

INSPECTION REPORT

CASTLEFIELDS INFANT SCHOOL

Rastrick, Brighouse

LEA area: Calderdale

Unique reference number: 107531

Headteacher: Mrs S Wood

Reporting inspector: Mrs M Fitzpatrick
24326

Dates of inspection: 2 – 5 December 2002

Inspection number: 246684

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
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Field Top Road Rastrick Brighouse
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Courtney Thompson
Date of previous inspection:	24 November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
24326	Mrs M Fitzpatrick	Registered inspector	English History English as an additional language Education inclusion	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
11437	Mr A Anderson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
30781	Mrs W Stenton-Richardson	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Science Music Religious education Art and design	The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

22482	Mr B Potter	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Geography Physical education Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Castlefields is a small, two-form entry infant school with 167 pupils on roll. The school has no nursery and children join the school in the year in which they are five. The percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is about average. While the percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than in most schools, there are only five pupils who are at a low level of fluency in English. The ethnic background of pupils is mainly white European, with about twenty five per cent of pupils from other ethnic origins, mainly Asian - Pakistani or black Caribbean. There has been a significant increase in the number of pupils from other heritages since the previous inspection and the school has adapted its provision for cultural development very well in that time. The school has a lower than average percentage of pupils on the special needs register and currently there are no pupils with a statement of special educational need. The majority of special educational needs are associated with physical impairment or emotional and behavioural difficulties. The attainment of pupils when they join the school is average overall, though, often, there is a good proportion of higher attaining pupils. The attainment of children when they enter the school is now lower than at the time of the previous inspection. The school has recently gained the Investors in People Award for its extensive staff development programme.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Castlefields is a very good school, which places very effective emphasis on child-centred learning. It achieves good standards because of the excellent curriculum, the good teaching and the good attitudes of the children. Children learn well in a happy, safe and high quality environment. The school is very well led and managed and the headteacher places very strong emphasis on the professional development of all staff. The school has a strong community spirit and works in very good partnership with all who have an interest in the children's learning. Taking into account the efficiency of spending and the very good outcomes for the children, the school is judged to give very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are good and the children achieve well. Performance in national tests, especially in mathematics, is well above that of similar schools. Standards in art and design and information and communication technology are well above the expectation for pupils of this age.
- The quality of teaching is good; there is excellent provision of classroom support for learning. All staff make very good use of assessment to help pupils make good progress.
- The school is very well led and managed. The professional development of staff is very good.
- Curriculum provision, including out of school activities in Years 1 and 2, is excellent; in Reception it is very good. Teachers' planning for learning is of a very high quality.
- The school benefits from a very high level of commitment and care from all who work there.
- There is very good partnership with parents to support pupils' learning and to support learning in the community.
- There are high quality and effective links with partner schools, the community and industry which promote pupils' learning and prepare them well for the next stage of education.
- There is very good provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
- There is very good provision for pupils who have special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language.

What could be improved

- The behaviour of a few pupils.
- The curriculum for personal and social education.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good improvement since it was last inspected in November 1997. All of the issues identified then have been successfully tackled and the school has made very significant improvements in the quality of its provision, especially in information and communication technology where standards are now well above the expectation. Standards in national tests have kept pace with the national trend of improvement. The quality of leadership and management in the school has improved and the impact of this is seen in the high quality teamwork, which has improved provision for the curriculum and the quality of teaching, and in the higher standards seen in most subjects. The provision of classroom assistants has improved dramatically and is now outstanding. Links with parents, which were good at the time of the previous inspection, are now very good, as are the links with neighbouring schools and local industry. Taking into account the high quality leadership of the headteacher, the very good management of key staff and the governors' role in the school's development, the school is in a very good position to continue to improve and to raise standards even further.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
Reading	A	C	B	B
Writing	A	C	C	C
Mathematics	A	A	A	A

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

Taking all test scores together, in 2002, pupils' performance was well above the average of all schools. In the teacher assessments in science, the percentage of pupils who reached the expected level was above the national average and for those reaching the higher level it was well above the national average. Since the previous inspection, results have improved in line with the national trend. Pupils in Year 2 now, are on course to achieve standards above the national average in the tests in 2003. Pupils reach such good standards because of the quality of teachers' planning for their learning, the excellent use that teachers make of classroom assistants to give support to learning and their clear expectations that children will work hard. The result is that children do work at a good rate and they achieve well. This is also true of other subjects. In art and design and information and communication technology they reach standards that are well above the expectation for their age. In music and religious education they reach the expected standard and in all other subjects they exceed the expected standards for their age. Children in the Reception classes make good progress in their learning because of the teachers' very good planning and the high quality curriculum they provide. A few children in Reception need extra provision to help them cope with the demands of working with others and learning the conventions of how to behave in a group. The school is aware of these needs and has involved outside agencies to give

additional support and advice. Otherwise, children in Reception are on course to reach the early learning goals in all areas of learning by the end of the Reception year.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good and in some classes very good. Pupils like school and show a sense of excitement and enthusiasm for learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory overall. While the vast majority of children are well behaved and co-operative, there are a few in some classes who reduce the overall quality of the behaviour through immature attitudes. The school has already begun to take action to address this issue.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils relish the opportunity to take responsibility both for classroom routines and their own learning. They develop close and trusting relationships with their teachers and their friends.
Attendance	Satisfactory. In line with national average. Some lateness in the mornings means a few pupils don't benefit fully from a punctual start to learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good in the school overall, and a high proportion of very good teaching was seen in Years 1 and 2 during the inspection. Literacy is very well taught because teachers have good subject knowledge and they plan in detail for all groups in their classes. Pupils' learning of the basic skills is good because they are given interesting and achievable tasks which they enjoy doing. In mathematics lessons, the teaching is always good and often very good. Teachers make very good use of questions to stimulate pupils' thinking about number. Pupils relish the challenges set and, as a result, develop very good mental agility with number. Teaching in science is always good. Pupils' learning in the subject is made memorable through the interesting investigations that they do. These help them to think for themselves, as well as to develop good observational skills. In all other subjects teaching is at least satisfactory and usually good. In information and communication technology, the teaching, including that of the specialist support assistant, is very good, helping pupils to reach standards well above the expectation for their age. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language is good and they learn at the same rate as other pupils in their class because of the outstanding support from classroom assistants. In the Reception classes teaching is good overall. The strength of children's learning in Reception lies in the careful planning of the curriculum. This ensures that the majority make good progress and develop independence. The curriculum for personal and social education is less well developed than it is for other subjects and this impacts on the quality of teaching, which is satisfactory overall for the subject.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
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The quality and range of the curriculum	Excellent in Years 1 and 2; very good in Reception. Planning for progression is very good, as is the provision for extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The high quality of teaching and the careful monitoring of pupils' progress ensure that they achieve well against the targets set for them.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. Classroom assistants provide very good support for pupils who are at early stage of fluency to acquire English. Those who are fluent learn at the same rate as other pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall; very good provision for spiritual and cultural development. Pupils' excitement about the world around them is very well nurtured, so too is their appreciation of art, music and literature from their own and other cultures. The vast majority of pupils mix well in play and learning activities.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes very good care of its pupils through well thought out procedures for monitoring their attendance and progress. The assessment of pupils' learning is very good. There is a hazard to pupils' safety when they arrive at school because of the traffic congestion on the busy road.

The school has a very good partnership with parents, which is very effective in supporting pupils' learning. Parents are encouraged to take part in the work of the school and are supported in the development of their own learning through use of the school's facilities.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good leadership from the headteacher provides clear direction and a good pace for the development of the school. The deputy headteacher and other key leaders provide very good support for developments.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have a good knowledge of the school and are actively involved in its development. They ensure that all statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The headteacher is well aware of how the school performs in comparison with similar schools and is skilled in supporting staff to continually improve their practice in order to raise standards. Monitoring procedures ensure that all staff have a good knowledge of what the school's priorities are.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school makes very good use of all staff and physical resources for the benefit of pupils' learning. The headteacher and governors are determined to make the best use of the school's resources and in doing so they are very good at securing best value in what the school does and in what it buys.

Staffing, learning resources and the accommodation are all very good. Together they provide very well for pupils' learning and help make the school the happy place it is.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That their children like school, are expected to work hard and make good progress. • That behaviour in the school is good. • That the teaching is good. • That the school works closely with them and keeps them well informed about how their children are progressing. • That the school is well led and managed. • That the school provides an interesting range of activities. • That their children are well supported to become mature and accept responsibility. • That provision for homework is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very small number of parents do not think the school gives the right amount of homework.

Inspectors agree wholeheartedly with the positive views of the school held by a majority of parents. Inspectors do not agree with those parents who have concerns about the provision for homework, which they judge that to be very much better than is usually found in schools of this type.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the school with average attainment. By the time they start Year 1 they have achieved the standards expected of five year olds, and some have exceeded them in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development. Learning in the Reception classes is good and children achieve well.
2. In the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2002, the school's performance in reading was above both the national average and the average of similar schools. In writing, the school's performance was in line with the national average and that of similar schools. In these tests, the percentage of pupils reaching the higher level was above average in reading and well above average in writing. In the national tests in mathematics, the school's performance was well above both the national average and the average of similar schools. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher level was very much higher than the national average. Since the last inspection, the school's performance in these subjects has been above the national average and the trend of improvement has kept pace with the national trend. There is no difference in the performances of boys and girls in the tests. Teacher assessments of pupils' standards in science in 2002 place the school in line with the average at the expected level and well above average for the percentage of pupils reaching the higher level.
3. Standards in reading and writing in the current Year 2 are above the expectation for pupils aged seven. The reason for this, and the sustained good standards in English, is the high quality of teaching in the subject. Teachers ensure that they provide good challenges for pupils to use their basic skills and that they have plenty of opportunity to reinforce their learning. The result is that pupils are confident and eager to work independently. They always work hard to please their teachers. In mathematics, standards are above the expectation for seven-year-olds. Pupils relish the sharp questioning at the start of lessons and develop good mental agility with number. The mathematics curriculum is very well planned to ensure that pupils cover all elements of the subject in good depth, with the result that they develop confidence and expertise in the subject. Standards in science are also above the expectation for their age. The strength of learning in science lies in the many opportunities that pupils have to carry out investigations and learn from observation and deduction. The methods used ensure that pupils are secure in their learning and have a better understanding of the natural world than is usually seen.
4. In religious education and music, pupils reach standards expected of seven-year-olds. In all other subjects, pupils learn well and achieve good standards; in art and design and information and communication technology they reach standards that are well above what is expected for their age. The good and very good standards achieved are the result of very careful planning by teachers and classroom assistants, which provides exciting and interesting learning, while teaching the important skills and knowledge in each subject. In art and design, pupils are very confident and accomplished in using different media, such as paint, clay, crayon and fabric to create visual images. They also have a very good understanding of the work of famous artists and sometimes use their work for ideas and to copy techniques. In information and communication technology, pupils frequently use computers to support their learning in other subjects; they have very good keyboard and 'mouse' skills as a result of this frequent practice. They also show a very good knowledge of a wide range of programs

and applications for information and communication technology. The standards achieved in information and communication technology owe much to the excellent support given by the information and communication technology assistant.

5. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported to make good progress against the targets set for them. They achieve well, and many reach the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they are seven. This is because of the excellent support they have from classroom assistants, who have a very good knowledge of their needs and have been very well prepared to meet these needs by the high quality planning of teachers. Pupils find their learning is demanding but achievable and always managed at a pace which is comfortable for them. The few pupils who are at an early stage of learning English also make very good progress. This is because of the small group provision, where there is a strong emphasis on developing vocabulary and the correct use of forms of expression. The work of the literacy support manager is excellent in developing pupils' use of spoken English. As a result of this very good support, pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make the same good progress in their learning as do other pupils.
6. The school has sustained high standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science since the previous inspection as a result of very good development of the curriculum and the good quality of teaching. The professional development of classroom assistants has been very significant in raising standards in many subjects, as well as supporting the high standards in English, mathematics and science. The very well developed partnership with parents is another factor which helps the school sustain the high standards it seeks for its pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. The good attitudes to learning found at the last inspection have been maintained, despite changes linked to the school's wider catchment area.
8. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good overall and in many lessons they display a high level of enthusiasm. This is especially the case in information and communication technology lessons where they work very well with a partner to complete tasks. A group of Year 2 pupils worked with very good concentration to find information about the Arctic and Antarctic for their geography topic. They were careful to discuss and note what they were learning and to be fair about taking turns at the keyboard. In other lessons where enthusiasm and excitement about learning accelerate progress, this is usually because the teachers have organised tasks so that pupils are doing much of their learning independently. The vast majority of pupils respond very well to this method of working and have the skills and confidence to deal with a high level of responsibility for their learning. On the few occasions when pupils' attitudes are satisfactory, rather than better, this is usually because they have sat too long listening to the teacher's explanations or they have not all been effectively included in the questioning.
9. Attitudes to learning in the Reception class are noticeably more variable than in Years 1 and 2. This is because of the increased number of children who have not benefited from regular pre-school provision, or are significantly less mature than their peers. These children have a low concentration span and need much more intensive adult support to show them how to learn through play and how to share and take turns. Those children who have had regular pre-school or nursery experience show good

attitudes to learning. They have responded well to the carefully planned activities and are making good progress as a result.

10. In most lessons pupils listen closely to teachers and to each other. The few occasions when listening is less good usually occur when a teacher spends too much time focussing on the behaviour of one or two pupils so that others lose interest. Pupils show very good listening skills particularly when they are told what work they will do. They always know exactly what to do and organise themselves very quickly to get started. They are sympathetic to the needs of others and show a good understanding of those pupils who need extra support to help them behave well.
11. Behaviour in the school is satisfactory overall, with many examples of good and very good behaviour seen both in and out of classrooms. There have been no recent exclusions from the school. Good behaviour was observed in whole school assemblies, where children entered very quietly and listened with good attention. The vast majority of pupils are polite and courteous towards each other and adults. They know the rules for their classroom and the playground and follow them to help create the harmonious atmosphere that pervades the school. Most pupils displayed consistently good behaviour when walking around the school and in the playground. Behaviour in the dining room was less good. Here, some pupils were noisy and less careful of each other than they were in the classroom or playground. This was partly because of a drop in lunchtime supervision due to ill-health, but also because the lunchtime supervisors did not have the same expectations of pupils nor did they use the same approaches as teachers and classroom assistants.
12. The day-to-day relationships between pupils and teachers and pupils and pupils are good. Pupils work very well in collaboration with their peers. They develop trusting and supportive relationships with each other and their teachers. The quality of relationships has a positive impact on the learning of all pupils either by giving or receiving support from peers. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to enhance their personal development through taking registers to the office, tidying up classrooms and serving themselves in the dining room. The result is that pupils are confident and willing to volunteer for responsibility and relish taking responsibility for their own learning.
13. Attendance at the school is satisfactory and is in line with the national average. There is evidence of occasional lateness from a minority of pupils.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was good overall, with a high proportion of very good teaching. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection, particularly in the amount of very good teaching seen in the Infant classes. Improvements in teaching have been brought about in response to the school's monitoring procedures, which allowed the headteacher to identify where professional development was needed to improve teachers' skills. The extensive developments in curriculum provision, including the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies, together with an increased focus on planning for teaching, have also played a part in improving the overall quality of teaching and learning.
15. The quality of teaching in the Reception class is good overall and good support from classroom assistants was seen in both classes. Teachers' planning is a strength of the provision; the range of opportunities provided ensures that children learn at a good rate. Through their careful planning, teachers make sure that children are able to make

choices in their learning when working independently, as well as when being directed by adults. Teachers' planning for creative development is very good. Children make great strides in their understanding of techniques and materials in art work; their language development and imagination are fostered through the many well-planned opportunities for role-play. The teachers in the Reception classes monitor children's learning well and they make use of the information they gather to provide good challenge for the next stage of learning. This allows children to learn at their own rate and to solidly reinforce their learning.

16. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching is good overall, with a high proportion of very good teaching seen. Teachers have a good understanding of how children learn. They provide interesting and imaginative activities to engage their pupils' interest and keep them motivated. They ensure that pupils have plenty of opportunities to develop independence by designing activities and tasks that allow them to find out for themselves. For example, pupils in Year 2 worked with a minimum of supervision on different programmes on the computers to find information about the Arctic and Antarctic regions. Such learning is memorable, as was demonstrated by Year 2 pupils, who were able to recall good detail from similar topics they had studied earlier in the term. Teachers' expectations of pupils are high and, because they provide interesting tasks, pupils always rise to the challenges set and work hard. In the vast majority of lessons, not a moment is lost when pupils are told their work; they organise themselves quickly and settle with good concentration. This eagerness on the part of most pupils to please their teachers makes a good contribution to their learning.
17. Literacy is very well taught. Teaching in English was very good in all lessons seen. Teachers have good subject knowledge and the detail of their planning shows that they know what different groups of pupils and individuals need to learn next. Teachers place a strong emphasis on letter sounds when they teach reading and spelling. The thorough grounding that pupils have gives them confidence to attempt new words when reading, as well as helping them to spell, so that their writing can be understood. The use of classroom assistants allows the formation of small groups so that all pupils are taught at a level where they can make good progress. Occasionally, a teacher does not involve all pupils effectively when questioning in whole class sessions. This reduces pupils' opportunities to develop their confidence through talk. In Year 1 classes, questioning is very well used to involve all pupils, making them all feel valued and confident.
18. Mathematics teaching is good overall, with half the lessons seen, being very good. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they use this very effectively to produce very good lesson plans. Pupils respond well and are particularly hard working in the highly appropriate and interesting activities, which they are expected to carry out. Pupils learn well because of the brisk pace to teachers' good questioning. They respond by concentrating hard and thinking quickly so that they can volunteer answers and explain their methods of working out. The stimulus provided by the mathematical displays adds to pupils' learning and reinforces their knowledge of the topics that are currently being studied. The pupils respond well to the teachers' high expectations in mathematics lessons and they enjoy working both independently and at a good rate.
19. The contribution made by classroom assistants to teaching and learning is exemplary. They work very closely with teachers in planning and monitoring the work of the pupils for whom they are responsible. They form very good relationships with the pupils, who respond positively to their support and work hard to meet the targets set for them. All classroom assistants who have worked in the school for some time are highly skilled because of the good training they have received. They are well able to develop pupils'

reading skills and knowledge of number. Lower attaining pupils in Year 2 did very well in their instructional writing because of the very good support they were given by the classroom assistant, whose questioning and encouragement helped them all to succeed. In all lessons in the Infants, the work of classroom assistants increased the pace of learning and ensured success for every pupil in the groups they taught. The impact of the work of classroom assistants on the standards that pupils achieve is very good. The work of the literacy support manager is outstanding, both in its scope and in its impact. She is highly skilled in managing pupils' learning and has very good strategies for motivating and instructing young children. Her work on sound sequences with Reception children very rapidly developed their confidence, their speaking and listening skills and their understanding of how sounds related to words. The pupils involved were delighted with their success, secure in what they had learned and were clearly eager to continue with more of the same kind of activity on another occasion.

20. Teachers make use of a good range of resources to interest and motivate pupils. The number of visits and visitors arranged to support learning is impressive. So too is teachers' use of information and communication technology to encourage pupils' independence in learning. Pupils concentrate very hard when they work on computers, both in and out of the classroom. They enjoy applying their skills to finding out new information and presenting this in different ways. Pupils in Year 1 have made very good progress in their understanding of the work of Henry Moore, as well as learning how to produce good quality sculptures of their own in clay when working with a visiting artist. Teachers' planning to link subjects is another strength of the learning process. In history, Year 2 pupils have used computers and interviewed people from the community to find out about houses in the past. Next term they will visit a local museum to take part in a day of Victorian housework to consolidate their knowledge of this learning. Teaching in science is good; a strength of pupils' learning is the amount of investigative work that they do. As a result, pupils are confident about expressing their ideas. The experiences planned by teachers for the pupils make their learning memorable as well as exciting.
21. Teachers' use of assessment in the classroom is very good. They make careful assessments of pupils' knowledge both through questioning at the start of lessons and through observation of how they work on tasks. They keep very good records of these observations and use them to plan the next stage of learning. This is particularly notable in English and mathematics, where pupils are always provided with tasks that challenge while allowing them to succeed.
22. The learning of pupils with special educational needs is very well planned by the teachers and classroom assistants. The teachers use very good assessment procedures to identify precisely what individuals need to learn next. Teachers and classroom assistants know and value each pupil and they work together well to promote and monitor effective learning. Pupils with special educational needs work with others who are at a similar level. They benefit considerably from the quality and extent of support that the school provides and make good progress as a result.
23. The pupils who speak English as an additional language are nearly all fluent and have no difficulty in learning through English. For those pupils who are at an early stage of learning English, there is good provision. They are well supported by teachers' planning and classroom assistants who spend time developing their knowledge and use of English.
24. The provision for homework is very good. Teachers ensure that each pupil is provided with work that is at the same level as they work on in class. This means that all pupils'

needs are well met and that homework provides very good support for the progress they make. Parents were overwhelmingly in favour of the school's homework arrangements.

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

25. The school provides very good and full coverage of a broad and balanced National Curriculum for all its children, which together with its planning, is one of its main strengths. The several enrichments to its curriculum, such as French club, ensure that it meets very well all statutory requirements, including the provision of religious education. An appropriate amount of time is spent on each subject and these are all reflected in very high quality displays which greatly enhance the learning environment of the school. Important subjects of the curriculum, such as English, mathematics and information communication technology are well used to support learning in other subjects.
26. The school has worked hard and very successfully since the previous inspection to improve further its curriculum provision, with the result that curricular opportunities are now excellent. There are many opportunities for independent learning, for example in the organisation of classrooms and the provision of extension activities to enable and encourage independent investigation. The curriculum developments have underpinned the extensive improvements that have taken place across the school in teaching and the environment.
27. The national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are very well implemented. Other subjects have their own schemes of work, which help to guide teachers in their planning and are implemented in the day to day teaching. There are many instances of literacy and numeracy being very well integrated in other subjects. For example, the planning for design technology and science shows that very good opportunities are provided for children to practise their developing literacy skills through writing accounts and reports of their work. When the theme/subject in design technology is making soup, this factor becomes the main focus of a subsequent literacy lesson. Numeracy is used in science through, for example, graphical representation and in physical education through the use of non-standard measurements.
28. Information and communication technology is used very well across the curriculum with the skills pupils have learnt being put to good use. This has been an important area for development and can now be regarded as an area of strength in the school. As well as good opportunities in the computer suite, each class has its own bank of computers and these are constantly used, supporting and adding enrichment to almost every lesson.
29. The curriculum for children under five is planned to teach the "Early Learning Goals". The school and local playgroups work closely in partnership to ensure consistency of approach and provision. By so doing, a very good foundation is provided for children to build upon as they become five and enter the National Curriculum programme. Very good provision is made for language and literacy, mathematics, creative development and in developing a good understanding of the world. The provision for personal and social development is satisfactory, but needs a sharper focus to teach children the important skills of listening and sharing. Children's physical skills are well developed and all, including those identified as having special education needs, are given equal opportunity and access to a full range of activities. This is also true for those children who speak English as an additional language.

30. The curriculum meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs. The very good provision made for them and the high quality of the support they receive enable them to make very good progress. They are provided with a range of activities that match their ability and mirror the activities being carried out by the rest of the class. The very good individual education plans have clear and achievable short term targets which are appropriate to the individual pupils' current needs. These targets are well reflected in teachers' planning. Very good records are kept of their progress and parents are very well involved in the process by which the school addresses their child's special educational need.
31. Health education is very well promoted. For example, children, parents, staff and governors have all been involved in collecting a broad selection of evidence to support the schools' application for the Healthy Schools Award. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is regularly timetabled but there are some lost opportunities during these lessons to address matters of attitude and behaviour among a few which are currently very pertinent to the school. Sex education is linked to the science curriculum and PSHE. Further learning takes place through the Healthy Schools' project. The schools' provision for this area is good and appropriate for children of this age. The school has involvement with a national initiative to ensure its pupils are aware of both the good and harmful aspects of drugs. Learning is reinforced through drama and play activities.
32. The school makes very good provision of a wide range of extra-curricular activities, both during the day and after school. These activities, which include dance, football, gymnastics, recorder, choir, French, and an information technology club which extends to include parents and children working together, involve many pupils. Learning opportunities are enhanced and a sense of pride in achievement and sense of community are fostered. Opportunities are very good for an infant school, with teachers seeing this as an extension to their homework provision, and so it is another area which can be regarded as a strength in the school's provision.
33. There are very good links between the school, other schools and the wider community. Its very good association with Longroyde School helps to ensure curriculum continuity and the close association and frequent visits of Year 2 children make sure that the transition process is relatively easy. The local high school is very supportive. A design technology project, sponsored by local industry, was significantly enhanced by the expertise and the facilities provided by the high school. The school is providing very good opportunities for the integration of children from the neighbouring special school by encouraging frequent visits through which these children are able to work alongside mainstream children in lessons. An example of this good integration was observed in a physical education lesson.
34. Visits and visitors to the school provide very good and regular enrichments to the curriculum. These are well linked to curriculum areas and special events, for example, visits of an African drummer added interest to music whilst a dance artist provided example and inspiration for the dance element of the physical education curriculum. Local artists regularly visit to teach pupils specific skills, such as how to create models in clay. To mark World Book Day, the whole school visited the library.
35. The school makes good provision overall to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is a similar position to that found at the last inspection.

36. The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual development. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. Positive contributions are made through time set aside for prayer and reflection in some assemblies and at the end of lessons as pupils reflect on their learning. The use of a candle in assembly helps pupils to reflect calmly and creates an atmosphere conducive to worship. There are opportunities for pupils to explore values and beliefs as, for example, finding out the meaning of Advent to Christians or Eid-ul-Fitr to those of the Muslim faith. There are opportunities for excitement in learning across a range of subjects and a supportive atmosphere where pupils' self esteem is promoted. Discussions in many subjects help pupils to understand and develop spiritual awareness. The quality of the physical environment for the pupils is very good. The school is attractive and welcoming to visitors. The building is clean and well maintained and large ranges of lively, interactive displays celebrate the life and work of the school and underpin its aims. Pupil's achievements are also celebrated in assemblies, newsletters, and on display boards throughout the school. The recently formed 'nurture group' and arrangements for pupils with severe special educational needs to visit and take part in school activities result in pupils learning to consider the needs of others, those with physical or mental disabilities or those for whom English is not their first language. However, aspects of supervision in the dining hall detract from the calm purposeful atmosphere at other times of the day. This factor lessens the considerable strengths in spiritual development.
37. The provision for moral development is satisfactory. This is a weaker position than that found at the last inspection. While the school highlights good behaviour in its mission statement the agreed rewards and sanctions in the new behaviour programme are not used consistently by all staff yet. The vast majority of pupils behave well but in the Reception classes and Year 2 the poor listening skills and immaturity of a few, sometimes have a negative effect on learning. As pupils enter school the teaching of codes that are necessary to live together as a school community are not sufficiently explicit for those pupils with little experience of pre-school learning. The expectations of both teaching and non-teaching staff are lower than they could be. This means that some pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to listen to their teachers or each other nor are they taught the importance of putting up their hands if they need a turn to talk. Some pupils in Year 2 also show unsatisfactory listening skills and concentration at carpet times. This is usually found when they are sitting passively for too long. Where teachers use interactive methods of teaching such as the use of number fans, listening skills are at their best. Some of the strategies used by staff mean that pupils with behavioural difficulties are too frequently picked to come to the front of the class to speak or demonstrate. This results in those pupils who try hard to conform and behave well feeling left out. Staff plan well to promote equality of opportunity for pupils with special educational needs, pupils from ethnic minorities who may not speak English as a first language and more able pupils. All pupils have equal access to curricular and extra curricular activities. The school provides a safe learning environment. Through its religious education lessons and assemblies, the school effectively promotes the awareness of the rules of other cultures. This means that pupils learn respect for other faiths and beliefs.
38. The provision for social development is satisfactory. The school has clear systems to ensure that all pupils are made welcome in the foundation unit and the school. All pupils are encouraged to work co-operatively, share and take turns. For example in a Year 1 lesson in religious education pupils sat in groups and drew pictures for a class Advent calendar, they worked together in a friendly way talking about what they had chosen to draw. Assemblies, school concerts and the wide range of extra curricular activities also provide for the development of personal qualities. The good relationships between all members of staff and pupils help to create a positive atmosphere. There are good

opportunities for pupils to take responsibilities for routine jobs such as taking the register or clearing up. Children are chosen to take on the responsibility of a 'Castlefield Carer' and friendship stops in the playground encourage everyone to be included in playtimes. The residential visits provide pupils with further opportunities to develop their independence and personal and social skills through a range of challenging and exciting activities. Midday supervisory staff do not always speak as politely as they should to pupils, which is an unsatisfactory position.

39. The school makes very good provision for cultural development, which is a further improvement since the last inspection. Pupils visit places of interest such as Cannon Hall. Visits such as the South African drummer and visitors with religious education links to talk about Muslim, Sikh and Christian beliefs assist learning about other cultures. The 'Hand to Mouth Ministry' puppet theatre has also visited school to develop an understanding of Christianity. The wide range of extra curricular activities and opportunities to enhance the curriculum extend pupils' understanding of the world they live in. There are opportunities to take part in literature and cultural events. There are good links with the wider community, neighbouring schools, the early years' network, Highbury Special School and local places of worship. The reinforcement of cultural values is strengthened by the high quality of displays around the school in every curriculum area. Through religious education lessons pupils study other religions such as Islam or Hinduism as well as Christianity. This helps pupils to broaden their understanding of the diversity of the world in which they live. Curriculum focus weeks highlight the importance of music, literacy, mathematics, design technology and information and communication technology and extend pupils' cultural development across the curriculum.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. The procedures for child protection and welfare are good and those for the monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development are very good. The educational and personal support and guidance for pupils' is also very good. With respect to safety, the headteacher does her best to ensure the safety of children as they arrive at school by monitoring the traffic on the road outside the school. This is to prevent parking or the use of the school's car park which could endanger the safety of children. Without this level of vigilance there is a strong possibility of an accident involving the children.
41. Child Protection procedures are in place and are effective. The school teaching staff and classroom assistants, very well supported by a range of external agencies, provide a high degree of welfare support to individual pupils. The day to day pastoral and welfare provision for children at the school is particularly strong. In the classroom, teachers are quick to observe any personal difficulties and to take appropriate and remedial action. Teachers are very well supported by a wide range of classroom assistants who are used to maximum effect. The school carries out regular health and safety audits of the site and full records are maintained. Fire drills and alarm system tests are also a regular feature of school life and appropriate records are kept. A very small number of minor health and safety issues came to light during the inspection and the school has already taken action to review and amend relevant procedures as appropriate.
42. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are satisfactory. The school recently implemented a new behaviour programme which places responsibility on pupils to help devise classroom rules and recognise that good behaviour supports good learning. The effectiveness of these new procedures is seen in the school's swift

response to a few pupils in the Reception classes and in Year 2, who have either behaviour difficulties or display a significant level of immaturity. With the help of external agencies these pupils have been assessed and specific programmes of support have been devised. Unfortunately, during the week of inspection, two of the assistants had just been assigned to children in Reception and had not yet found effective ways of dealing with particularly difficult behaviour. Given the high quality expertise of all other classroom assistants it seems fair to assume that, given time, the new behaviour support assistants will become equally effective in their work. The school is now at an appropriate point to assess the overall effectiveness of its new programme and has this among its priorities for the next term.

43. The school, with the regular assistance of external agencies, monitors the levels of individual pupil absence well. The monitoring and promoting of attendance levels of pupils is handled sensitively and with a high degree of resourceful management by senior staff at the school.
44. Pupils' academic performance and personal development are monitored both formally and informally by the school and the monitoring procedures in this area are very good. The school provides a good level of educational and personal support to pupils, which is aimed at raising their individual achievement and self-esteem. The school acknowledges this individual achievement through the praise given to pupils in the classroom and, more formally, in assembly presentations and rewards. Classroom assistants work closely with teachers to monitor the academic and personal progress being made by pupils in the school.
45. The assessment of pupils' learning needs is very thorough. Those with special educational needs and those at an early stage of fluency in English are carefully monitored by teachers and classroom assistants. Individual education plans are well written with targets that are achievable and are shared with pupils and parents. They are regularly reviewed so that they are moved on at a good rate and their progress matches that of their classmates. Because of the very good level of care, many pupils on the special needs register reach the expected standard in English and mathematics by the time they are seven. Pupils with English as an additional language are quickly supported to become fluent through the very good teaching of the literacy support manager.
46. The school has very good systems for supporting pupils' learning through its use of thorough assessment procedures. In English, mathematics and science, the assessment of pupils' progress is frequent; teachers and classroom assistants make notes regarding learning by individuals and groups of pupils at the end of lessons. The assessment of reading is based on pupils' knowledge of letter sounds and word recognition as well as their understanding of what they read. The regular assessment of pupils' writing is another strong feature of the school's care in monitoring pupils' progress. This is used to help teachers set targets for pupils to help them improve any areas of perceived weakness. Mathematics assessment at the end of topics is rigorous and lets teachers know how well pupils have learned the different elements and which may need to be revisited. The very good use of information gathered for these assessments undoubtedly plays an important part in raising and sustaining high standards.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. Parents' views of the school and the school's links with parents are both of a very high quality.
48. The parents' questionnaire returns show that the vast majority of parents are very supportive of the school and of its aims and objectives. Parents expressed very high levels of satisfaction in all areas of the school's performance. They said that their children like school, are expected to work hard and are making very good progress. Parents also feel that the teaching is good, that the school is very well managed and that the information provided by the school through the prospectus, annual report to parents and via regular newsletters is of a high standard. They are happy with the arrangements for homework and the very good range of activities that the school provides for their children. There were no significant concerns expressed by parents about any aspect of the school's provision.
49. The annual written reports cover the areas which each child has been studying and include target areas for development, particularly in the main core subjects of English and mathematics. The reports also provide parents with a summary of their child's attainment, personal development and of their attendance record. Parents are kept well informed about their children's learning, through the weekly newsletters and the notice boards around the school telling them what topics will be studied and how they can help their children with these. The school runs regular sessions for parents to learn how their children learn and these sometimes extend learning into the community. A good example is the Parent Child Computer Club which runs after school and where, under the guidance of the information and communication technology technician, parents learn how to use the computer and certain programs that are used in school, alongside their children.
50. All parents have been invited to enter into a home/school agreement which is designed to promote improved relationships between the school, parents and children. The school operates an open door policy and the headteacher is very active in her endeavours to further develop the good relationship between parents and the school. Some parents help out in school and also provide support during school trips and social events. The parental support for special events such as Christmas concerts and open evenings is usually very good and the Parent Teacher Association works hard to raise funds for the school and to promote its further development in a number of areas. Parents' involvement in the work of the school and the support they give to homework makes a very good contribution to their children's learning. The partnership with them is a significant strength of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. The headteacher provides very good leadership for the development of the school. Her commitment to high standards, through a very well planned curriculum and very good partnerships, is reflected both in the quality of provision made for children's learning and in the high standards they reach. Under her leadership the school has made very good progress since the previous inspection. Standards have risen in most subjects notably in information and communication technology and in art and design and overall results in national tests are well above those of similar schools. The role of subject managers has been developed so that they play a full part in monitoring and developing the work of the school. The skills and expertise of classroom assistants have been areas of very significant improvement, so that the contribution made by them is now a strength of the school. The quality of teaching has improved with a much higher percentage of very good teaching than was seen at the previous inspection. In

all of this improvement the headteacher has been well supported by the deputy headteacher who has taken a lead in curriculum developments.

52. The headteacher is highly skilled at delegating responsibility to colleagues. She knows her staff very well and astutely supports colleagues when they need it, while allowing them to manage improvement independently where they clearly have the vision and expertise to do so. This ability to release the potential of staff has led to considerable increase in their expertise and desire to make improvements in all areas of the school's work. Through extensive professional development, seeking out and learning from the good practice of other institutions and through secondments to other institutions, staff have brought a huge range of approaches and methods to the school. The effectiveness of this professional development was recognised recently with the Investors in People Award. The impact of staff professional development on the school is far reaching in terms of curriculum development, provision for pupils with special educational needs and the identification of children who need specific strategies to help them learn good behaviour and develop self-esteem.
53. The work of subject co-ordinators makes a very good contribution to the development of the school. They have well established and effective monitoring procedures which they use to gain a picture of standards, the quality of teaching and learning, and areas for improvement in their different subjects. The success of these procedures is evident in the rise in standards and the quality of provision across the curriculum since the previous inspection. This close involvement in the improvement of the school extends to classroom support assistants, whose views are respected and acted upon by teachers. The close working partnership that exists between teachers and classroom assistants is exemplary and greatly enhances the provision for learning and progress.
54. The management of support for pupils with special educational needs is thorough and very effective. Teachers are skilled at identifying pupils whose learning needs are not being fully met by classroom provision and at preparing appropriate activities to support their learning to help them overcome obstacles. The special needs co-ordinator ensures that records of progress as well as links with parents and outside agencies are efficiently managed, which contributes to the very smooth running of provision. The excellent teamwork that exists between teachers and classroom assistants and the highly skilled special needs support assistant ensures that children who falter are picked up quickly and given the support they need.
55. The governors have a good knowledge of the school's strengths as well as areas for development. They are actively involved in all aspects of the school's development and have a detailed knowledge of the work of the school through the headteacher's reports, presentations from curriculum leaders and their own visits to the school. Governors are aware of the school's growing popularity and support the headteacher's suggestions for the development of the school site, as well as improvements to safety features connected with the arrival of children at school in the mornings. Individually, members of the governing body bring a broad and high level of expertise to the service of the school and play a proper role in the school's strategic development.
56. The experience and expertise of the teaching staff are very good. There is a very low turnover of staff and this stability adds to the strength of the school. All staff, teaching and classroom assistants have benefited from very good professional development. The newly qualified teacher who has joined the school is being very well supported to develop her professional skills and reflect upon her work in the classroom. She is also given very good support from the headteacher to learn about the subject manager's

role. Because of the quality of support she receives she is well able to meet the high professional expectations that the headteacher has of her staff.

57. The quality of the school's accommodation is very good. The classrooms are large and very well adapted for the curriculum. One of the classrooms in each year is dedicated to either literacy or numeracy. As children take their English or mathematics lessons in the dedicated room, they benefit well from the very good displays which reinforce their learning. The creative area which each year group shares is very well used to benefit pupils' learning in art and design, science and design and technology. Outdoor provision for learning through play has been well developed through the provision of adventure equipment and games. The playing fields and hard surfaces give plenty of space for children's play as well as providing good space for games and athletics.
58. The quality and range of learning resources are very good. Teachers make very good use of these to provide exciting, interesting and challenging learning for their pupils. In English, the provision of a huge range of story books, soft toys and role-play materials gives pupils a great love of reading and acting out the stories they know well. The provision for information and communication technology is very good and excellent use is made of computers to support pupils' learning and develop their independence. In art and design the high quality materials that pupils use, prompt them to take great care with their efforts to ensure that they produce finished work of an equally high standard.
59. Financial planning is very good. The headteacher and governors take a long term view of developing the school. The high surplus they currently carry is earmarked to protect staffing numbers when government grants are withdrawn next year. They have a very good focus on raising the quality of provision in all areas of the school as the route to raising and maintaining high standards. The regular monitoring of the school's work means that the school is aware of where it needs to allocate funds to bring about improvement or to respond to changing circumstances. The latter is well illustrated in the focus the school has recently had on developing positive behaviour management strategies, having recognised the changing needs of some of the children who are joining the school. The school is very careful to get good value in what it does through very careful planning. This is based on a very good understanding of its needs as well as very good understanding of the strengths of its personnel. Governors are shrewd at evaluating best value in what the school buys and take care to ensure a very efficient use of its finances. The school is very well administered by the school administrator and she and the headteacher have devised systems which ensure that the school runs very smoothly and efficiently and that parents are always made welcome.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. In order to raise standards and improve the school further, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

(1) Improve the behaviour of a few pupils by:

- Identifying their needs more closely and devising effective strategies for individual pupils;
- Training new classroom assistants in managing difficult behaviour;
- Regularly monitoring the effectiveness of strategies.

(paragraphs 11, 37, 65)

(2) Develop the personal and social curriculum so that:

- Children who join the school with a low level of personal and social skills are quickly taught the conventions of group learning;
- All children are taught to respect the rights of others to speak and be heard;
- By adopting the successful methods already used in the nurture group these children have their self-esteem raised.

(paragraphs 9, 10, 31, 77, 88)

Governors should also consider the following for inclusion in the action plan:

(3) Further training for lunchtime supervisors in managing behaviour in the dining room.

(paragraph 11, 38)

(4) Seek the support of the local council to improve the safety of the arrangements made for the arrival of children to school in the mornings.

(paragraph 40)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	36
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	12	17	7	0	0	0
Percentage	0	33	47	19	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/a	167
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	27

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/a	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/a	22

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	12

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	28	16	44

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	24	25
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	40	40	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (94)	91 (94)	93 (96)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	25	25
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	40	41	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (94)	93 (96)	93 (96)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	135	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	8	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	18	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	4	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	140

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/a
Total number of education support staff	N/a

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	341,053
Total expenditure	305,222
Expenditure per pupil	1,956
Balance brought forward from previous year	31,004
Balance carried forward to next year	66,835

Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/a
Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/a

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
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

Number of questionnaires sent out	167
Number of questionnaires returned	69

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	28	0	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	59	41	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	54	43	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	51	42	6	1	0
The teaching is good.	74	25	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	57	39	3	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	81	19	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	77	22	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	67	28	3	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	64	33	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	33	1	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	71	26	3	0	0

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

61. Children enter the Reception class in September, before their fifth birthday, with broadly average knowledge, understanding and skills. An increasing number enter with lower than expected personal and social skills and the school is currently adjusting to these changing needs. Children make good progress, so that the majority are on course to exceed the national goals for learning by the time they enter Year 1. This is good achievement over time and is a direct result of the consistent, high quality of education and very good, well planned curriculum provided by the teachers and support assistants. There has been a declining trend in personal and social skills among the pupils entering the school since 1999. While the school still continues to provide a very high quality curriculum, it has not sufficiently taken into account the implications of this trend, and strategies to tackle this need further development.
62. The quality of the children's classroom environment is very good and the staff provide a wide range of activities, routines and experiences that are carefully chosen to match the learning needs of children, including those of high ability. The consistent, high quality work of the Reception teachers and their team is apparent in the way that most learning opportunities are planned. As a result most children are inspired to learn. The curriculum is in line with the government guidelines and assessment procedures are very good; all staff know how well each child is progressing and can plan to extend their learning through the activities provided. The partnership with parents is very good which means that children are well supported in their learning. In addition staff place a strong emphasis on valuing each child, consequently all children feel included. Opportunities for personal, social and emotional development are planned for some of the children's activities but are not yet explicit enough to ensure that children quickly learn that school is a community that has to have routines for the benefit of all involved. Too often the few children who do not conform to classroom conventions are allowed to opt out of direct teaching situations. This is because temporary staff have not yet learned the school's approach to behaviour management.

Personal, social, and emotional development

63. There is satisfactory provision for this area of learning. The majority of children progress very well in their personal, social and emotional development. Most children's skills on entering school are slightly above average, this helps them settle in quickly, share toys and generally work co-operatively. As a result, many are on course to reach the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. However a significant minority are immature and show poor listening skills; they do not listen well to their teachers or to each other. They are reluctant to take turns to speak and call out instead of putting up their hands to signal they wish to speak.
64. Most children understand what is expected of them and they play and co-operate well with one another as, for example, in the role-play areas. Many children are able to concentrate and stay on task for sustained periods of time. The majority will volunteer contributions to discussion. Many are eager to participate and understand the need for praise. Most children learn what is fair, by the teacher and classroom assistants providing clear routines for taking turns. Consequently everyone has an equal opportunity to take part in all learning activities.

65. There is a pleasant atmosphere in which children can learn to co-operate with each other. The teacher and assistants are always positive and praise the children often for what they do well. This makes every child feel valued and boosts self-confidence. Teachers make good provision for children with special educational needs. A minority exhibit unsatisfactory behaviour, and attention given to managing this detracts from the quality of teaching and learning. Difficulties are usually identified early on and the good adult to child ratio helps when action is taken to address unsuitable behaviour. However, the personal and social development needs of some children in the Reception classes are not always sufficiently well identified in order to plan the next steps in their learning of these skills. Lessons in personal, social, citizenship and health education are provided and stories such as 'A Bag of Worries' help children to talk about what may be worrying them. Overall, children have a positive approach to new experiences.

Communication, language and literacy

66. Children make very good improvement in their communication, language and literacy skills over their time in the Reception classes. The very good teaching that they receive helps children, including those with speech difficulties, to develop their skills. This means that the majority of children in the class will achieve or exceed the average levels for their age in this area of learning by the time they enter Year 1.
67. Children talk with confidence because of the very good opportunities provided for them. For example, when discussing the story of 'We're all going on a bear hunt' they can suggest what they might do when they see the bear. The teacher asks questions about the story that will enable children to participate fully. Several pupils have begun to read and are developing strategies, which help them to read unfamiliar words. Learning of sounds is consolidated with games and stories. Children can recognise initial and final sounds in words. Words and sentences are reproduced by the teachers and repeated in different situations so that the children come to recognise the words in other contexts. Higher attaining pupils can write one or two sentences independently. Displays are clearly labelled so that the children can improve their vocabulary and knowledge. Very well prepared resource areas assist learning as, for example, in the literacy room. Opportunities are provided to read and word process on the computers. A well-equipped, attractive book corner is provided with a wide range of books, and comfortable seats where children can browse through the books.

Mathematical development

68. Children achieve well in their mathematical development. Many are already above the level expected and almost all are on course to achieve or exceed the level expected when they transfer into Year 1. Teaching is satisfactory; teachers use opportunities to enable the children to apply their developing knowledge and understanding of mathematics. For example, number rhymes such as 'Five currant buns in the bakers' shop' are used to reinforce and extend the knowledge of counting. Teachers have prepared a very good bank of resources to support early mathematical development. Nearly all the children can recognise and name numbers to 9 and most can write them with help if it is needed. There is good support for children's early recorded attempts at mathematics.
69. Children are able to put numbers in the correct sequence and identify missing numbers in a line of numbers to twenty. Higher attaining pupils are able to use numbers up to twenty and beyond, can count in two's to twenty and in tens to one hundred. They recognise coinage to one pound and a two-pound coin. They can sort coins into the

correct sets. The rich indoor environment provides the children with many interesting materials to improve their mathematical skills as they sort, count, talk and play with sand, water and large construction bricks. Display in the Reception classes is used effectively to support this area of children's learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

70. Children enter the reception class with broadly average general knowledge. Very well planned activities ensure that there are on-going opportunities in this area of learning. The knowledge and understanding room is set up with all kinds of activities to extend children's knowledge and skills especially in science and information and communication technology. The 'Bear's Cave' is filled with an assortment of pebbles and rocks for children to touch, feel, describe and sort into groups with the support of a classroom assistant. An excellent range of resources connected with light is there to explore and investigate, for example, fibre optic wands, a kaleidoscope and torches. Some children work with the teacher constructing simple electrical circuits using a bulb, battery and leads in order to make a lamp for 'Little Bear'. Other activities enable children to explore aspects of their world.
71. There is a good outdoor area for the Reception class and children are learning about road safety or using role-play to go on a 'Bear Hunt'. Children are taught how to use the computer and can use the mouse. The wide range of toys and materials enables the children to explore and use their skills, for example, using large bricks outside to construct a den for the bear. Visits and visitors help to further children's first hand experience. The residential visit opportunity at the end of the children's first year at school also extends their knowledge of the world beyond home and school.

Physical development

72. Children are using their physical skills well and make very good progress over time in the Reception classes so that they begin Year 1 with their development exceeding the level expected for their age. They can dress and undress for physical education with increasing independence but are not expected to do this quickly so valuable time is lost from lessons. Most children can run lightly on their toes, they can stride, jump, hop and run showing control and awareness of others. The majority follow the teachers' instructions and are conscious of their own bodies and the space around them. They become completely engrossed in their work. A few children have not yet learnt to listen to the teacher's instructions and lack concentration.
73. Children are making good progress in developing manipulative skills. They are taught careful letter formation and the high child to adult ratio ensures that children's pencil grip and control are checked as well as ensuring that they develop good writing habits. They confidently handle scissors, glue spreaders, play-dough, paintbrushes and construction equipment, both large and small.

Creative development

74. Children make good progress in creative development and the majority will meet the level expected by the time they go into Year 1. They progress well as a result of the good range of planned activities and effective teaching. There are numerous opportunities for role-play, such as playing in the party area where resources support the children's work on celebrating Eid and Christmas. Plenty of resources such as party plates, hats and clothes encourage children to create their own play situations.

75. The children have a very wide range of experiences in using different types of artistic media, for example crayons, collage, sewing, clay, plasticine and dough. Children investigate yellow, blue and red ice cubes to see what colours they will make in water. Children also use the same colours of play dough and talk about what colour the dough will be when they mix it together. This work makes very good links to scientific investigations carried out the previous day when children made orange, purple or green jelly by choosing two of the colours they were given. Children enjoy finger painting in their colour mixing activities. They enjoy creative work and confidently explore all the stimulating activities provided for them. The sensitive teaching and intervention of the teachers and their team, support learning very effectively in creative development.

ENGLISH

76. In the national tests in 2002, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level for seven year olds, was above the national average in reading and about the national average in writing. At the higher level, the percentage of pupils reaching the higher level was well above the national average in both reading and writing. Compared with similar schools, the pupils' performance was above them in reading and in line with them in writing. Standards in the current Year 2 classes are good in both reading and writing and overall are above the expected level for pupils of seven.
77. Standards in speaking in Year 2 are good. Pupils are confident speakers who answer questions clearly and audibly when asked. They are also confident when talking about their work and give sensible explanations of what they are doing and why. Occasionally, some pupils are not given the opportunity to answer because the teacher directs questions to a few pupils whose attention is weak, as a means of drawing them into the lesson. While this strategy has a positive effect on those pupils with low concentration, it leaves some pupils silent for the whole time they are on the carpet and reduces their chance to develop ideas through talk. Listening is variable in Year 2, partly because of a number of pupils in each class, mentioned above, who have poor concentration and partly because some pupils do not expect to be asked questions. Pupils listen best when teachers give instructions for tasks to be completed independently. They have good retention and are always ready to begin work without any delay. Pupils also listen well during small group work, when they are asked questions and encouraged to join in discussion about the work and how they will do it. In Year 1, listening is better overall because most pupils have good concentration and teachers make a point of including everyone through direct questioning.
78. Standards in reading are good and are above the expectation for seven year olds. This is because pupils are taught good reading strategies from the time they start school. Pupils of all abilities make use of letter sounds to help them say new words, they also use pictures to help them guess unfamiliar words and make good guesses at new words from the meaning of the story. Because they have such good strategies, pupils are confident about their reading and happily attempt reading all that they see around them. Higher attaining pupils read with great fluency and good understanding and are beginning to develop an interest in favourite stories and authors. Average and lower attaining pupils read the "Three Little Pigs" with good expression, showing that they understand the different moods in the story and can recognise different characters. Pupils make good use of their reading skills in other subjects, most notably information and communication technology, where they have many opportunities to follow on screen instructions which help to reinforce and develop their reading skills.

79. Standards in writing are above the expectation for seven-year-olds. Pupils are given many opportunities to write for a wide range of purposes. As a consequence they see writing as a vital means of communication and frequently write notes and lists that they post on classroom notice boards. All pupils are confident about attempting to write independently because whatever their ability they are given good support to help them do this. In Year 2, pupils with special educational needs and the pupil with English as an additional language, were able to write instructions for how to pack a lunch box, because the teacher had provided them with items of food with the names well labelled so that they could spell them correctly. Through discussion with the classroom assistant, these pupils quickly arrived at how they would order their writing and were confident when it came to writing the instructions in full. In Year 1, pupils retell fairy tales with great confidence and good attention to detail because they have been very well prepared by reading a number of different versions which has helped them extend their vocabulary. From this wide reading they are able to make word choices to give their own writing an individual flavour. Standards in handwriting are good because it is systematically taught, practice is given and the teachers' expectations of presentation are high. Spelling is good because pupils are used to sounding out words for reading and use this technique to support their spelling. They also have good homework which supports their learning of irregular words.
80. Teaching is very good overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge and a very good knowledge of how young children learn. The result is that all pupils learn and achieve well in the subject. Teachers give plenty of opportunity for pupils to learn from a range of situations and experiences and they ensure that there is plenty of repetition to consolidate the basic skills. They plan imaginative tasks to make learning memorable. For example in Year 1, one group of pupils used a puppet theatre to tell the story of the "Three Little Pigs", while another group read a play version of the story with the classroom assistant. Teachers plan frequent opportunities for pupils to use computers to practise their spelling or to write their own stories. In Year 2, higher attaining pupils were very well challenged by the teachers' use of complex instructions to make a pirate ship. They returned again and again to check the instructions to make sure that they were following them correctly. This activity stretched their understanding and gave them very good practice at extracting precise information in an exciting and purposeful way. The use of classroom assistants is a strength of the teaching in the subject. They are well trained and very well prepared for lessons, which means they are able to give very good support to pupils' learning. They take responsibility for the assessment of pupils' learning in the groups they work with each day and provide very good information about this for teachers to use in their future planning.
81. The curriculum in English is very well planned to provide a wide range of activities to help pupils of all abilities to learn well. There is much provision for reading and writing and the impact of this on standards is evident. The provision for homework is well thought out and is set at different levels of challenge to meet the needs of all pupils. The resources are very well chosen to stimulate pupils' imagination and to help them learn independently. For example, there are many toys and settings created to encourage the development of language through role-play. The quality and range of books is very good and they are well used to enrich pupils' learning in the subject. The attractive and informative displays of literacy posters and pupils' work further adds to their learning and the pleasure they get from the subject.
82. The subject has been very well developed in the school over time and bears the hallmarks of very good leadership in the past. The subject manager has been in post since the start of the school year. While she is gaining experience, she is being very well supported by the headteacher and the local authority literacy consultant. She has

very good subject knowledge and a high level of expertise in teaching the subject. She is currently gaining a good insight into standards in the subject through the monitoring of pupils' work. This monitoring will extend to teaching and learning later in the year. Given her expertise and the support she is receiving, the subject is well managed.

MATHEMATICS

83. Standards attained by seven year olds in the 2002 national tests were well above the national average when compared with all schools nationally and with similar schools. Very significant in these results is the high proportion of pupils, over two thirds, who exceeded the expected level. This continues the very good trend in results over recent years, results which show no variance in the performance of boys and girls.
84. Inspection evidence indicates that results are again above the national average although it is unlikely that as high a number of the present Year 2 children will be able to exceed the expected level. Standards being achieved now, and consistently since the last inspection, show the school has made very good improvement on the previous findings which stated standards as "being in line with national averages". Very good progress is being made consistently throughout the school by all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is a second language.
85. Pupils have very good opportunity to gain experience in oral and mental calculations in the designated time at the beginning of every lesson, in accordance with the National Numeracy Strategy which the school implements very well. Teachers' planning reflects the key objectives for the age group. In accordance with this, Year 2 pupils understand that multiplication is repeated addition and they know the facts for the two and 10 times multiplication tables which they illustrate by their very confident counting in twos up to 30. The higher achievers extend their learning when they understand that there are five groups of two in ten. Pupils respond well to some challenging questions for example, by using their previous knowledge to help them volunteer that there are four fives in twenty. They are well accustomed to using the language of mathematics, appropriate to their age. Many lessons aim to extend this knowledge as was evident in the lesson observed in which the word 'array' was introduced, understood and used. The very high quality of support ensures the inclusion of all pupils and through this those pupils who have special educational needs are able to make good progress at tasks which mirror the activities being carried out by the rest of the class. Pupils with English as an additional language are very often to be found in higher achieving groups and language causes no impediment to their inclusion or progress.
86. Although inspection observations in mathematics were mainly concerned with the number and calculations elements of the curriculum, there is ample evidence through past work and planning of the full inclusion of the other strands of the curriculum. Pupils estimate and measure objects around the school in non-standard measurements progressing to standard measurements. Good knowledge is apparent of the properties of 2-D and some 3-D shapes and appropriate mathematical vocabulary is used to describe position, direction and movement. The use of information technology is very good as is exemplified in the birthday graphs produced by Year 2 pupils to present the outcome of their collection and analysis of data. The use of the computer is making a very good contribution to mathematics teaching and learning.
87. A very good feature of every year group is a designated mathematics area which the pupils know as the "Maths Den". Here, interesting and inviting challenges are

presented, such as, “come and measure yourself, ask a friend to help you” or perhaps they may take up the challenge to solve a maths puzzle. Such organisation helps pupils to develop interest and enjoyment in mathematics; it keeps them interested and provides opportunity for the development of independent working and initiative, often working co-operatively with a partner.

88. Teaching is consistently good, with half the lessons seen being judged to be very good. Teachers’ subject knowledge is good and they use it very effectively to produce very good lesson plans. They manage the pupils well and expect them to work hard and do their best. Pupils respond well and are particularly hard working in the very well planned and appropriate activities which they are expected to carry out. These positive attitudes are sometimes better when pupils are working independently than when they are sitting in a group on the carpet listening to the teacher. This period of whole class teaching taking place on the carpet is very significant to pupils’ learning and understanding of number and important as a time for explanations and instructions of the tasks they are going to do. Sometimes these periods are a little too long to sustain the concentration of young pupil and a minority of pupils with behavioural problems tend to become restless, sometimes spoiling the learning opportunities for the rest of the pupils. During the inspection, teachers did not make enough use of strategies, such as number fans and white boards, to ensure that every pupil was totally involved all of the time and able to respond individually to the teacher’s request to “show me” in answer to her questions.
89. Assessment of pupils’ work is very good and well linked to their targets. Marking is evaluative and in itself makes a very strong contribution to more formal assessment procedures. The pupils are able to derive much encouragement, pride and support from the very helpful comments written by teachers in their books. The use of homework is very good; it is regular and very closely linked to the focus of the current class lesson. It is very well marked by teachers and pupils are assured that their work is valued.
90. The subject manager is a very experienced teacher who has benefited from extensive training, which enables her to carry out her duties well. She has further developed the very good resources of the school to ensure the curriculum is very well supported. She has been given opportunity to observe her colleagues teach mathematics which has greatly assisted her requirement to monitor teaching and learning and identify training needs. She has ensured that special arrangements are made to ensure the full inclusion of the lower attaining pupils. The ten minute periods which they have twice a week in a small group with the very good support assistants have been very successful and have had very positive effect upon the progress these pupils are making.

SCIENCE

91. At the end of Year 2 standards in science are above average. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level in teacher assessments is very high compared to that found nationally. This is because of the well-planned curriculum, which gives very good opportunities for investigative science in every year group. All pupils including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress in science. There are very good opportunities for higher attaining pupils to be challenged in their thinking and achieve well in their science lessons.
92. Year 2 pupils can name several kinds of metal and know that magnets attract metal. They can describe properties of materials such as plastic or clay. They can work out that pulling, squeezing, bending, stretching, twisting or rolling can change the shape of

play dough. They investigate a range of substances to see which will dissolve. They understand the importance of using the same amount of water in which to place lentils, coffee, sugar, salt or flour and decide that in order to make it a fair test they must all use a level teaspoonful and count the times they stir. They predict which of the substances will dissolve and record their results. They reflect on their learning and realise that they now understand that water will absorb some things and not others. Analysis of written work in Year 2 shows that pupils undertake a good range of work across the national curriculum and know about healthy food, tooth decay and the importance of exercise. They can sort living and non-living things. They can communicate their findings by drawings and charts. Information communication technology to record data and results is not yet used regularly.

93. The quality of teaching is good. The teachers provide a very good learning environment, which motivates pupils to learn. They enthuse their pupils about science and the excitement of finding out for themselves, through careful investigations. The teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and how to teach it. The strong emphasis on investigations and good assessments of what pupils know, understand and can do, result in progressive learning and acquisition of scientific skills. However, the listening skills of a small minority of pupils in Year 2 are having a negative effect on learning and teaching. In the Reception classes there is a broad range of planned opportunities for pupils to experience 'hands on' science in focussed activities and the role-play areas by exploring and investigating a wide variety of living and non-living resources. This effectively stimulates pupils' natural curiosity and gives them a very good start in their learning about the subject.
94. Teachers' skilful questioning helps the pupils to think scientifically. In a Year 1 class the teacher probed her pupils' understanding of looking at ways of making sounds so that they successfully learnt that air moving down a tube produces notes in some musical instruments and gave examples of percussion instruments to pluck, rattle, blow and bang. The support assistants interact well with pupils as, for example, when a small group of pupils with special educational needs were helped to discover that ice will float and were supported in recording their result. Teachers ensure that in science lessons the pupils engage their developing skills of literacy and numeracy but the use of information and communication technology to record data is not always systematically planned in science lessons. All teachers give homework regularly. This consolidates and extends pupils' knowledge and understanding of science.
95. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is not their first language are well supported in their science lessons by teaching assistants who are knowledgeable and understand the varying needs of the pupils with whom they are working. They plan carefully with the teaching staff and make a valuable contribution to the assessment of pupils' learning in their science lessons.
96. The subject manager has worked hard with colleagues to ensure that the science curriculum provides meaningful opportunities for pupils, which stimulate their natural curiosity and motivate them to learn. As a result, achievements in science are good. The subject manager has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the provision for science and has succeeded in developing very good working relationships between staff for the development of the subject. As a result, all staff work effectively towards the same goal: improving teaching and learning for pupils of all abilities and from all backgrounds.
97. The curriculum, based on the national guidelines, ensures very good breadth and balance. Science makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and

cultural development. There are good examples throughout the school of this provision. Interactive science displays where pupils are encouraged to create, for example, a simple electrical circuit, science weeks and curriculum displays all support the teaching of science and enable pupils to make the best progress of which they are capable.

ART AND DESIGN

98. Standards in art and design are well above the expectation for pupils aged seven. Building well on the experiences they had in Reception, all pupils make very good progress in the subject. This is because of the very good teaching and very well planned scheme of work which promotes the systematic development of skills, knowledge and techniques. Portfolios of pupils' work show a huge range, all of a very high quality and illustrating how quickly pupils master technique and become proficient. Their observational drawing and design sketches for sculptures are particularly noteworthy, as is their skill in mixing and using colour.
99. In Year 1, pupils have been studying the work of the sculptor Henry Moore. They have worked in a variety of materials to design and create their own versions of family groups. Displays of couples made from pegs or fabric and pipe cleaners, show that pupils have a very good understanding of the essential elements to suggest relationships. When they worked with a visiting artist, they were well prepared with ideas for composing groups in clay. Higher attainers achieved outstanding effects by shaping and angling body forms to illustrate relationships. Other pupils created pairs of friends holding hands to signify they were 'related'. When they evaluated their work with their class teacher, pupils of all abilities were able to make comments and suggestions about the work of others, showing how well they had understood the tasks set and how good were their insights into what their friends were attempting. Their use of appropriate vocabulary was no less impressive than their artwork. Most were able to refer to shape and composition and how the connection was made between people in each group. In Year 2, pupils' floral paintings, following the style of Claude Monet were confident in their use of both colour and line. Pupils showed a good understanding of the techniques of the Impressionists as line and form were subtly created with good brush strokes using dark and light colour to emphasise shape.
100. Teaching in the subject is very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are well supported by the regular visiting artists who share their expertise and help develop teachers' confidence. This in turn gives pupils confidence as they are thoroughly taught both technique and skills. They delight in using these skills to create their own works of art and work with very good concentration and interest in art lessons. They are confident when talking about their work and can explain how it relates to the work of famous artists. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development through the many experiences pupils have and the insights they gain.
101. The subject has been very well led and the management has passed to another teacher from the start of this school year. The scheme of work is skills based and progression in all areas of art and design is provided for. The range and quality of resources for art and design are very good and they are very well used to promote high standards in the subject. The subject is used well to support learning in other subjects such as history and religious education. There has been very good improvement in standards and provision for the subject since the previous inspection.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

102. Due to arrangements of the timetable it was not possible to see any lessons taught in design and technology during the period of the inspection therefore no judgement about the standard of teaching can be made.
103. From examination of examples of pupils' work and teachers' curriculum planning, it is evident that the school provides some good opportunities for children to learn the process of design and making. The outcome seen through pupils' work and some photographic evidence suggests that standards attained are above national expectations for pupils of this age. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and achieve in line with the achievement of their peers. The same standards are achieved by those pupils who have English as an additional language.
104. Throughout the year, Year 2 pupils will be looking at textiles, pneumatics and structures, as well as lots of opportunity for food technology such as making a vegetable soup, making a pizza, and making a sandwich. For each topic, the school encourages pupils to think carefully about what they are going to make (design) and make a drawing of how it will look. The ability of young pupils to make and follow plans is limited and this is necessarily achieved in a very simplistic form. They have to consider what materials they are going to use and their suitability for the purpose. For example, pupils soon realise that thin paper will not be a suitable choice for making a purse. Throughout the school, they learn to use tools safely and they develop techniques for joining, as is well promoted through the Year 1 topics of levers and hinges, moving toys and wheel axles. Some examples of these techniques being used is apparent when they make a flap book, employing a simple form of hinge or when they design and make a Christmas card using a simple lever mechanism. The higher attaining pupils soon realise the limitation of some of the methods they may choose for joining, for example the use of sticky tape will not allow movement.
105. Some work in design and technology encourages pupils to practise their literacy skills, for example they must read and interpret instructions when making the vegetable soup. The school has established very good links with local industry through its design and technology curriculum. For example, pupils used a computer program supplied by a local company to design their own key ring. The design was then taken to the high school where the available expertise and special equipment enabled them to transfer their design to a milling machine which produced the key ring.
106. The subject is well promoted through a Design Technology Week. In the past it has focused upon using construction material to design and build a town, of which there is photographic evidence. A competition was held during the inspection week to design a kite, the work for which was carried out at home involving parents. The entry fee for the competition was donated to UNICEF.
107. Resources and tools are very well organised and there is a special designated area for food technology. The subject manager is keen and interested and is ambitious to further develop learning opportunities in the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

108. Standards of attainment in geography are above national expectations and all pupils are making good progress, including those with special educational needs. Those pupils with English as a second language have similar attainment and progress to the rest of the pupils.

109. Year 2 pupils demonstrate awareness of their own locality and how it contrasts with other places they know. A visit to Howarth provides opportunity for first hand study and the gathering of evidence by which the contrast with their local environment can be measured. In line with whole school approach to all subjects, there is a good development of specialist vocabulary.
110. Both Year 2 lessons seen followed identical planning. Pupils, under the guidance of their teacher, established and recorded what they already knew about the Polar Regions. As a class, they then made a list of things they wished to know. This provided the context for the main research activity that followed. All pupils researched well using books and the internet. In both lessons the attainment was good and the pupils showed interest and positive attitudes, although in one lesson a few pupils did not always listen attentively or respond appropriately to their teacher's instructions.
111. Teaching was good or better in the lessons seen. The lessons were well introduced and well managed. The tasks are clearly explained and lower attaining pupils were given appropriate and achievable tasks which were very well supported by classroom assistants. The classrooms are very well organised and trouble is taken to support the focused topic. For example, in the shared area between the two Year 2 classrooms there is a "set piece" display through which the children are able to find out more about the Polar Regions. Another interactive display consists of an ongoing jig-saw puzzle of the world map.
112. The curriculum is well supported and considerably enhanced through a very good series of visits for both pupils and staff. An exchange visit arranged between this school and schools in Germany and Finland resulted in links being made and pupils now write and send e-mails to each other.
113. The resources provided by the school are good. The subject manager monitors standards and assessment takes place through half-termly evaluations and end of year reporting. Good improvement has been made since the time of the previous inspection.

HISTORY

114. No history lessons were taught during the inspection and judgements are based on discussions with pupils and scrutiny of their written work. Standards are above expectation for pupils by the time they are seven and all pupils make good progress. They have good recall of their learning and show a good understanding of why things happened as they did in the past.
115. In Year 2, pupils have a comprehensive knowledge of the Fire of London. They explain how and where it started and why it was so difficult to bring under control. Higher attaining pupils know that information about the event comes from the diaries of people like Samuel Pepys, who witnessed the fire. They are intrigued that he buried his precious possessions, like cheese and wine, to protect them from the fire. In Year 1, pupils combine history and geography in their study of houses over time. They have learned a good deal from their walk around the neighbourhood, looking at houses from the past and the present. They know that furniture and appliances have changed over time. Higher attainers can explain how technology has helped bring about change in kitchen and laundry appliances. They have investigated housework in a Victorian household to prepare them for their visit to Cannon Hall in the spring term, when they will spend a day 'working' in the laundry and kitchens, discovering at first hand how difficult life was then.

116. Although no direct teaching was observed, it is clear from the work seen and pupils' recall that teaching and learning have been at least good. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm of hearing about the events of the Great Fire and of watching a video which 'brought it to life'. They enjoyed finding information from CD-Roms and creating replica houses for a display to show how the fire spread. The extent of their knowledge and the quality of work they have done demonstrates how seriously they take learning in the subject as well as how hard they work.
117. The subject is currently being effectively managed by the headteacher. There are very good visual and information and communication technology resources for the subject and they are well used by teachers to make learning interesting. The arrangements for visits and visitors are extensive and well planned and ensure that history 'comes alive' for the pupils. There has been good improvement in standards and provision since the previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

118. Standards in information communication technology are well above expectations and all pupils are making very good progress. Pupils identified as having special educational needs receive very effective and well targeted support so they, too, are able to make very good progress. Their use of a computerised reading support programme is particularly helpful in stimulating the interest necessary to make improvement in their reading. Those pupils with English as an additional language have equal opportunity to access and enjoy their work on the computer and achieve as well as their peers.
119. The interest that pupils show, their keenness and their very good knowledge and use of very well established basic skills are very clear and substantial evidence of the way that information technology provision has been developed over the past three years. Major acquisitions have been made and significant training has taken place which has ensured high standard provision that continues to improve. This has ensured that the school is able to teach all elements of the National Curriculum for information and communication technology which has had a very positive effect upon learning and standards.
120. Pupils in Year 2 are able to retrieve, organise and present findings and almost all will achieve the school's aim for "to purposefully use information and communication technology for specific outcomes". Many children work to the higher level by using the computer "to develop ideas and solve problems". An indication of the high standards is found in pupils' ability to make a "Powerpoint" presentation into which they are able to input sound.
121. Pupils' very high standards in Year 2 are the result of the many opportunities available to them and the good quality of their work in earlier years. The school's decision to employ a technician has had a very pronounced effect upon the progress being made. Her expert work with smaller groups is providing pupils with the very individualised support they need. Work observed with Reception children shows their early acquisition of keyboard skills and use of the mouse. They know the function of the space bar and acquire much basic knowledge and skills at this early stage upon which the school very successfully builds. By Year 1, pupils are learning how to import pictures into text and at the same time there is very good development of technical language. They learn how a picture can be selected, changed in size or shape and moved around the screen and it is evident that they understand the "double click" function on the mouse.

122. Teaching is confident and good. Much training has taken place, the most effective being that which addressed the teachers' own particular needs. Teachers successfully include information and communication technology as a natural part of their lesson planning. It is not a "tagged on" element of a lesson, rather it is a natural and essential tool by which pupils learn and which they use to present their work.
123. The school has worked very well towards its goal which sees information and communication technology fully integrated as a tool for all subjects. In this context literacy is very well supported. All pupils in Year 1 take turns to work on an appropriate reading programme in the information and communication technology suite under the supervision of the technician. They show the ability to operate the software very confidently and there is significant enhancement to their reading development. Year 2 pupils are able to access another program, more relevant to their age, through their classroom computers. Computers were in regular use during numeracy lessons throughout the inspection. The internet is very well used. The classes in Year 2 used it effectively in a geography lesson to research information on the Arctic. All classes have their own E-mail account and send messages between classes. Very good attention is given to the safety and security aspect of using the internet.
124. The subject manager has had a very good and determined approach so that development and improvement since the last inspection, when standards were reported as "being in line", has been very good. Information and communication technology plays a large part in the very good range of extra-curricular activities the school provides. This includes an after school club in which parents can work with their children.

MUSIC

125. Insufficient evidence was seen to make an overall judgment on standards in music. In singing pupils' skills are average. There are opportunities to learn to play the recorder and also a small choir club that meets at lunchtimes. In assemblies and choir practice, most pupils sing in tune with enthusiasm, showing good rhythm and diction. They enjoy their singing in choir and some pupils are confident to sing duets. There are links to the local community when pupils sing at the local hospice or take part in a local festival. Parents can enjoy music at the harvest festival and concerts at Easter, Christmas and in the summer. All pupils take part on these occasions.
126. In Year 2, pupils can compose a short graphic score using symbols to represent the instruments they are using and to highlight dynamics so other pupils know where to play loudly or softly. They can compose a short musical phrase for percussion instruments then use this to play their chosen 'tune'. They handle their instruments responsibly and know the names of tambourines, shakers, drums, triangles and maracas. They play their compositions with concentration but there is insufficient time to evaluate and subsequently refine their performances.
127. Two lessons of music were seen during the inspection; in these the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better. Classroom assistants unobtrusively enable all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to be fully involved in lessons. Teachers' subject knowledge is sound and they use the correct musical vocabulary for example, stave, notation, graphic score and rhythm. Their management of pupils' behaviour is good and, coupled with high expectations, results in the teaching and learning of music being maximised in each lesson. Very good relationships in these lessons support good attention skills and good listening.

128. Since the last inspection the music manager has revised the scheme of work which teachers use to support their lesson preparation. She has arranged events to enhance the music curriculum, for example visits from an African dancer and drummer. This means that pupils' experience a different style of music, adding to their knowledge. The school has not identified pupils with a particular gift or talent for music and has recognised that this is an area for development. The subject manager checks teaching plans prepared by her colleagues to ensure that the music curriculum is being correctly followed. However, she has not yet been given time to carry out checks on teaching and learning in music in order to define the standard of achievement by pupils compared to that found nationally.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

129. Pupils are achieving well and attaining standards above national expectations. Progress throughout the school is very good for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Those pupils with English as an additional language achieve and progress similarly to the other pupils.
130. Physical education has high profile in the school. There are clear aims for the subject, that are well met by a well developed range of physical activities, including dance and games. Pupils understand the importance of physical activity and the effect it can have on their bodies.
131. In most lessons pupils worked well and with enjoyment. Lessons in dance observed in Year 1 were of a very high quality; pupils learnt very well and showed a good ability to express a range of moods and feelings through dance and movement. In a good example of multi-cultural provision, Year 2 pupils' dance was inspired by their experience of a visiting African drummer. These lessons provided ample evidence of the extent of physical activity and the discipline of controlled and expressive movement. Year 1 pupils made very good progress and achieved good standards in their gymnastics lessons, showing imagination as they successfully explored a variety of balances and movements, forwards, backwards and sideways.
132. Two pupils and staff from the nearby special school were included in some lessons and their confidence was seen to improve noticeably as they draw on the work of the other pupils. This is a good example of the very useful and positive links the school has with other schools.
133. Teaching is always at least satisfactory and on more than one occasion, very good. Lessons are well planned and pupils are managed well. There are opportunities to evaluate each other's performance leading to refinement and an improvement in performance. In the best lessons pupils achieve well because of the teachers' high expectations, clear demonstrations and very good explanations.
134. The school has been successfully assessed for the Active Mark Award, which recognises the school's commitment to enhance physical education through the provision it makes in lessons, its extra-curricular clubs, outdoor play and visits by sports persons or teams, such as the Halifax Blue Sox for rugby coaching. In accordance with this the school has slotted in extra physical education lesson into an already busy timetable. At present these extra periods are too short, allowing no time to change clothes or carry out proper warming up and cooling down activities. This is diluting an otherwise good curriculum, which is underpinned by high expectations and is confusing to pupils in the dual standards which are presented.

135. The extra-curricular opportunities are very good for an infant school. This was very well demonstrated in the fun and enjoyment and the very good learning that took place in the well attended gym club. There are many occasions on which the school celebrates achievement in physical education, for example through awards in assembly, proficiency awards for gymnastics and opportunities to demonstrate skills. Sports day is a time for participation and enjoyment.
136. The management of the subject is very good and there is a high level of colleague support. Assessment takes place through notes on planning, and half termly evaluation sheets ensure and check compliance with the National Curriculum.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

137. Standards in are in line with the expectations for pupils who are seven. The school uses the locally agreed syllabus and work is planned from this. The lack of written evidence by pupils or a portfolio containing examples of work from each year group means that it is also difficult to check whether pupils are making progress year on year in their knowledge, skills and understanding in religious education.
138. Year 2 pupils can talk about Christmas and know the story of Jesus' birth and that birthdays, Christmas and Easter are celebrations. They know that Eid is a celebration and that the Koran is a special book. They cannot remember any other stories of Jesus. They know about Diva lamps used at the festival of Divali. They can talk freely about their Christmas performance of 'Whoops-a-daisy, Angel'.
139. In Year 1 pupils learn about the celebrations of Eid-ul-Fitr and Advent. Pupils know that Advent means that Christmas is coming and that there are twenty-four days in Advent. They can name people and artefacts associated with Christmas such as angels, shepherds and kings. They know what fasting means and that people of the Muslim faith fast during Ramadan. They know that Eid marks the end of Ramadan and that it is a special celebration with family and friends. They recognise that Muslim people worship at the mosque and that the Koran is written in Arabic. In these lessons pupils showed an above average understanding of what they had learnt about the Muslim and Christian faiths.
140. The quality of teaching in the two lessons seen was good. The teachers make very good links to previous learning, careful planning makes efficient use of the short lesson time, the pace is brisk and pupils learn well. Teachers use the first hand knowledge of Muslim or Christian pupils within the class to enhance learning about the celebrations of Eid-ul-Fitr and Advent. These pupils are excited about the forthcoming celebrations and eager to share their experiences. This effectively brings pupils' learning to life. In these lessons teachers have a firm approach to behaviour management, which means that pupils listen to their teachers and each other. Teachers expect a good attitude, pupils respond by paying attention to whoever is speaking, showing respect for the views of others and their learning moves on.
141. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by teaching assistants and there are opportunities for higher attaining pupils to be challenged during discussion and follow up work. Teachers' effective strategies for questioning ensure that pupils of all abilities have the opportunity to answer and feel fully included in their lessons.
142. The policy for religious education is up to date and the schemes of work drawn from the locally agreed syllabus. The subject manager has gathered a good range of

resources, accessible to colleagues, which support the teaching of religious education. The stock of artefacts for pupils to see and handle reinforces the curriculum. She is helping to enhance the teaching of religious education by arranging for a range of different visitors from other faiths and cultures, which is a strength.