an impact.
61. The senior management team has an understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses but they have not adequately addressed some aspects of the key issues identified by the previous inspection or ensured that planned improvements have been rigorously put into practice. The roles of subject co-ordinators in monitoring the quality of teaching, pupils' learning and the quality of pupils' work, for example, are developing in English and mathematics but in all the other subjects they have not been established. Key issues such as providing appropriate challenge to meet the needs of all pupils and raising the standard of pupils' presentation of work throughout the school would not be as weak as they are if the pace of change had been faster and more rigour applied.
62. Staff share a common purpose and some elements of good teamwork exist with teachers planning together and offering advice to each other. Governors have a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are now working with staff in a common purpose to improve standards. The headteacher and key staff have analysed performance data to some degree but co-ordinators presently play little part in monitoring standards in subjects other than English and mathematics and there is no common understanding of the levels of pupils' work. The greatest progress has been made in English and mathematics where co-ordinators have begun to monitor teaching, planning and looking at a range of children's work. The school has rightly focused on the implementation of literacy and numeracy and these strategies have been thoroughly introduced.

63. The School Development Plan has identifiable budget links, which focus on the year in hand, but shows little awareness of forward planning. The school's aims and values are embedded in its work, staff and pupils interact well with one another and pupils' contributions are valued. The school offers a fully inclusive curriculum. Visitors to the school are welcomed and the school environment is a caring one where pupils' work is valued and celebrated.
64. Some responsibilities are delegated satisfactorily. However, staff have little or no time away from their pupils to fulfil their co-ordinator or management duties whilst lessons are in progress. Consequently, they do not gain a wider view of how their subject is being taught or standards being attained. All staff now have job descriptions. The high number of non-teaching staff are largely effectively deployed and give generally good support to those pupils with special educational and behavioural needs. They have a positive impact on behaviour in the classroom and in the corridors. They are not, however, consistently involved in the planning of lessons nor do they give feedback on the progress of groups or individuals in a structured way. There is insufficient opportunity for sharing expertise and good practice.
65. The governing body meets all its statutory responsibilities and after recent changes now has a core of committed individuals who at the time of the inspection were present in school working alongside staff and pupils. They know the school well and are very supportive of the headteacher and staff and are beginning to act as a 'critical friend'. This augurs well for further development of the school. Performance targets have been set for all staff and the appraisal process is well established.
66. Presently the deputy headteacher acts as the special educational needs co-ordinator. He efficiently manages the administration, ensuring that copies of statements and informative documents for individuals are easily accessible and securely stored. However, he has little time to undertake other duties such as monitoring individual pupils' progress or staff training. All provisions for statements are in place. There is variety of learning resources available for pupils and resources for specific needs, such as visual impairment, are good.
67. Several support staff are trained and qualified to assist pupils with special learning needs. At times their number and deployment in class suggest that this should be reviewed. Where support staff sit for long periods of time during discussion they could be used more positively for assessment purposes, observing special needs pupils or those who exhibit challenging or bizarre behaviour. Equally, a number of staff would benefit from more formalised meetings which would develop their recording and assessment expertise.
68. The school has good links with teacher training institutions and students receive a good standard of mentoring. The headteacher has started to carry out a monitoring programme to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching but it is at the early stages of development. Moreover, it has not been specific or rigorous enough to identify where teaching needs to be improved. It has done little to improve the percentage of pupils attaining expected levels in National Curriculum tests. The school governing body has set targets in English and mathematics but these have not been met and more accurate use of analysis of performance data is needed to focus resources, predict actual potential and support improvements. Information gained from optional tests are used to inform target setting but standardized score information is not used to show small steps improvement in English and mathematics.
69. The school administration staff run the school office efficiently and they give a positive first impression to visitors. Educational priorities are supported by clear budget costs and the school does its best to apply best value principles by obtaining tenders for services or goods and pays attention to quality. Adequate information is available from the headteacher and governing body to ensure that finances are kept in good order. The governing body is provided with monthly financial statements and the finance committee meets regularly. The school is making satisfactory use of new technology including computers as they are using a financial database, word processing reports and using standardized planning formats. Expenditure per pupil is average and when all other factors, such as the standards attained, quality of teaching and the positive aspects of leadership and management are considered, the school is providing satisfactory value for money.
70. Specific grants are used effectively. Education Action Zone (EAZ) funding, for example, recently provided an interactive whiteboard linked to the Internet and this is used well to enhance learning for all pupils. Reading initiatives and inter-agency initiatives contribute

positively to school development. Government funding for computers has been effectively used to purchase more computers and update the present software. The SEN budget is used appropriately to support those pupils with special educational needs. Standards Fund money is used well to provide staff training in literacy, computer training, numeracy and other initiatives.

71. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is satisfactory overall. The special needs co-ordinator is the deputy headteacher and due to his senior management responsibilities and full-time class teaching commitment, it has not been possible for him to develop this role fully. However, individual education plans are in place and reviews with parents and outside agencies take place to ensure appropriate provision. Expertise of the deputy headteacher in science, for example, has not been fully utilised in order to raise standards further. A recently employed temporary teacher had not had sufficient opportunity to consolidate her limited numeracy and literacy training in a long term classroom situation and this weakness was not picked up by anyone in school. As a result, literacy and numeracy were not being properly taught. EAZ funding is effectively used to employ a large number of non-teaching assistants who have contributed to improve the level of behaviour since the previous inspection.
72. The standard of the accommodation is good. The school buildings are modern and well maintained with bright spacious teaching spaces and shared resource areas. Outside there are good quality grassed and hard play areas. The school is clean and tidy and displays are bright and interesting. The outside play area for the nursery is particularly conducive to role-play and encourages pupils to develop their physical and social skills, however the pupils in the reception class do not have access to a designated outdoor play area. There are advanced plans to extend the school as new houses nearby are occupied. Reception children will have their outdoor area provided in this building phase.
73. Learning resources are good. There is a satisfactory range of reading books available in the library, classrooms and corridors. The nursery is particularly well resourced with a very good range of high quality indoor activity apparatus and outdoor play equipment. There is a need for a wider range of computer software to support learning in history and geography in particular.

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

74. The inspection team recognise the difficulties faced by the school and the efforts of the headteacher, supported by his conscientious staff, to improve the quality of education for pupils. To raise standards, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, the school needs to increase the pace of change and accelerate the rate of progress for pupils of all abilities. The governors, headteacher and staff need to work more effectively as a team to:

(1) improve the quality of teaching by

- i. raising expectations of what pupils can do,
- ii. planning tasks which more closely match pupils capabilities,
- iii. giving pupils clearer guidance, when marking their work, on how they can make it better.

(Paragraphs 5,14, 23-34, 37, 38, 52, 97, 100, 104, 113, 118, 119, 132, 134, 137, 150, 153, 167.)

(2) make leadership and management more effective by

- i. developing the role and responsibilities of the deputy headteacher and senior staff,
- ii. Fully empowering subject co-ordinators to monitor and evaluate their subjects,
- iii. Monitoring and evaluating standards rigorously and taking effective action to correct any weaknesses.

(Paragraphs 38, 51, 53, 59-73, 121, 126, 131, 139, 156, 165, 169.)

(3) continue to implement the procedures designed to improve attendance and regularly monitor their effectiveness, considering ways to further improve them if necessary.

(Paragraphs 22, 48.)

**The school has already identified for improvement all of the aspects in the Key Issues covering leadership and management and attendance in its current School Development Plan.**



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed   | 60 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 37 |

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

|            | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number     | 0         | 7         | 23   | 27           | 2              | 1    | 0         |
| Percentage | 0         | 11.7      | 38.3 | 45           | 3.3            | 1.7  | 0         |

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. It should be noted that each lesson is equivalent to more than one per cent.

### 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)      | 30      | 230     |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 0       | 126     |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs   | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs       | 0       | 9       |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 0       | 94      |

| English as an additional language                       | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 1            |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year                                       | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 20           |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving           | 9            |

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

|                           | %   |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data               | 6.6 |
| National comparative data | 5.6 |

#### Unauthorised absence

|                           | %   |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data               | 1.7 |
| 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)

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
|  | 2001 | 17   | 11    | 28    |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results       |          | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above   | Boys     | 15      | 16      | 14          |
|   | Girls    | 10      | 10      | 10          |
|   | Total    | 25      | 26      | 24          |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School   | 89 (62) | 93 (65) | 86 (65)     |
|   | National | 84 (83) | 86 (84) | 91 (90)     |

| Teachers' Assessments                       |          | English | Mathematics | Science  |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above   | Boys     | 15      | 14          | 17       |
|   | Girls    | 10      | 10          | 11       |
|   | Total    | 25      | 24          | 28       |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School   | 89 (62) | 86 (65)     | 100 (79) |
|   | National | 85 (84) | 89 (88)     | 89 (88)  |

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

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

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
|  | 2001 | 19   | 26    | 45    |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above   | Boys     | 3       | 8           | 11      |
|   | Girls    | 12      | 10          | 13      |
|   | Total    | 15      | 18          | 24      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School   | 33 (65) | 40 (35)     | 53 (56) |
|   | National | 75 (75) | 71 (72)     | 87 (85) |

| Teachers' Assessments                       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above   | Boys     | 5       | 10          | 3       |
|   | Girls    | 13      | 15          | 11      |
|   | Total    | 18      | 25          | 14      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School   | 40 (53) | 56 (53)     | 31 (53) |
|   | National | 72 (70) | 74 (72)     | 82 (79) |

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

|                                 | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage      | 0            |
| Black – African heritage        | 1            |
| Black – other                   | 0            |
| Indian                          | 2            |
| Pakistani                       | 2            |
| Bangladeshi                     | 0            |
| Chinese                         | 0            |
| White                           | 280          |
| 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                        | 1            | 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) | 10.5 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   | 21.9 |
| Average class size                       | 25.5 |

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

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| Total number of education support staff | 12     |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week   | 203.25 |

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

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 0.5    |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   | 60     |
| Total number of education support staff  | 3      |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week    | 106.25 |
| Number of pupils per FTE adult           | 15     |

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| Financial year                             | 2000/01 |
|  | £       |
| Total income                               | 521,941 |
| Total expenditure                          | 499,726 |
| Expenditure per pupil                      | 1,823   |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | -10,990 |
| Balance carried forward to next year       | 11,225  |

### **Recruitment of teachers**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years   | 0 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years   | 1 |
| 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) | 0 |

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

26.9 Per cent

Number of questionnaires sent out

260

Number of questionnaires returned

70

### Percentage of responses in each category

|  | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school.   | 66             | 27            | 4                | 3                 | 0          |
| My child is making good progress in school.  | 49             | 40            | 10               | 1                 | 0          |
| Behaviour in the school is good.   | 36             | 44            | 14               | 1                 | 4          |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.                              | 33             | 47            | 13               | 6                 | 1          |
| The teaching is good.  | 50             | 39            | 7                | 1                 | 3          |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.                          | 43             | 37            | 19               | 1                 | 0          |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 69             | 30            | 0                | 1                 | 0          |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.              | 61             | 36            | 3                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school works closely with parents.   | 50             | 36            | 10               | 3                 | 1          |
| The school is well led and managed.  | 59             | 33            | 6                | 1                 | 1          |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.                      | 53             | 34            | 9                | 0                 | 4          |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.            | 34             | 24            | 19               | 9                 | 14         |

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

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

75. Provision for children in the nursery and reception class has improved since the previous inspection when much of the work was satisfactory. It is now good, with particular strengths in the nursery. The overall good teaching has a positive impact on children's learning. Teachers, nursery nurses and teaching assistants form high quality teams in both classes and plan work carefully together. This ensures that on the days that the part-time teacher is not working, the quality of provision is not compromised.
76. Many children begin the nursery with below average skills in speaking and listening, mathematics, personal independence and knowledge and understanding of the world. They make good progress. By the time they are ready to start Year 1, many will have reached the Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development, mathematics, creative and physical development. Many will be on target in reading, though their conversational and writing skills will still be below average overall and a minority of the children will achieve the set goals in their knowledge and understanding of the world.

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

77. Children make good progress as a result of good teaching. This has a positive effect on their learning in all other areas.
78. Children's progress is very good in the nursery where children respond to the very well established routines and high levels of care provided by staff. They work confidently and happily. They work well alongside one another, and stick to the nursery rules. They respond quickly to the staff's requests to tidy up, or to be ready for a story in the book corner. Staff provide excellent role models, working very well together and leading by example. When collecting in reading books, for example, the nursery nurse demonstrated how to put them back tidily in the book rack. Learning is often exciting and children's interest and curiosity shine through.
79. Children make good progress in the reception class due to good teaching. The reception teacher has worked hard to establish routines since she took charge of the class this term. Staffing changes in the previous term affected the continuity of children's learning. The teacher is calm and patient and the children are clear what is expected of them. They work independently and make sensible choices. Staff promote independence by making resources easily accessible. The children have good, trusting, relationships with adults. They develop satisfactory levels of personal independence, changing for physical education, for example. More could sometimes be expected of them, when tidying up for instance. Children's attitudes to the wide range of work provided are invariably positive.

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

80. Children make good progress due to good teaching. Teaching in this area has improved markedly since the previous inspection when it was only just satisfactory. Parental support is harnessed and has a good impact on children's progress in reading.
81. Nursery staff are skilled at listening to children and extending their language and communication skills. They work purposefully with groups, providing a commentary, asking questions and prompting children's answers. They use class times very well. They engage the children's interest through exciting story-telling, for example. Children respond very well. They listen carefully and join in discussions well for their age and level of maturity. Although there is no specialist help for the occasional child with English as an additional language, the quality of provision and support are such that these children make very good progress. The children's listening skills are not quite as good in the reception class, particularly when the class is together. Most children listen well, but a few have limited concentration spans. They lose interest if the pace of teaching slackens, though the teacher is good at drawing these children back into discussions. Children speak willingly, but the range of their vocabulary and complexity of their speech is below average.

82. Early reading skills are taught well in both nursery and reception and help most children to meet the Early Learning Goals. Children have many opportunities to learn the names of letters and some simple words. In the nursery, children act as readers. Even three-year-olds sit in the book corner, turn over the pages of a book and respond to the pictures. Bright children are encouraged to do as well as they can. One nursery child is already reading simple books fluently. Many children in the reception class recognise simple repetitive sentences. Parents help by hearing children read at home. Many attend the weekly reading workshop in the reception class where they play reading games with their children.
83. Nursery children are encouraged to make marks on paper and to 'write' captions for drawings. This continues in reception, where most children have reasonable pencil control and write their first name legibly. The teaching of writing is linked satisfactorily with reading, but more could be done to strengthen the links in order to raise the profile of writing and improve children's attainment even further.

### **Mathematical Development**

84. Children make good progress due to good teaching. Mathematical work is taught separately and linked well to other areas of learning in both nursery and reception. The use of the interactive whiteboard to teach mathematics in the reception class is good.
85. Older children in the nursery count to ten as they count out the sausages they have made from play-dough. They join in number rhymes and know how many sausages are left if one is taken away. In the reception class, children recognise simple shapes and try out the new word, 'symmetry', that they have learnt confidently. They order numbers up to ten using the pointer on the interactive whiteboard to move them into place. They use correct terminology, zero for example. They begin to learn about sets in their work on mini-beasts. A few children find it hard to grasp basic number concepts, but are helped by the patient support of staff and good use of resources.

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

86. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world are extended through good teaching. The range of work covered in the nursery and reception class is wide. Children are encouraged to observe and learn about natural things, for example using magnifying glasses to look at mini-beasts in the reception class. They have many opportunities to investigate their surroundings and to find things out for themselves. In the nursery, children learn about road safety by operating the 'traffic lights' in the outdoor area. They use construction materials to build, selecting resources and using tools. Children in the reception class join boxes together to make models. Children have the opportunity to operate listening centres and computers in both classes. Staff support children's learning well, asking probing questions as they work and helping them to extend their own lines of enquiry.

### **Physical development**

87. Children make good progress due to good teaching. This is very good in the nursery when children engage in outdoor play. Staff make this purposeful by setting specific objectives, for example to respond to the 'traffic lights' as they ride their bikes and trikes. The range of wheeled vehicles provided ensures that children of all ages and abilities can take part safely.
88. Children in the reception class show satisfactory skills, moving in different ways and controlling their movements as they crawl over benches in their physical education lesson. They do not have the opportunity for regular outdoor play, however, and this is a limiting factor.

### **Creative development**

89. This area of work is a strength, as it was at the previous inspection, with many achieving the Early Learning Goals well before the end of their reception year. Children in both classes have many opportunities to make pictures and models, using a wide range of materials. Staff provide excellent support for them, ensuring that early skills in painting, for example develop well. The painting done by the nursery nurse as part of story-telling stimulated the nursery children to provide high quality work of their own. There are good opportunities for role-play and dressing up to encourage children's imaginative play. Music is a regular feature of provision.

## ENGLISH

90. The results of the national tests in 2001 show standards for 11-year-olds were very low compared to national expectations. The above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs, which included a significant number of pupils with challenging behaviours, accounts for the low standards. Equally, during this time there were several instances of pupils transferring to and from the school. Pupils' attainment at the age of seven was close to the national average in reading and well above average in writing. These more positive results were largely due to the school's careful analysis of infant skills and subsequent action plans designed to improve reading and writing.
91. Whilst the trend in results for junior pupils has been consistently low, the present generation of eleven-year-olds are set to obtain better results when the above initiatives are extended fully for junior pupils. These, alongside booster classes and additional literacy programmes, will positively affect future standards. The weak performance in national test results reflects the very low starting point for many pupils. In spite of this, the quality of teaching and the support of trained special needs assistants has ensured achievement is satisfactory overall. During the inspection, junior pupils, whilst below average, showed slight improvement in attainment. That of infant pupils showed attainment to be close to the national average in reading and above average in writing which indicate better results are likely in the future.
92. Standards in speaking and listening are below average by the age of seven and eleven because pupils have had insufficient opportunity to build the required skills and confidence from an early age. Pupils in Year 1 often listen carefully in introductory sessions of the literacy hour but their levels of attention are short. As a result, when they start a task, they are unable to successfully carry out instructions and are slow in completing their work. In Year 2, pupils listen more carefully and are keen to share their information on the weekend growth of their beans. However they do not have sufficient self-discipline to understand when to contribute to class discussion and when to listen to others.
93. Many junior pupils are confident when talking in informal situations; they talk readily about their likes and dislikes in lessons. However their vocabulary is narrow and this shows markedly when they need to enrich some of their written work descriptively. When asked question by their teacher they respond simply and are often unwilling to elaborate on their answers. Only the more able pupils, or those pupils who are encouraged, ask questions or communicate their ideas clearly in lessons.
94. Standards in reading are close to the national average for pupils at the age of seven and below average for pupils at the age of eleven. Higher-attaining seven-year-olds enjoy reading and readily re-tell the story they have been reading. They are well on their way to becoming fluent readers. Both average and below average pupils are less accurate in their reading but have sound book knowledge gained from work in the literacy hour. All groups have a good grasp of simple letter sounds. A small number of eleven-year-old pupils read with engaging expression and talk with enthusiasm about the authors they have enjoyed. Those of average attainment often read competently but with less interest and confidence. Their silent reading is often better and shows sound comprehension skills. Below average pupils often struggle with their reading through uninformed choices of books and insufficient skills to support their independent reading. Inevitably where reading is important in other lessons this significantly hinders their learning. Whilst few pupils are familiar with the use of the school library, older pupils are able to find information from simple texts. Those pupils who have support from their parents for reading significantly benefit from their help.
95. The standard of writing for seven-year-olds is above the national average. This is a result of sound teaching, which is well structured to concentrate on writing skills. Most infant pupils punctuate their work carefully and are practiced in using capital letters and full stops accurately. Whilst most above average and average pupils are making good progress in writing their stories, periodically their spelling and use of vocabulary is weak. Their handwriting is well formed overall in practice but this good presentation does not always transfer to work in other lessons.
96. At the age of eleven the standard of writing is below average overall. The work of the most able minority is often good and shows good achievement. There is an enthusiasm for writing at length in well-paragraphed chapters, using *cliffhangers* for effect, and dialogue is often used

well. Some pupils use words well in narrative and poetry work, - “ Nightmares are taking over their lives, creeping into their minds” and, “ Youth is full of football, Age is a game of bowls.” More often however, the majority have much ground to make up and progress is slow. Several pupils choose to avoid using the skills they have learnt and are satisfied with a low standard of work. Where pupils recognise the purpose of their work and teaching methods are well structured, pupils make better progress.

97. Pupils' work on display in subjects such as history indicates that they are capable of presenting clear and well-formed handwriting. In pupils' practice books for handwriting teachers often comment positively on the work done. However in their independent writing, particularly amongst junior pupils, the presentation of work is unsatisfactory. The lack of pride, in the work many pupils do, affects the overall standard of written work in English. There are good opportunities, however, for extended writing in religious education and history, for example, and information and communication technology is proving to be a useful tool in supporting the subject.
98. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and achieve appropriately when taking their starting points and targets into account. The achievement of those who are registered for the management of behaviour is variable. Where pupils are co-operative over time, their progress is good but where their challenging behaviour is unpredictable their progress over time is less good. The challenging behaviour which occurs most frequently amongst junior pupils affects standards overall for pupils of this age. However where progress is positive, the sensitive management of behaviour by teaching staff and the skilled, inclusive, support of support assistants is significant.
99. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and contains good features within both infant and junior stages of the school. The small percentage of unsatisfactory teaching links notably to the organisation of activities in the classroom. Successful lessons are those where teachers know the subject well and incorporate their knowledge successfully into the literacy hour. This develops pupils' basic literacy skills appropriately. In Year 2 the teacher used previous learning well on how stories start and reminded pupils of appropriate vocabulary such as *setting* when thinking about story writing. Successful teachers make clear links between discussion and activities which often means that pupils work at an appropriate pace and complete tasks successfully. Calm and consistent management of pupils ensures better productivity and concentration on the work to be done. This was particularly evident in Year 4 where pupils were confident enough to ask questions, discuss their task together in pairs and subsequently made good progress in their work on definitions.
100. Lessons are less successful where teachers' expectations are insufficiently high, the time of support assistants is not deployed effectively and ground rules for managing behaviour are not always consistent. Teachers praise the positive effort pupils make but do not always indicate what is unacceptable in the presentation of work. The marking of work gives pupils little feedback on how to improve. The use of support assistant is very effective in specific groups for additional literacy support but during introductory sessions to lessons support assistants are often unoccupied for significant lengths of time.
101. The literacy hour is well established and is at the stage where it can be suitably shaped to meet the needs of all pupils in the school. Staff are working on adapting the assessment for guided reading to give a better picture of reading difficulties. Reading interviews with individual pupils are not a feature of diagnostic assessment at the moment. Teachers incorporate poetry reading and writing in the subject well and encourage pupils to enter for local poetry festivals. Friends of the school contribute very effectively to pupils' appreciation of literature by regularly reading stories to classes across the school. The atmosphere within the school during the reading afternoon to celebrate World Book Day was very positive. The appreciative laughter of pupils when listening to the poems of Roald Dahl and the concentration observed in other classes showed pupils' listening and learning behaviours at their best.
102. Whilst the standards for infant pupils are similar to those reported in the last inspection there has been significant improvement in standards over time particularly in writing. This has been mainly due to a number of initiatives to promote reading and writing such as *Red Apples* programme, Reading Workshop with parental support and additional literacy projects. These coupled with tighter assessment of skills have given teachers better insight into the targets that individual pupils can reach. Standards for junior pupils have declined over time but are



presently showing signs of improvement and strategies, which have proved successful for younger pupils, are to be extended to older pupils with increased funding.

103. The subject has benefited from the input of committed co-ordinators and its priority within the School Development Plan. Further training, for behaviour and learning, is developing positively towards improving standards. Although ongoing assessment could be improved, the subject overall has been monitored well and provides useful information for setting targets for individuals as well as those which will improve the teaching of the subject. Up to the present time, resources have suitably supported the subject but the library is under-used overall and is insufficiently stocked to supplement the subject satisfactorily.
104. Whilst the expectations of pupils remain an area for development since the previous inspection, the school has made steady progress in improvement. Attainment in writing for infant pupils has significantly improved and junior pupils are set to benefit from further action planning and teacher training. The school and outside agencies are working together positively to promote the learning and behaviour of all pupils in the school.

## **MATHEMATICS**

105. Pupils currently in Year 2 attain standards which are in line with the national average. The work seen in class by those in Year 6 was in line with the standards expected but, because of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, the overall standards for this cohort of pupils is below the national average. This shows no significant improvement on the standards reported by the previous inspection. However, since 1997 when the previous inspection took place, pupils' results have consistently been low, casting doubt over the previous judgement. National test results in 2001 for both seven-year-olds and eleven-year-olds showed pupils results were well below average in relation to all schools nationally. When the results are compared with similar schools, those for seven-year-olds were below average, but those for eleven-year-olds remained well below average. Interestingly, if the school's results are compared with in the correct banding, based on the increased number of free school meals, currently standing at 55 per cent, the comparative grades improve. In the case of junior pupils, their performance is almost in line with the results in similar schools. The tests showed that there was no significant difference between boys and girls, with the boys doing slightly better. Taking account of the higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs in Year 6, it is clear that standards are slowly improving. The rising trend in the performance of eleven-year-olds has been particularly impressive as test results for this age group had been consistently well below average up to a year ago.
106. Pupils of all abilities also achieve well over time in relation to their earlier attainments. This is because the school has improved slowly but steadily since the previous inspection. The school has, for example, decided to more effectively use the expertise of the deputy headteacher and Year 6 teacher to teach literacy and numeracy. The deputy headteacher has expertise in mathematics and teaches both his own Year 5 and 6 class and pupils in Year 6. The school has also improved its assessment procedures and teachers are beginning to use the information gained well. Teachers' planning now takes good account of this information to strengthen weak skills and to provide work and support which enable all groups of pupils, including those who are most able and those who have special needs, to make the best progress they can. This is made easier and more effective by an arrangement that allows pupils of similar ability to work together. It is also made more effective by the more consistently better quality of teaching, by improved resources and homework. The effectiveness of these improvements is due to the good quality of subject leadership, reinforced by a good response to the National Numeracy Strategy. A strong basis is laid for continuing improvement.
107. By the age of seven, pupils have made good progress in learning and consolidating their mathematical skills, concepts and vocabulary. The rate of progress is particularly good in Year 2. Work shows a secure grasp of time, shape and space, and an ability to perform calculations with money and to use rulers and simple scales to measure length and capacity. Teachers encourage pupils to exercise before challenging them with calculations involving number tables or mental calculation of half or double numbers. Pupils enjoy taking part in the energetic stretching exercises and are told it is to join up both sides of their brain and help them to be more alert. It certainly helps all to concentrate and all compete to be the first to answer in these sessions.

108. Teachers in the junior classes build effectively on pupils' earlier learning. The rate of progress is not constant, however, and pupils' past work shows more secure and quickening progress from Year 5 onwards. The most likely cause of this is the effect of using the expertise of the deputy headteacher. All pupils achieve well in shape and measure. For example, pupils of differing attainments in Year 4 coped well with tasks requiring them to show their grasp of symmetry. In Year 6, higher-attaining pupils eagerly took on the challenge of finding the best value holiday below £1,500 for their teacher and his family. They understood the several steps involved in the calculation, recognising factors such as room supplements. However, other pupils in the class experienced difficulty with simple problems involving money calculations.
109. By the time they are eleven, most pupils can perform and explain work with all four operations, and their mental competencies are about average, overall. Below average attainers can explain the effect of multiplying or dividing decimal numbers by ten or 100, although they cannot always relate a decimal number to its equivalent fraction. Higher-attaining pupils accurately convert decimals into fractions.
110. The climate for learning in the subject is favourable following the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Throughout the school, teachers plan and teach securely in relation to its framework and three-part lesson structure. They also work together to plot opportunities to reinforce and extend mathematical skills by using them to support learning in other subjects. Almost all pupils show an eager commitment to tackle challenging mental mathematics work, responding enthusiastically to mental sessions and practical tasks.
111. Skills in information and communication technology are also well used in mathematics sessions to support learning, especially in data handling and graphical work. Planning is always good, and includes assessment opportunities and graded work for groups of differing attainments. All lessons have clear and shared objectives, and good structures for developing and reinforcing relevant learning. All teachers insist that pupils use correct mathematical language and explain their methods. 'How did you work that out?' is the question on every teacher's lips. As a result, pupils know where they are going and what is expected of them. The presentation of work, however, is untidy. Pupils take little care to be neat when writing in their exercise books and teachers accept this untidy work without comment in their marking.
112. The quality of teaching and learning overall is satisfactory. In the only unsatisfactory lesson observed, the quality of teaching was poor because a temporary teacher had not been sufficiently well trained to deliver a lesson which met the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy. The common strengths distinguishing the better teaching from that which is satisfactory are:
- pupils are challenged at their level of individual competence. Not only are group tasks accurately matched, but also the questions put to specific pupils during the mental session. As a result, pupils are challenged but not confused, and they make progress;
  - every new point is explained, demonstrated, checked and reinforced in terms that pupils understand. This enables pupils to acquire new understandings and skills with clarity and confidence;
  - teachers working interactively, enthusiastically and at a good pace. Consequently pupils are enthused and kept productively busy;
  - resources and tasks are interesting, and well designed to support the challenges made. Few commercial resources are used because teachers devise fresh and imaginative aids, such as the holiday task in Year 6, which generated independence and interest;
  - teachers maintaining a presence during group activity but, without compromising independent skills or positive attitudes; they look for and expertly use small opportunities to intervene and move learning forward;
  - the impetus of learning is maintained through homework tasks and constructive marking.
113. Whilst these features are present in satisfactory lessons, they operate at a lower level, and a lower pace, and the quality of learning is not as good, particularly for the more able. Common weaknesses found in these lessons are that some pupils are unclear about what to do, and there is a tendency to lower expectations for some more able pupils by giving all in the class the same work to do.

114. Management of mathematics is satisfactory. The co-ordinator's systematic approach to the development of the subject is effectively eliminating weaknesses in teaching. She has developed good assessment systems so that individual progress is now monitored closely through the school. Focused monitoring of teaching works well to strengthen specific elements such as the use of end-of-lesson reviews. Good programmes of staff training have developed expertise, confidence and consistency across the school. Clear priorities have been set for the systematic improvement of standards, and action taken to achieve targets has been highly effective. The school is now able to see that these efforts are beginning to pay off.

## SCIENCE

115. Attainment was well above national expectations in the teachers' assessments for seven-year-olds in 2001. However, standards of work seen during the week of inspection did not reflect this high attainment. In the national tests for eleven-year-olds, attainment is well below national expectations compared to all schools and well below those attained by pupils in similar schools, with few pupils attaining the higher Level 5. Pupils' progress is unsatisfactory and those pupils with special educational needs do not make progress commensurate with their abilities due to the work being poorly matched to their needs. Similarly, the more able pupils are not appropriately challenged. The improvement since the previous inspection is unsatisfactory as many areas have not been fully addressed and standards have not been raised sufficiently.
116. By the age of eleven, most pupils are able to plan and carry out an investigation bearing in mind the need for fair tests. They know about electrical components, can draw their symbols and can construct simple circuit diagrams. Pupils know that a complete circuit is needed to make electrical devices work and most understand the role of insulators and conductors. Pupils in Year 3 are beginning to appreciate the value of healthy eating and exercise. Year 4 pupils know that changes occur when solids are added to water but few pupils use the correct scientific vocabulary e.g. dissolve, insoluble. There is insufficient opportunity for pupils to make predictions, plan and record their work themselves. Pupils in the Year 5 and 6 class work in groups co-operatively to design a burglar alarm and they used their knowledge of circuits, conductivity and practical requirements to solve a problem. In Year 6 some pupils know about the relationship between earth, sun and moon and know how shadows are formed.
117. Younger pupils have a sound knowledge of the requirements for growth in plants and most can name the parts of a plant but do not have any understanding about the functions of roots, leaves and flowers. By the end of Year 2, pupils in their study of 'mini-beasts' in the environment can sort insects into broad groups by observation and know where various insects live. In a good link with information technology pupils used the Internet to link with another school and compare the types of 'mini-beasts' found in their school grounds.
118. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory with examples of good practice in Years 5 and 6. There is a good focus on developing key vocabulary and clear scientific language. For example, in a lesson on electrical properties at the end of Key Stage 2 the teacher encouraged the use of appropriate words to describe what is needed to make a burglar alarm. In the best lessons teachers have high expectations and teaching moves at a fast pace with pupils given time targets to complete their work. Planning is clear and lessons are well focused. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and this is used well to promote a purposeful learning atmosphere. Sometimes the work planned is too prescriptive and lacks challenge for the more able pupils; this overdirection leads to few opportunities for pupils to show any initiative in their learning. Tasks set do not always match the needs of all pupils and in the scrutiny of work it was apparent that many pupils complete identical work. Pupils are not sufficiently prepared to meet the challenges of the Year 6 tests as they are not acquainted with the style of the questions and the rigour of the timed tests. The majority of pupils have difficulty expressing their thoughts in written form and their recording skills are not logically or carefully set out. Insufficient opportunity is given to written recording in lessons and there is an over-reliance on completing worksheets throughout the school.
119. Teachers' expectations are not consistently high enough and the standard of presentation throughout the school is unsatisfactory. Work is regularly undated, untidy and unfinished. Marking is variable and although gives praise to pupils it generally does not provide guidance about what pupils need to do next to improve. Pupils are unaware of the National Curriculum

level at which they are working. Plenty of opportunities for using the scientific skills of investigation are provided but prediction, refinement of their own plans and making generalizations about their work is sometimes missed. Pupils show satisfactory levels of concentration. Most pupils listen well to teachers and show interest and enjoyment in the subject, especially when given the opportunity for practical investigations.

120. Resources for science are good and there is a growing use of information and communications technology to support the subject. In Year 6, for example, pupils used sensors to record the effect insulation material has on water temperature. In good lessons purposeful links are made with other subjects. Class based computers are not used well enough to support learning and extend pupils' knowledge and skills by using CD-ROMs and the Internet.
121. The quality of leadership to support the subject is underdeveloped. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable with specific expertise in the subject but due to lack of opportunity is unable to share his good practice with other staff. The schemes of work and the policy are sound and a strong element is the focus on investigation work but coverage of the curriculum is not monitored and the school is aware of this. Pupils' work is not regularly assessed to National Curriculum levels and assessment is in the early stages of development. The monitoring of teaching, planning and the quality of pupils' work does not take place.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

122. Whilst there were limited opportunities to see art being taught, the sound range of work on display and discussions with pupils show that standards since the previous inspection remain close to expected levels for both junior pupils and infant pupils. Given time constraints by the emphasis placed upon core subjects such as literacy and numeracy, teachers specifically plan to incorporate art in topic work, particularly with younger pupils. However the clear topic links and suitable connections with design and technology means that all pupils make satisfactory progress in their art skills including those who have special educational needs. Pupils often use pencil, brush and paint with care but to some extent have to work hard at control given their below average skills when they enter the school. Equally the work of older pupils is often influenced by their belief in their ability to sketch, draw or create a worthwhile picture. However where planning concentrates initially on the building of skills, the attitudes of pupils to the subject are satisfactory overall.
123. Infant pupils maintain the good creative start in early years through sound opportunities for observational drawing. Pupils in Year 2 talk with some enthusiasm about the flowers they sketch linked to their topic on Spring. Their daffodil pictures show neat brushwork and appropriate choices of colour. Their colour chart show as variety of colours made through colour mixing. Simple portraits, which are drawn and coloured carefully, suggest good support for sound presentation.
124. Junior work connected with a history topic showed aerial views of settlements, which were well drawn and, in some cases, showed a good eye for detail. Discussion with pupils indicated that whilst they enjoy their artwork their recall of work is variable. Infant pupils were mainly able to describe the work in progress and a few junior pupils were able to recall the work of Van Gogh and Monet when exploring the colours of nature. The school has benefited from the work of a visiting artist, which some junior pupils recalled well. They particular enjoyed making clay figures for their work in religious education.
125. Whilst no overall judgement can be made on the teaching of art there was firm evidence in Year 6 of good use of subject vocabulary, clear planning and good demonstration of sketching technique in the style of Edward Hopper. This resulted in pupils having a sound grasp of perspective and using shading techniques well. There was very good inclusion here for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers celebrate the work of pupils throughout the school by mounting attractive displays within the surrounding areas of their classrooms and school. Teaching staff have looked carefully at recommended schemes of work and have recently adapted requirements sensibly into their own scheme. The use of computer programs for art is very positive and whiteboard work gives good opportunities for large groups to explore colour and design in an artistic and technological way.

126. There is no form of assessment or monitoring of the subject so far. This limits the information teachers have on the levels of pupils' skills. However when the scheme of work is fully in place this should raise the levels of skills as well as widen pupils' opportunities in art.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

127. As few lessons were observed and pupils' work on display was limited to connections with topic themes, judgements on standards and teaching have not been made.
128. By the age of seven, pupils cut and measure and join materials carefully when they make houses for their topics on homes. They learn to make simple hinges and, with support from their teachers, their work is well finished for display. Links with art are made when they complete patterns for their design. In discussion they describe how they discuss their proposed designs. They use the vocabulary such *detached*, *terrace* and *semi-detached* when they describe their choices. When using clay they are aware of the need to observe safety when using tools and they make simple judgments about the differences of materials. When working with clay they "had to get it the right shape" and "working with paper was easier".
129. By the time pupils are eleven, they simply record the tools and materials they will need for their design. It is here that their writing and recording skills hold back their progress in planning a design and subsequently evaluating the finished product. Pupils show some inventiveness in the design of a chair of a celebrity but stability and finish are not well considered.
130. Most pupils enjoy their lessons in design and technology and where work is well planned and pupils are well managed good results are obtained. More able pupils in Year 3 made careful measurements on paper and folded these precisely to produce a well-constructed box. In the Year 5 and 6 class, where more decorative boxes were constructed from card and clay, concentration on the task was good overall, boys were particularly keen to shape their clay structures precisely.
131. Whilst the development of design and technology mentioned in the previous inspection has been affected by the emphasis placed on literacy and numeracy, teachers satisfactorily incorporate the principles of designing and making into their topic work. The subject has a low profile presently, largely on account of these priorities. Monitoring and assessment of the subject is not in place and therefore staff do not have sufficient information to judge the progress pupils make overall. Consequently designing, making and recording skills for pupils, particularly those of junior pupils cannot be as well established over time.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

132. Standards are close to those found nationally at the end of Year 2, but below expected levels by the end of Year 6. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 to 2 due to sound planning and teaching. Pupils make steady progress during Years 3 to 6 and their rate of learning generally matches their ability. A significant proportion of pupils in these years find it hard to learn, and their attainment is tempered by their inability to retain information. They have poor levels of general knowledge and do not readily assimilate new knowledge. Their conceptual development is weak. Some pupils, notably older boys, do not make enough progress because they are not motivated to learn. Teaching and planning do not always meet the needs of these pupils. Standards, provision and teaching are similar to those reported at the previous inspection.
133. By Year 2, pupils develop satisfactory knowledge of their local area and draw simple maps and plans of the area in and around school. They draw simple routes and use computers to draw plans. They answer questions about their likes and dislikes of the area and begin to develop an elementary understanding of different types of buildings and land use. Geography is included in the planning of broader topics. This is mainly satisfactory, though there is evidence of more in-depth work at Year 1 than Year 2. Only one lesson was seen and this was taught well. The teacher asked probing questions about methods of transport to develop pupils' thinking, for example 'Could I walk from here to Leeds?' Pupils responded positively to the teacher's clear explanations and to the work that was set at an appropriate level.

134. By Year 6, relatively able and more able pupils reach the national levels in their knowledge and understanding of places, environments and geographical patterns. They understand a range of terminology, including continents, countries and specific terms for weather conditions. They have a broad knowledge of places in the world and of climatic conditions. They are able to make valid comparisons. They remember work about the local area that they were taught in previous years. A sizeable minority of pupils, however, has little knowledge or a muddled understanding of these things. They find learning hard and lack motivation. Although teaching is satisfactory, overall, it is neither sufficiently structured nor dynamic enough to extend the learning of these pupils. Strengths in the teaching include good management of pupils' behaviour, which can at times be challenging, and good knowledge of the local area. Computers are used satisfactorily for research but writing tasks are very narrow and sometimes unchallenging.
135. The co-ordinator has recognised that many pupils have little knowledge of the world and has introduced an additional useful programme of inter-cultural education. Pupils research a country and share their findings with others through displays and class assemblies. Provision is enhanced further through residential visits in Years 4, 5 and 6. Planning now follows national guidelines and is thorough. Resources are good and well stored.

## **HISTORY**

136. There is too little evidence to judge standards by the end of Year 2. No teaching was seen and little evidence was available for the previous teaching of history through stories, for example about Guy Fawkes. The lack of evidence, however, shows that history is not strongly represented in the broad topics that are taught, and this is likely to have a limiting effect on pupils' learning. There are some good examples of teaching linked to the literacy hour through the use of big books, for example about the Victorians, but these are not extended significantly. These young pupils have too few opportunities to extend their historical knowledge and understanding, and to practise their computer skills and their writing in the subject.
137. Planning also has a limiting effect on pupils' learning in Years 3 to 6, where standards are below expected levels and progress is unsatisfactory. Teachers have not yet got to grips with the organisation of history to take account of the mixed-age groups. History is covered through appropriate topics, but there are often long gaps between them. In Year 6, for example both history topics have been covered in the first half of the school year. These gaps limit pupils' chances of acquiring knowledge and skills in a systematic way. By Year 6, relatively able and more able pupils have sound knowledge of the topics taught. For example, they know about daily life during the Second World War and have found out information from a range of sources. They have done some work independently, for example bringing photographs from home to include in a portfolio about life in the 1960s and '70s. The sizeable group of lower-attaining pupils, however, has a limited and muddled recall of historical events. A similar finding was reported at the last inspection. They have a poor understanding of chronology, in spite of the use of timelines displayed around the school. They recall most from lessons where resources have been used to bring history alive, for example a tin of powdered eggs to illustrate food shortages during the war, or from visits, such as that to the coal mining museum.
138. Only one lesson was seen in Years 3 to 6, but this was satisfactory. A teacher's good knowledge of the local area helped pupils to learn more about the history of coal mining. Effective control ensured that pupils paid attention and behaved appropriately. The average and more able pupils were able to consolidate their new learning by recording their work in drawings and writing. This relatively unstructured task was not suitable for the lower-attaining pupils, however, who quickly gave up.
139. Co-ordination of the subject is not effective in raising standards. A review of the curriculum is under way, but the changes to the curriculum are taking too long. The co-ordinator has not been able to monitor or evaluate provision or teaching. Resources, including the use of artefacts, visits and visitors, are satisfactory. Computers are increasingly used for research, but there are too few chances in all year groups for pupils to practise their writing skills.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

140. Standards are broadly in line with national expectations in Year 2 and in Year 6. Since the previous inspection the school has established a computer suite which contains sufficient computers for half a class to be taught together whilst the other half do related work. The school has plans to improve these facilities further and has made good improvements since the previous inspection.
141. Pupils are regularly timetabled to have access to the suite and teachers use it well to teach keyboard skills and the knowledge and skills necessary to support learning in mathematics and science in particular. Teachers are growing in expertise and confidence in teaching the subject but presently they do not plan its application in detail in other subjects. The teaching staff have completed a full training programme and further development is in hand. Work is supported by national guidelines and this gives the necessary structure to ensure that pupils are taught the necessary skills and knowledge throughout the school. There is a system of assessment to record progress and attainment of pupils but this is not yet embedded in practice throughout the school to be fully effective.
142. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall in accordance with their abilities. In a Year 6 class, non-teaching assistants work particularly well with small groups and support their learning well.
143. Pupils are taught satisfactorily in both key stages with some particular strengths in Year 2 and Year 6. The intentions of lessons are shared with pupils and they are made aware of achievements and problems encountered in discussions at the end of lessons. In the best lessons pupils respond well to suitably challenging questioning and tasks set. Numeracy skills are being developed well in the use of graphs, tables and interpretation of data. Fewer opportunities exist for development of literacy skills apart from word processing, using the computer to create a best copy.
144. Presently pupils have to stand at the computers in the suite, as there are insufficient stools, this is not conducive to good work skills. During the inspection evidence was seen of a range of work illustrating clipart, inserting borders, creating postcards using colour magic. Work is not presented well or compiled in a work folder and consequently pupils' work is not valued as it should be and it is difficult to track pupils' progress.
145. Year 1 and 2 class pupils can choose words from a wordbank and use a cursor to highlight the key word and insert it into simple text to make a sentence. Younger pupils have good mouse skills and use 'My Word' to click, drag and drop text labels into prepared picture prompts. They use this in their work on looking at the life-cycle of frogs. In Year 2 pupils can use a CD-ROM to find information about their work on insects.
146. Pupils in Year 4 can successfully use a graph package and make choices to represent data in an appropriate form. In Year 6 pupils can use temperature sensors and graph their results as part of their science work on insulation and materials. Older pupils understand the use of sensors in the real world, for example, their use in traffic lights and burglar alarms. In discussions and scrutiny of work, pupils reach satisfactory standards in word processing, conducting research using the Internet and creating pictures using graphical packages such as Colour Magic. Currently their experience in sending e-mails and searching the Internet is at an early stage of development. Recent Education Action Zone funding has been used to install an interactive whiteboard in one room and this is beginning to be used well to bring lessons to life and utilise a range of source materials.
147. Pupils of all ages enjoy learning about and using ICT. Most work well together in pairs or small groups showing due care and respect for equipment as well as for the suggestions and opinions of their classmates. Resources are good, although there is a limited range of CD-ROMs available to support work in history and geography in particular. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and provides a good lead for the development of the subject. She has supported colleagues well in their training. She has a good understanding of the demands of the curriculum and has an action plan in place to address the need for more structured assessment procedures.

## MUSIC

148. Pupils' attainment in Year 2 is broadly in line with national expectations. However the attainment of Year 6 pupils is below national expectations.
149. Standards in listening, composition and the use of instruments is lower than those often found in schools; this is mainly because the school does not give enough opportunities for listening to a range of music, composing and performing. Improvement since the previous inspection is unsatisfactory, as many issues have not been addressed fully.
150. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated and make satisfactory progress supported by non-teaching assistants. The school uses 'Music in action' and the local authority scheme, which ensures coverage of the curriculum. This is being evaluated to ensure that skills and experiences are being built upon, as the school is aware that in practice there is little progression in the skills learnt. Progress is better in lessons where the pupils are challenged by the tasks set for them and where teacher's expectations clearly demand high standards of performance. Lessons are generally interesting and well organised and the majority of pupils enjoy making music together.
151. Pupils sing enthusiastically in assemblies and in music lessons. Year 2 pupils can choose an instrument and pick out a simple rhythm and maintain it. Most Year 2 pupils can sing simple songs in two parts and are confident accompanying their singing using a range of untuned instruments to beat out the rhythm. Musical vocabulary is not a strong feature of lessons and pupils are unclear what 'rhythm' or 'tempo' means. During the inspection there was no opportunity to evaluate listening and appraising. Discussion with pupils indicates that few pupils in Year 2 or Year 6 could name famous composers or a favourite piece of music and explain their preferences.
152. In a Year 6 class, there are good links between music, English and science; for example, pupils can beat a rhythm on untuned percussion, matching syllables in sentences they had written which was linked to work on planets and the solar system. They considered pace and dynamics in their work using symbols to record the beats. Many pupils found it difficult to maintain the tempo and focus on dynamics of the piece and there was little progression in these skills from Year 2. Pupils in Year 6 do not have a satisfactory knowledge of notation and technical vocabulary. They can name the instruments such as maracas, tambour and tambourine.
153. Teaching is satisfactory throughout the school and CD and taped music is used as an accompaniment to singing as there is no music specialist. Teachers' knowledge and confidence varies across the school and this leads to variations in pupils' progress and the standards they achieve. Most lessons have an appropriate mix of whole-class and group work. In Year 2 a governor regularly comes once week to play the piano to accompany pupils' singing. Lessons are well planned but in some classes expectations are not high enough to challenge the more able pupils and there is an insufficient match to the needs of the pupils.
154. Pupils enjoy their lessons and their attention and concentration is generally satisfactory although in some classes there is a small minority of pupils who consistently talk over the teacher and behave inappropriately.
155. Older pupils have the opportunity to play an instrument, receiving tuition from the music support service. This provision is good and pupils are enthusiastic about their work. The choir, which performs annually at Pontefract Music Festival, is open to all junior pupils. This gives them opportunity to represent the school, enjoy singing together and experience music in the wider community. The music support service provides a concert annually and occasionally a music workshop visits the school to raise the profile of music. These few opportunities play a part in enriching the music curriculum.
156. Resources for music are satisfactory, however since the previous inspection the music room has become unavailable due to other priorities and musical instruments are stored on a mobile trolley. Monitoring of the subject is not in place and the co-ordinator has not had the opportunity to gain an overview of the subject. Assessment is very much in its infancy and as yet does not inform the teacher of what the child can or cannot do. The enthusiasm and commitment of the co-ordinator provides a good lead for the subject and she has plans to address these issues.



## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

157. Standards are above those expected of pupils aged seven and 11. This represents an improvement in standards since the previous inspection when standards were in line with those expected for both seven- and eleven-year-olds. This rise in standards is mostly due to the very good level of resources for physical education, which includes a large well-equipped hall, and the good quality of teaching. Teachers take care to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are fully included in lessons. In common with all pupils, they enjoy taking part and the behaviour of all pupils in lessons is good. Strengths in teaching such as good class management and subject knowledge demonstrated by all teachers help pupils to make good progress.
158. There has been a good improvement in the provision for physical education. The introduction of a nationally recognised scheme of work allows for the systematic development of pupils' skills throughout the school. It also ensures that pupils cover the full curriculum, including the non-statutory outdoor and adventurous activities such as problem solving and orienteering exercises, which are planned into the programme for pupils in the junior classes, often during residential visits. It also includes a good assessment programme, which helps teachers to track the progress of pupils achieving below or above the expected levels effectively.
159. Pupils in the junior classes go swimming and benefit from expert tuition available at the pool with the result that most pupils can swim 25 metres by the time they leave the school. All have the opportunity to practise personal survival skills or develop a range of strokes.
160. A strength of the teaching programme is the pupils' knowledge of the effects of exercise on their body. This is given practical relevance by teachers, who nearly always start lessons with vigorous and sustained warming up sessions, which extend pupils and leave them breathing hard. Pupils in the infant classes know that the heart beats faster after exercise and junior pupils know the reasons for stretching muscles before exercise.
161. Pupils are given good opportunities to develop a range of skills in gymnastics, dance and games. Pupils in Year 1, for example, practise various methods of moving around and over a range of different types of apparatus. In Year 2, pupils effectively develop their balance and control by developing a sequence of movements to incorporate a twisting movement, forward movement and balance position. Year 3 pupils learn the correct methods for striking a ball with their foot, relating this to different sports. All show good control kicking, stopping or dribbling a ball. Year 4 pupils show that they can link their dance sequence closely to music, performing a traditional folk dance with accuracy. In good lessons, teachers use good coaching techniques to extend pupils' learning. Year 6 pupils, for example, are taught how to hold a cricket bat correctly, allowing them to practise batting and fielding skills successfully in pairs and small groups.
162. Pupils have opportunities to apply their skills in games situations and develop tactical awareness. For example, Year 3 pupils develop attacking and marking skills in small-sided games situations, while using a variety of passing techniques. The good range of sports teams gives pupils opportunities to develop these skills in competitive situations.
163. Opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own and others' performances are not well developed in some lessons. Teachers use demonstrations by pupils well to illustrate points and identify how the performance might be improved but some do not give pupils the chance to comment themselves on their own or others' performance.
164. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers use the detailed scheme of work as a basis for planning their lessons, ensuring that pupils encounter a range of activities. They dress appropriately, emphasising the importance of the subject and setting a good example, which is generally followed by pupils. In good lessons, teachers show good class management techniques, ensuring that pupils pay close attention and work hard, helping to consolidate and extend their skills and learning. They also ensure pupils are aware of health and safety issues. Pupils in Year 1 know, for example, that four are needed to lift out heavy mats carefully and all are aware of the need to remove jewellery. Good lessons are conducted at a good pace but sometimes the pace of lessons is allowed to slow down when the teacher takes too long to give instructions or question pupils about their performance, reducing the time and opportunities available for practice. The very good level of resources for lessons means that all pupils are

provided with good opportunities to practise throwing and catching, for example. Additional facilities such as a good-sized field and a playground marked for various activities further enhances the opportunities for pupils to do well in this subject.

165. The curriculum is managed well by the subject co-ordinator, who unfortunately was absent during the inspection. Teachers' planning is checked each term and the quality and condition of resources is reviewed regularly. However, time has not yet been allocated to monitor the quality of teaching effectively. Pupils' attitudes to physical education are generally positive and this helps their learning. A satisfactory range of extra-curricular sporting activities also makes a positive contribution to their learning. These include a marching club and football and netball training.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

166. There is too little evidence to make a judgement about standards at the end of Year 2 as only one lesson was seen in the infant department. This was taught well and Year 1 pupils showed appropriate levels of understanding about Easter and made good gains in their learning. The teacher introduced the idea of religious symbolism at a level that pupils could understand, and used resources well to make the lesson interesting. Planning for Years 1 and 2 is now satisfactory and has improved since the previous inspection. Religious beliefs, values, festivals and celebrations are all included and are planned to help pupils gain knowledge in a systematic way. However, the amount of time that teachers say that they give to the subject is still below the national average. Religious education is taught regularly, but for quite short periods. Much work is oral and there is very little recorded evidence of pupils' work. Chances for pupils to write independently are lost. Coverage is still sometimes superficial. Stories are used appropriately, for example 'I am a Jew' with Year 2 pupils, but this lesson was not extended to consolidate pupils' learning by showing artefacts or inviting Jewish visitors to talk about their faith.
167. There has been some improvement in planning in Years 3 to 6 since the previous inspection in that individual blocks of work are often well planned and taught, for example on the Sikh religion and Buddhism. However, the overall curriculum is not planned in detail for each year group for each term and this has a limiting effect on the progress that the pupils make. Christian festivals, for example, are taught annually and planning does not make it clear how pupils' knowledge and understanding should be developed, as they grow older. Overall, pupils make steady progress, though overall standards remain below expected levels by the end of Year 6. As well as shortcomings in planning, this judgement also reflects the high proportion of pupils in classes who find learning very difficult. Some of these pupils lack the necessary motivation to learn.
168. Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers' subject knowledge is adequate. Explanations and questioning are used well. Pupils' behaviour, which can be very challenging, is managed well. Resources are used effectively to extend pupils' knowledge, particularly in relation to other world faiths. Year 4 pupils' contribution to an assembly about Buddhism reflected good previous teaching. Many of these pupils have learning difficulties, but show what they can achieve when they are motivated. They spoke out confidently about the eight-fold path and led other pupils in meditation. In some lessons, strengths in the introductory part of the lesson are not matched by carefully prepared activities for pupils to do in groups or independently. In an otherwise sound lesson about Islam, for example, pupils were given a free choice of work. The lower-attaining pupils chose the easy option, to colour in Islamic tile patterns. They did this without adequate support and guidance and marked time, learning little of significance. Generally, pupils have too little opportunity to record their work in a variety of ways and to practise their writing skills.
169. The co-ordination of the subject is not effective in raising standards. The co-ordinator has not been allocated any time to monitor or evaluate provision or teaching as the school has been concentrating all its energy on raising standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Resources are adequate and are mainly used well.