

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Horsforth, Leeds

LEA area: Leeds

Unique reference number: 108013

Headteacher: Mrs S Rushfirth

Reporting inspector: Mr T Richardson  
16500

Dates of inspection: 23 – 26 June 2003

Inspection number: 246753

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Broadgate Lane  
Horsforth  
Leeds

Postcode: LS18 5AB

Telephone number: 0113 258 4593

Fax number: 0113 258 4593

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr J Barnes

Date of previous inspection: October 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
16500	Mr T Richardson	Registered inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, music, special educational needs	How high are standards, how well are pupils taught, how well is the school led and managed, what should the school do to improve further
9883	Mr B Silvester	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development, how well does the school care for its pupils, how well does the school work in partnership with parents
1578	Mrs M Sinclair	Team inspector	Science, art and design, geography, history, the Foundation Stage	
31838	Mr M Williams	Team inspector	English, design and technology, physical education, educational inclusion, English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>10</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>27</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Mary's is a mixed, Catholic, primary school of average size with 210 pupils on roll aged 4 to 11; equal proportions of boys and girls; and seven classes. The majority of pupils are from white British and European backgrounds and, although 11 pupils have English as an additional language, they are all at an advanced stage of acquiring English. Below average numbers of pupils are eligible for free school meals (five per cent) and there is a below average proportion of pupils with special educational needs at 16 per cent. Five pupils have Statements of Special Educational Needs and these are for moderate learning and communication difficulties, physical disability and emotional and behavioural difficulties. Children enter the reception class from a number of nursery and pre-school providers and generally have above average attainment on entry. Most of the pupils live within three miles of the school, but some travel up to six miles to attend. The school is a 'Partnership Promotion School' for the initial training of teachers, is an Investor in People, and routinely gains School Achievement Awards.

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

The school is very effective. Pupils are taught very well, and demonstrate high standards and good achievement in English, mathematics and science as a result. The headteacher and key staff provide very good leadership. They set a very clear ethos for valuing the worth of each individual, and everyone gives of their best in return. Staff and governors are very knowledgeable about what the school does well, and act decisively to ensure improvement. The school gives very good value for money.

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

- There is outstanding provision for children in the Foundation Stage so that they receive the best possible start to their education, and enter Year 1 with attainment well above average.
- There is a very strong ethos for valuing and including every individual. As a result, there are excellent relationships; pupils gain very high levels of confidence, self-esteem and maturity; and give of their best in school.
- There is excellent provision for moral development. As a result, pupils have very good attitudes to school and behave very well.
- Pupils are taught very well and attain very high standards in English, mathematics and science. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. In particular, pupils gain high-level skills in speaking and listening, and this supports their learning in other subjects and leads to very good achievement in their personal development.
- The school is very well led and managed. School leaders have a very clear vision for what needs to be done and manage change very well so that action leads to higher standards.
- The school has a very good partnership with parents and provides very good care and guidance for its pupils.

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

- Pupils' attainments in art, design and technology, history and music have yet to match the high standards found in other subjects.
- Inspectors support the pupils' views that the quality of the toilets should be improved.

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

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

The school was last inspected in October 1997. Since then, it has made very good improvement and done much more than address the key issues that were identified. Standards have risen in English, mathematics, science, and in the subjects the school has so far prioritised for development. Outstanding improvement is evident in the Foundation Stage. There has also been very good

improvement in: school effectiveness; the quality of teaching; leadership and management; the curriculum; assessment procedures; the provision for pupils with special educational needs; attendance; and governance.

### STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	B	A*	A*	A
mathematics	A	A	A*	A*
science	A	A	A*	A

Key	
top five per cent	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
lowest five per cent	E*

Standards are very high and the school's challenging targets are routinely met. The Year 2 test results in 2002 (not included in the table above) were well above average in reading and writing; above average in science and average in mathematics. The provisional test results for 2003 show an improvement for Year 2 pupils, especially in mathematics, and further improvement for Year 6, with more pupils attaining the higher Level 5 than before. Most children enter the Foundation Stage with attainment just above average. They achieve very well and enter Year 1 with attainment well above average, and also with significant gains in their personal, moral, social and communication development. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 show good achievement over time. As well as attainment that is well above average, they gain increased confidence, extend their vocabulary and develop increasingly sophisticated speaking and listening skills. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have good achievement. Standards rise from well above average to being in the top five per cent for the nation. In addition, pupils develop sophisticated thinking, speaking and listening skills and use technical vocabulary with ease and fluency. A benefit of this is that pupils communicate very effectively with one another and come to value realistic praise and constructive criticism. Boys and girls do equally as well, as do those pupils from minority ethnic groups, pupils with special educational needs, and those whose home language is other than English. Pupils develop their literacy and numeracy skills very well but standards, whilst average, could be higher in art, design and technology, history and music.

### PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very keen to come to school and enjoy their work
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils want to behave well and are courteous, polite and friendly towards others as a result.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Relationships are very strong indeed and pupils gain high levels of self-esteem, confidence and independence.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance figures are well above the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Excellent	Very good	Very 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.*

English, mathematics, geography and science are taught very well, as are the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Teachers promote speaking and listening skills to high levels and also teach reading, writing and spelling very well. Teachers and assistants provide brisk and focused sessions on phonics, reading and spelling and take every opportunity to help pupils develop their numeracy skills. Children in the Foundation Stage concentrate very well and apply considerable effort to their learning in response to the excellence of the teaching. The exemplary teaching of mathematics in Year 6 leads directly to the pupils’ very high standards in the subject. The teacher’s confidence and enthusiasm is inspirational, and pupils extend their thinking and enjoy being creative with numbers. Teachers and assistants work very well together as a coherent, flexible and effective team. Assistants are very well informed and are highly skilled at knowing how best to support the pupils in their learning. Teachers make sure the needs of every pupil are met and encourage everyone to develop maturity and independence. As a result, pupils know they are responsible for their own learning and work harder. Pupils informed inspectors that they enjoy learning because their teachers set ‘real things’ for them to do in their lessons. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching and learning due to very good monitoring and encouragement for teachers to evaluate what they do well and what could be improved.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is broad and well-balanced with a good range of learning opportunities that meet the needs of the pupils. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is excellent.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils’ needs are identified and supported very well. The school does all it can to help pupils catch up and be fully included in learning and other school activities.
Provision for pupils’ personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall, with very good provision for pupils’ spiritual, social and cultural development. Provision for moral development is excellent. Pupils clearly know right from wrong and fully understand the effect of their actions on others.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Each individual is valued and cared for as an important member of the school community.

There is a very good partnership between parents and the school. Parents support their children very well and are very pleased with the school.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher and her deputy make sure the school's aims are exceedingly evident in all its work. There is a very clear vision for what needs to be done and resultant action is very effective in raising standards. There is a very strong ethos for valuing the worth of every individual and every pupil is included fully in learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The skills of individual governors are used very well to support the work of their committees and the governing body operates efficiently.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Everyone in school takes part in evaluating what is done well and what could be improved. The school is confident in its strengths and identifies valid priorities for development.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Finances are controlled very well and the principles of best value are applied very thoroughly to all transactions.

The school is very well staffed and has good resources. The accommodation is good. However, inspectors support the views of the pupils that toilets are insufficiently private and need renovation.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• children like school, behave well and are helped to gain maturity and responsibility</li> <li>• there is good teaching, children are expected to work hard and make good progress as a result</li> <li>• the school works closely with parents and keeps them well informed about their children</li> <li>• parents feel comfortable to approach the school with any questions or problems</li> <li>• the school is well led and managed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no significant concerns were raised with inspectors</li> </ul>

Inspectors support, in full, all the positive views of the parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Standards are very high. The Year 6 pupils' results in the 2002 national tests for English, mathematics and science are in the top five per cent in the country. These results are also well above the average for similar schools for English and science, with mathematics again in the top five per cent. The Year 2 pupils' test results in 2002 were well above average in reading and writing; above average in science (teacher assessments); and average in mathematics. When compared with pupils in similar schools, the Year 2 pupils did very well, except in mathematics, where their results were below average. The headteacher and co-ordinator for mathematics have analysed the 2002 results and the quality of provision in great detail. They identified specific areas for improvement and have carried out work to raise standards in mathematics for Year 2 pupils. Inspection shows that this work has been very effective. The provisional test results for 2003 became available during the inspection. These show that almost every Year 2 pupil has attained at least Level 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science. In addition, a large proportion of pupils has attained the higher Level 3 in these subjects, and standards in mathematics are as high as in the years previous to 2002. Provisional test results for 2003 also show further improvement for Year 6 pupils with almost every pupil attaining Level 4 in English, mathematics and science, and more than two thirds of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in these subjects.
2. Year on year, the school's test results in English, mathematics and science are improving at a faster rate than the national trend. The school sets challenging targets for whole school performance and these are routinely met. Challenging targets are also set for pupils in their lessons. Discussion with pupils shows that they are clear about how well they are doing, know the National Curriculum level they are working at, and know what they need to learn to do to gain a higher level.
3. Most children enter the Foundation Stage with attainment just above average. They achieve very well in response to the excellence of the provision and not only enter Year 1 with attainment well above average, but also with significant gains in their personal, moral, social and communication development. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 show good achievement over time. They continue to demonstrate attainment that is well above average and also show increased confidence and self-esteem. In particular, pupils extend their vocabulary and gain increasingly sophisticated speaking and listening skills that help them to understand much more within their lessons. Good achievement takes place for all pupils throughout Years 3 to 6. Standards rise from well above average to being in the top five per cent for the nation. In addition, pupils successfully gain higher order thinking, speaking and listening skills and use technical vocabulary with ease and fluency. These skills help every pupil to raise questions, use their powers of reasoning, and investigate fully the topics they are learning. As a result, pupils are increasingly secure in their knowledge and are confident to apply their learning skills to new situations. A further benefit of these achievements is that pupils communicate very effectively with one another and, through well-argued discussions, come to accept realistic praise and value any constructive criticism. This, in turn, contributes to the high level of relationships, the very good behaviour, and enables lessons to be used most productively for learning.
4. The school keeps very good records of how well pupils do each year. Analysis of these shows that all pupils are achieving well. Pupils with special educational needs, for example, often show good academic achievement as well as demonstrating significant advances against the targets set in their individual education plans. Boys and girls do equally as well, as do those pupils from minority ethnic groups and those whose home language is other than English. Pupils who enter the school with lower attainment routinely leave school with test results that are above average. Also, pupils with the potential for higher attainment are generally enabled to achieve as much as they can. The school keeps careful track of how well all individuals are doing and reacts quickly to put right any discrepancies that may arise.

5. There are, however, some differences between subjects, and pupils are generally doing better in the subjects that have already received attention and development through the school improvement plan. The very high standards in the Foundation Stage are related directly to the excellent teaching and experiences provided by the teaching team. Standards are well above average by the end of Years 2 and 6 in English, mathematics, science and geography. This is because these subjects are taught very well, teachers have the highest expectations for what pupils can do, and challenging work is set that interests the pupils and encourages them to work hard. Also, pupils develop their literacy and numeracy skills very well and see their relevance through using them for practical problem solving and increasing the accuracy of their work in other subjects. A key factor in the pupils' high level of success in mathematics is the excellent teaching of the subject in Year 6. The teacher's knowledge, rigour and enthusiasm inspires the pupils to extend their thinking and skills as much as they can. This teaching is also highly influential in promoting good practice throughout the school and raising expectations of what pupils can do in all year groups. Another factor in the success of pupils with lower attainment in English is the rigorous daily provision of phonic, reading and basic literacy work provided by teaching assistants for groups of pupils. This work is focused, brisk and stimulating. The pupils concerned work hard and quickly improve their skills as a result, so that they are able to be fully involved in class lessons.
6. Standards are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6 in information and communication technology. These standards are also continuing to rise, and pupils are achieving well, as a direct result of the use made of the new computer suite and network. Most of the current gains in pupils' computer skills have taken place over the last two years as a result of teachers improving their own knowledge and working with confidence so that pupils now have greater access to computers and are learning quickly. Pupils are also achieving well in using computers effectively to support their learning in other subjects. Standards in physical education are above average in Years 2 and 6. This is because teachers have high expectations and encourage pupils to discuss and evaluate how they can improve their skills. In addition, pupils benefit from the quality of instruction provided through the local sports partnership. Inspection identifies that improvements can be made, and standards across the school, whilst average, could be higher in the following subjects:
  - Art and design; design and technology. There is insufficient emphasis on enabling pupils to produce work of high quality. Also, more time could be identified on the timetable for teaching these subjects.
  - History. Pupils do well in gaining historical knowledge and understanding. However, they are not sufficiently encouraged to work at higher levels to evaluate and interpret sources of historical information and establish cause and effect in past events.
  - Music. Recent developments in the subject are clearly raising standards and pupils in Year 1 already show skills that are above average. This work is still being implemented and is likely to continue to raise standards.

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

7. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, relationships, personal development and attendance are a strength of the school. Pupils are keen to attend and play a full part in the school's life, including the good range of extra-curricular activities. They have a very good attitude to their work. Pupils are well motivated, confident and love to come to school. They are keen to do well but are not pressurised to do so. Pupils feel challenged by the work set and enjoy learning because their teachers make it fun and interesting with real investigations. They can work well independently and take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils have a high work rate, they know from their teachers how well they do and what they are working at to improve.
8. In the previous inspection report it stated that the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils were very good. This is still the case. The behaviour of the pupils, in class and around the school, is very good. Pupils are kind and polite and care for one another. There is a calm, welcoming, peaceful atmosphere in the school. Parents are very pleased with the standard of behaviour achieved and that any behaviour problems are managed well. Pupils' understanding of the impact of their actions on others is excellent. The excellent moral and very good social development provided by the school has a clear and positive impact on the very good behaviour observed. Pupils are thoughtful and helpful, with the older ones helping the younger ones, especially when they first arrive in the

reception class. The high standard of behaviour assists the learning of the pupils. No exclusions were reported in the year before this inspection.

9. Relationships, between pupils and between pupils and adults are excellent. Pupils work and play together and collaborate very well. Pupils feel the school is very friendly and that no pupil is allowed to be a 'loner'. Pupils of all ages and ethnicities get along well together. Their respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others is excellent. Pupils listen when another pupil or the teacher is addressing the class and are willing to share and take turns. The teachers and other staff are polite and courteous to the pupils and are a very good role model for them.
10. The personal development of the pupils is very good. They respond well to opportunities to take responsibility. Every pupil has the chance to act as class monitor. Year 6 pupils help the reception class children settle in and also assist in the smooth running of the school by helping one another at lunchtimes and in other ways. Pupils make good use of the suggestion box to put forward ideas to improve the school, like new benches and equipment. They perform in public at Christmas, for the summer production and in class assemblies. Pupils show initiative by proposing ideas to raise money for charities, like Red Nose Day and the Blue Peter Appeal. Some pupils ran a stall at the school's Summer Fayre. The pupils' enthusiasm for school is excellent.
11. Attendance in 2001/02 was 95.2 per cent, which is above the national median and very good. There were no unauthorised absences in that year. In 2002/03 the attendance was even higher at 96.1 per cent, which was above the target set by the local education authority. Other than illness, the main reason for absence is holidays taken in term time. There is no other evidence of condoned absences by parents or truancy. The level of attendance has improved since the previous inspection. Most pupils arrive punctually at school with only a few arriving late. Overall, this very good level of attendance and punctuality has a positive impact on the attainment and achievement of the pupils.

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

12. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. English, mathematics and science are taught very well and exemplary teaching is provided for children in the Foundation Stage and also for mathematics in Year 6. Analysis of lesson observations shows that teaching of very good quality was more routinely seen in reception and Years 1, 4, 5 and 6 than in other years. A major strength is the way that teachers promote development in the pupils' speaking, listening and thinking skills. In most lessons, the technical vocabulary to be used is listed and the definitions discussed with the pupils. During the lesson it is expected that pupils will try to use this vocabulary and the outcome of this work is that pupils learn complex terms and also communicate their thoughts with accuracy to others. For example, in a mathematics lesson for pupils in Year 5, the teacher discussed and used words such as 'congruent' and 'parallel'. She was also able to give instructions about listing the coordinates for a scalene triangle in the first quadrant, and the pupils understood at once what they were required to do. Teachers ask questions that can have a variety of answers and this makes the pupils think carefully about their replies, which are usually given in well constructed and whole sentences. Also, teachers often set challenging activities that require the pupils to solve problems, carry out investigations and use logic and reasoning to arrive at conclusions. Pupils informed inspectors that they find these activities interesting and enjoy learning because they do 'real things' in their lessons.
13. Children in the Foundation Stage concentrate very well, are most productive, and apply considerable effort to their learning in response to the excellence of the teaching. For example, in a group reading session in the reception class the teacher made a point of emphasising the punctuation in the text. She then read so expressively that the children looked ahead in the text and, when it was their turn, made sure they read with expression and followed the pauses indicated by the punctuation. In addition, the teacher made sure, through questions and discussion, that children fully understood the meaning of the text. As a result, all the children were working very hard at learning to read and many demonstrated reading skills well above the average for their age.

14. The exemplary teaching of mathematics in Year 6 leads directly to the pupils' very high standards in the subject. The teacher exudes confidence and enthusiasm and is inspirational in challenging the pupils to extend their thinking and enjoy being creative with the relationships between numbers. As a result, the pupils are very eager to discuss mathematical issues, they use the correct technical terms and sustain a very high rate of productivity in their lessons. The teacher leads challenging discussions, with mental calculations that demand that the pupils have a very good working knowledge of number facts and times tables. As a result, they learn very well from each other, appreciate how others solve problems and really enjoy learning their mathematics.
15. Inspectors also find that the following areas are strengths throughout the school in most subjects.
- Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding. This is particularly evident in English, mathematics, science and geography and leads the pupils to increase their understanding in these subjects. For example, in a science lesson for Year 1, the teacher led a discussion with confidence so that the pupils thought about the growing conditions necessary for the beans that 'Jack's Mother' threw out of the window. She also led the pupils to think of themselves as young scientists and this led the pupils to consider carefully their predictions for seed growth.
  - Basic skills are taught very well. There are high expectations for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. In addition to promoting higher order speaking and listening skills, teachers promote reading, writing and spelling very well and make sure that opportunities to practise these skills in other lessons are fully taken. Teaching assistants provide brisk and focused sessions on phonics, reading and spelling for pupils with lower attainment and this leads to pupils working hard to develop their skills at speed. Teachers and assistants take every opportunity to develop numeracy skills and pupils see the relevance of their efforts as they, for example, use accurate measurements and volumes in their science work. Recently, teachers have improved their ability to teach computer skills and now do this well, making good use of the computer suite to use computers for work in a wide range of subjects.
  - Throughout the school, teachers manage pupils very well, with an emphasis on praising pupils for their good behaviour and actions. Adults set a very good example and the outcome is that pupils learn to behave well and be polite and courteous so that lessons are uninterrupted and can focus on what is being learnt.
  - Teachers and assistants work very well together. An assistant is deployed to every class and this investment works very well. The adults in class form a coherent, flexible and effective team. Assistants are very well informed about the lessons and are highly skilled at knowing when and how best to help the teacher to support the pupils in their learning. In one lesson in Year 4, for example, the teacher conducted an activity with the whole class and then moved it into two groups, for five minutes, so that the teacher and assistant could work with each at the level appropriate to their ability. This transition took place with the minimum of effort and was very effective in preparing the pupils for the tasks that followed.
  - Teachers use assessment very well in English, mathematics and science to set targets for pupils and to make sure that lessons are planned to build on the existing skills and knowledge of the pupils. Books are marked well and often show the pupils what to do to improve. Inspectors also observed teachers providing good quality oral feedback in lessons and this helped the pupils to know what to work at next. For example, in a physical education lesson for pupils in Year 2, the teacher gave pupils constructive feedback and challenged higher attaining pupils to extend their skills, as well as giving guidance and support to lower attaining pupils. As a result, the pupils all worked hard at passing a ball with accuracy and were able to predict and intercept passes in games.
  - Teachers encourage pupils to develop maturity and be independent. As a result, pupils know they are responsible for their own learning and work harder in response. For example, in a literacy lesson in Year 3, the teacher planned the work so that the higher attaining pupils had the freedom to show what they could do without support and guidance. They rose to this challenge and produced well-argued letters in response. Pupils also want others to succeed and help one another, constructively, to overcome any barriers they may have to learning. This was seen regularly in the computer suite

where teachers pair the pupils carefully so that each learns from the other, and teachers can be more effective in giving time and support to those who need it.

16. In subjects other than English, mathematics and science; geography is taught very well and good teaching is evident in physical education and information and communication technology throughout the school. Teaching is satisfactory in art, design and technology and history. Too few music lessons were seen to judge the quality of teaching and learning. Since the last inspection, there has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching and learning and this is due to the emphasis the school has placed on monitoring lessons and encouraging teachers to evaluate for themselves what they do well and what could be improved. Inspectors identify that improvements can still be made in enabling pupils to work at higher levels in art, design and technology, history and music.

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

17. The school provides a broad and well-balanced curriculum and a good range of learning opportunities to meet the needs of its pupils. It fulfils the requirements of the National Curriculum well. As a Church school it follows the diocesan requirements for religious education. This provision is inspected separately.
18. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is excellent. They follow a very well planned curriculum with rigorous and challenging activities that motivate and interest the children to be enthusiastic about learning. The room is organised exceptionally well and children benefit from a highly effective mixture of structured formal tasks and informal play. These activities are based firmly upon detailed assessment of what each child can do and what they should learn next. Teachers are sufficiently flexible to adapt their plans to enable children to follow their interests and extend their learning.
19. For pupils from reception to Year 6 there are now policies and appropriate schemes of work in place for all subjects, providing clear and consistent guidance to teachers. The effective curricular planning, based on these, ensures that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding develop very well in the vast majority of subjects. The school has adapted the national literacy and numeracy strategies very well, including specific additional support for lower attaining pupils and extension classes for the highest, so that they have a very good impact on pupils' learning and achievement over the time that they are in school. The cross-curricular approach to these areas is a strength: in virtually all lessons, opportunities are planned to develop pupils' basic skills. There is limited emphasis given, however, to certain foundation subjects such as art and design and technology, so pupils' opportunities for creativity are not as widespread as they could be. There is not enough provision, for example, to routinely challenge any particularly gifted or talented artists. The curriculum for history and that for music are not covered in as much depth as they could be, which leads to some underachievement at higher levels. Equality of access and opportunity for all girls and boys, including those with special educational needs, is otherwise very good. Appropriate teaching methods and resources allow everyone to contribute and feel included in lessons. The very good monitoring and support of pupils' academic progress and personal development means that their needs in most areas of the curriculum are very well met. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Appropriate role models are provided within the school by all adults so that all pupils have suitable examples to follow.
20. The range of extra-curricular activities to support pupils' studies is good. There is a varied programme of visitors and educational visits both in the locality and local community and further afield. This includes residential visits to enhance learning and broaden pupils' experiences. There are trips to activity centres each year which, for example, improve pupils' PE and ICT skills. There is a good range of after school clubs including cookery, drama and several sports clubs which help to provide teams for the regular competitions and matches the school plays with a variety of schools within the area. The clubs are largely focused to the needs of older pupils so that there are only limited opportunities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to participate.

21. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teachers identify any pupils who are giving concern and their needs are assessed and analysed very well. Very good procedures are in place to make sure that pupils receive support that is matched to their needs. Teachers make very good use of their assistants to help these pupils and, as a result, they regularly improve their attainment and achieve well so that this special attention is no longer required. The school has a high number of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs. These pupils are supported very well, with individual education plans and targets that are directly related to overcoming the barrier of their needs, so that they can fully included in lessons. Again, assistants are deployed very sensitively and well and are very effective at making sure these pupils are included as much as possible. These pupils themselves comment on how well they are supported and value the school's very strong emphasis on equality and inclusion.
22. There are no pupils who are at an early stage of English language learning. Their needs are met through the normal provision for English as a core subject, and especially through the consistent focus given to speaking and listening and to key vocabulary in all subjects.
23. Good provision is made for pupils' personal, social, and health education. Some of this is undertaken through religious education but there is also in place an appropriate programme of discrete PSHE lessons. These studies make a strong contribution to pupils' understanding of their own development and also of the responsibilities of being a member of the wider community. The governing body had decided that sex education should not be part of the curriculum and at present this policy is still in place. The governors have changed their minds and are now working with the diocese to ensure that, in future, pupils learn about sex and relationships within a suitable context. Pupils benefit from the school's provision for citizenship and become concerned and informed citizens by the age of nine or ten. They are highly competent at explaining facts and views about political issues such as sustainable growth. Year 4 and Year 5 pupils have been active participants in local projects on environmental issues and are clearly aware that their work is linked to the need to look after the Earth for future generations. They have studied the local area and considered recycling questions and the development of local ' brownfield sites ' to meet housing needs.
24. The school has good links with the local community which strengthen the range of opportunities available to pupils. Visiting speakers have included members of the local fire service who gave talks relevant to the science curriculum. Local musicians, historians and local politicians have also helped to enrich the curriculum by their contributions to different areas. The school makes use of the church to support work in geography. It is also involved with a Deanery project to develop the mathematics curriculum. Parents who have expertise in various areas regularly contribute to the curriculum for example by assisting with the cookery aspect of design and technology. These contributions reflect the ethos of unity in which each individual has a valued part to play and in consequence encourage and motivate pupils to do well.
25. The school has very good relationships with partner institutions. There is regular liaison with nursery groups and secondary schools so transition by pupils between establishments are made smooth. There are especially constructive links with the Catholic secondary school to which most pupils transfer at the end of Year 6. This school is a designated sports college which leads a sports partnership involving itself and many primary schools. Through this, staff develop expertise and pupils develop sporting and social skills through a good programme of lessons, competitions and matches. The secondary school also provides opportunities to enhance studies in literacy, numeracy, science, and for older pupils "taster" lessons in French through one-day visits. St Mary's also uses the City Learning Centre to enrich the ICT curriculum.
26. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very good overall. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. Assemblies provide good opportunities for pupils to share and consolidate their spirituality and there are opportunities throughout the day for pupils to engage in prayer and reflection. The outcomes of the school's provision in Religious Education are evident in the pupils' appreciation of other faiths and the need for periods of quiet and calm. Although there are no detailed plans to identify moments of reflection throughout the

curriculum, in practice teachers are alert to opportunities; pupils in Year 3, for example, experienced a sense of wonderment in a science lesson about the growth of plants.

27. There is excellent provision for pupils' moral development. All adults are very good role models and provide clear moral messages through their excellent relationships with pupils and their expectations of behaviour. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong, and the emphasis upon positive, supportive attitudes, consideration and respect for others is maintained throughout the school. The impact of this provision is seen strongly in the friendships of children and their high level of co-operation, negotiation and maturity, as well as in the way they build relationships and care for one another.
28. The provision for social development is very good. Pupils have a say in the running of the school through the "suggestion box" and regular assemblies when matters put forward are discussed. Pupils take on roles as monitors for various duties, agreed amongst themselves and with staff. Older pupils act as "buddies" to younger children, helping them to settle in. Thanks to high expectations and consistent examples, everyone learns to co-operate harmoniously and value the worth of all who contribute to the school community, whether within the school itself or when participating in residential and other visits. In consequence pupils behave very well and relationships throughout the school are excellent.
29. The provision for cultural development is very good. There is very good provision for learning about western traditions for example through literature, music and art, and about the cultures of other countries for example through geography studies and visitors from abroad. Pupils have experienced African music and dance thanks to visiting performers. Multi-faith weeks help pupils to learn more about and gain respect and understanding for the different beliefs and customs of the people that make up the local community. Examples include talks by Muslim and Hindu visitors, including parents of pupils at the school, and long standing links with the local synagogue and Jewish community.

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

30. The care the school gives to its pupils is a strength and makes a major contribution to standards and achievement. The steps taken to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety are very good. The teachers know their pupils well, recognise their needs and give them very good support and guidance. The pupils move safely around the school, which is on several different levels. The school has an appropriate health and safety policy. There is a Buildings and Finance sub-committee of the governing body and a health and safety governor. The buildings and grounds are inspected regularly and an annual report is made. Plans and finances are in place to improve the uneven paving around the school. The fire bells are checked weekly. Fire drills are held termly and a fire safety risk assessment has been made. Most staff have had emergency first aid training and two of them are fully qualified first aiders. A Catholic care worker is employed to support families with additional needs. Staff and parents have been trained together to support bereaved and separated children. The learning mentor works very closely with the pupils and pupils speak to her about any concerns they might have. These aspects of the provision are very good and provide sensitive and effect support to children and families in need.
31. The school has an appropriate child protection policy. There is a child protection governor and a designated teacher, who is responsible for the policy and has received the required training. Child protection matters are raised at meetings of all staff, teaching and non-teaching, but there has been no recent formal training for them. The school has a good working relationship with other caring agencies, like the Social Services.
32. The schools' procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. There is a behaviour policy, which contains a suitable range of rewards and sanctions to encourage good behaviour. The policy is based on rewarding good behaviour whilst sanctions are available for misbehaviour. At the beginning of each school year every class agrees a set of rules to operate by, which are in line with the behaviour policy. The school encourages the development of self-discipline and esteem in the pupils. Incidents of bullying are



infrequent but, when they do occur, they are dealt with very quickly and effectively, in accordance with the anti-bullying policy. Parents of both parties are involved. The learning mentor works successfully with pupils who have 'barriers to learning' which include misbehaviour.

33. In the previous inspection report it stated that provision for the support, welfare and guidance of the pupils was effective and that the personal support given was very good. That is still the case. The assessment of the pupils' work and monitoring of attendance have improved. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and the use of assessment information to guide curricular planning are good. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are very good. Academic assessment in English, mathematics and science is very good. The systems for assessing science in Year 2 are very good but the teacher assessments sometimes tend to underestimate the abilities of the pupils. Assessment is very effective in geography and effective in ICT and physical education. There is still work to be done in art and design, history, music and religious education. The achievement of every pupil is tracked very well in English, mathematics and science. Assessment for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
34. The school's procedures for monitoring and supporting the pupils' personal development are very good. The personal development of the pupils is monitored by their class teachers and is reported in the pupils' annual reports. Teachers maintain records of when their pupils have featured in a 'good work' assembly. The Star of the Week is awarded to pupils for things like teamwork, kindness, giving of their best and sporting achievements. Teachers are encouraging a high level of personal development in their pupils. The pupils' personal development is supported by the opportunities they are given to take responsibility and show initiative.
35. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. Attendance is monitored by the class teachers, the administrative assistant and the headteacher. Registers are marked twice daily. Parents are very good at informing the school about reasons for absence. When this does not happen, the school contacts them. The education welfare officer (EWO) visits parents when required. There are good links with the EWO of the main receiving secondary school. Good use is also made of the computer analysis of attendance and the school deals immediately with any trends identified to ensure that pupils are in school as much as possible.

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

36. Parental links are a strength of the school. Parents are very supportive of their school and the liaison between the school and parents has a very positive impact on the pupils' learning. As a result, parents often talk with pupils about what they are learning, help them with any homework, and show an interest that motivates their children to want to do well. In the previous inspection report there were some criticisms of lack of information for parents, but these concerns have now been well addressed. The quality of information provided is now very good. A weekly newsletter is sent out in addition to a termly newsletter on religious education, and a Parents' Association and curriculum newsletter. The school's administrative assistant is a vital communication link and is well respected by the parents for the way she follows up any queries and deals immediately with their messages or concerns. Parents who are new to the school are invited to a presentation evening. Workshops and courses are held to inform parents of curriculum matters such as literacy, numeracy and preparation for Standard Assessment Tests (SATs). There is an annual open day for parents to look around the school at which Year 5 and 6 pupils act as guides for the adults. There are two opportunities a year for parents to discuss their child's progress with the class teacher, in the autumn and the spring. These evenings are very well attended by parents.
37. The pupils' annual reports tell parents what their child knows, understands and can do. Areas for improvement are given in mathematics, English and science and an effort grade is included. These reports are generally of very good quality. However, there are some areas where minor improvements could make the reports even better. For example, where reports are written using a computer word bank, this sometimes leads to similar comments, for different pupils, in some subjects. Also, in subjects other than English, mathematics and science, there could be an even stronger focus on what the pupil has learnt, rather than the topic studied. Parents have an opportunity to discuss the reports with the class teacher. An annual end-of-year letter is sent to

parents and this celebrates achievement, both academic and sporting. Parents find the school staff very approachable.

38. The parents' views of the school are very good. The contribution of parents to children's learning, at school and at home, is very good. Parents show care and consideration for the school community and willingly provide volunteer help and support for projects and fund raising. The Parents' Association (PA) arranges a wide range of events. These have included 'Stars in Your Eyes', a '12 hour fun run', a non-uniform day, a Spring Ball and a Summer Fayre. Each class has a parental representative as a point of contact between the PA and partners. The money raised by the PA is used to enhance the education of the pupils. In recent years funds have gone towards the information technology suite and the library. The PA gives dictionaries to each of the leaving pupils. They also raise money for a local hospice. Parents and other adults are encouraged to help in the school and between 10-15 of them do so on a regular basis, and this also helps the pupils with their learning through, for example, sharing a book together. More parents help with special events, like sports day and visits. The PA works closely with the school staff and the good teamwork is very evident.
39. The use of homework is good throughout the school, and very good in the Reception class. Years 5 and 6 have homework diaries and the rest of the school have reading diaries. Both are also used as an effective form of communication between school and home. Most parents are very supportive of their child's work at home. Parents are informed when their child should expect homework. The home/school agreement strengthens the link between parent and the school, and is signed by teachers, parents and pupils annually. Parents are invited to special events, such as class assemblies and school productions.
40. In the parents' meeting and questionnaire, prior to the inspection, parents expressed the view that they felt themselves lucky that their child could attend such a good school. No significant concerns were raised by parents with the inspectors.

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

41. The headteacher provides very good leadership and has a very clear vision for every pupil to get the best deal possible from their time in St Mary's. The school aims to 'enable all to achieve their full potential as unique individuals'. This aim is addressed exceedingly well by everyone in school and is highly evident every day. Pupils are respected and valued by all adults and their own peers. Staff receive praise and support for their work, and everyone in the school community knows their views are respected and taken into account. The outcome of this is that relationships in school are outstandingly high. Pupils are also included very well in school activities, and any barriers they may have to learning are removed. Staff work very well together as a team and willingly give effort beyond their contracted hours to the benefit of the pupils. As a result, pupils are motivated to give of their best and this, in turn, leads to them achieving as much as they can in their academic and personal development.
42. Since the last inspection, the headteacher has strengthened the school's ethos and led by example to ensure that the school's aims are realised. School improvement has been led very well and each year, the priorities chosen for development have been systematically addressed. All staff play a full part in evaluating what is done well and what needs to be improved. They also see the benefit of their successful improvement work in the pupils' achievements and know that their efforts are appreciated. This, in turn, helps school leaders to manage the process of change very well. As a result, there has been very good improvement in the following areas:
- Standards have risen in English, mathematics, science, geography, information and communication technology and physical education as a result of the emphasis given to enabling subject co-ordinators to develop the curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning in each subject.
  - The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is now excellent.
  - The quality of teaching and learning has improved as a result of focused monitoring and feedback so that teachers are clear about what they do well and know the skills they are seeking to improve.

- Leadership and management roles have been clarified and delegated effectively and well.
  - The curriculum is now well planned and assessment procedures are very effectively used for plotting how well each pupil is doing, and for setting realistic targets for what they should learn next.
  - The procedures, leadership, and quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs are now very good.
  - Attendance has improved.
  - The governing body now works routinely at a very good level to support school improvement.
43. The headteacher is supported by a very good deputy headteacher and a very good governing body. Subject co-ordinators are growing in confidence and successfully taking increased responsibility for leading the developments in their subjects. A key feature, shared by all in the school, is a strong desire to 'do the right thing' for the pupils and there is a very good commitment from all staff to continue to improve. Self-evaluation procedures are particularly strong. School leaders have successfully developed a culture so that staff and pupils routinely evaluate what they do well and what could be improved. This process is applied equally well to aspects within a lesson and to whole school areas for improvement. From this, priorities for school development are selected, included in the school improvement plan, and successfully implemented. This procedure is steadily improving the provision in subjects and is leading directly to the raising of standards. In addition, this process gives the school confidence. It knows what it does well and can determine accurately the path it should take for development. As a result, the headteacher and deputy are able to avoid over-burdening staff with unnecessary initiatives from external sources. In addition, the school has now reached a point where much of the 'groundwork' of school improvement has been done and school leaders are actively planning to reduce the administrative work-load of teachers.
44. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities very well. The skills of individual governors are used very well to support the work of their committees and the governing body operates with efficiency to ensure the quality of provision made for the pupils. A very good overview is given to financial procedures and, as a result, the budget and specific grants are used prudently and with the principles of best value applied at all times. Currently, governors are carrying forward a sum of money earmarked appropriately for better pathways, providing improved outdoor play facilities for children in the Foundation Stage and further enhancements to the provision for information and communication technology.
45. The school is very well staffed and there are very good procedures in place for the induction of new personnel, as well as the continued professional development of existing staff. In particular, teachers are encouraged to keep a portfolio of their work in the school. This shows clearly the success of teachers and includes messages of praise and support from the headteacher, parents and pupils. These serve as an excellent reminder of what is done well and are, rightly, valued by each teacher. The school is also a centre for developing student teachers and has very good partnerships and procedures in place for this work. The school's accommodation and provision of resources for learning is good. However, discussion with pupils highlighted that many pupils feel uncomfortable about using the toilets. Inspection reveals that toilets are insufficiently private and in need of renovation. This is an area that the school has already identified for improvement, and work is scheduled to take place later in 2003.
46. The school is managed very well. Day to day operations run smoothly and key staff, such as meal time assistants, administration staff, crossing patrol staff, caretaker and cleaners are very clear of their roles and take a pride in doing their best for the children and the school. As a result, they share in the teamwork of running the school, make sure that meal times are friendly and orderly, keep the pupils safe, ensure the buildings are clean and attractive and go about their daily tasks with good humour and a smile. This general happiness adds to the friendly and welcoming atmosphere the school provides.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

47. In addition to sustaining the high standards, very good teaching and very good quality of leadership; school leaders, staff and governors should now:
- Raise standards in art and design and technology (paragraphs 6, 16, 77 - 85) by:
    - Making sure sufficient emphasis is given to these subjects on class timetables
    - Making sure teachers improve their knowledge of these subjects and have expectations that are sufficiently high
    - Making sure that higher attaining pupils are enabled to attain at higher levels
  - Raise standards in history (paragraphs 6, 16, 91 – 94) by:
    - Enabling pupils to develop skills of historical analysis, evaluation and interpretation at higher levels.
  - Raise standards in music (paragraphs 6, 16, 100, 101) by\*:
    - Implementing fully the changes already started, so that the high standards now evident in Year 1 continue to be developed throughout the school.
  - Improve the quality of the toilets, especially those used by the older pupils\*

*\*already identified for improvement in the school improvement plan.*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	49
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	21	17	9	0	0	0
Percentage	4	43	35	18	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 two percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	210
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	34

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	11

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.8

#### 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)**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	11	19	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	11	11
	Girls	18	18	17
	Total	29	29	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (97)	97 (94)	93 (94)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	11	11
	Girls	18	18	18
	Total	29	29	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (97)	97 (94)	97 (97)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Total
	2002	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Total	26	27	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93 (100)	96 (100)	100 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Total	25	28	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (100)	100 (100)	100 (97)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Details on the gender of pupils have been omitted from this table as there were fewer than 10 girls in the cohort.

**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	184	0	0
White – Irish	5	0	0
White – any other White background	9	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	3	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	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	3	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	2	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 – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.3
Average class size	30

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	215

**Financial information**

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	471,844
Total expenditure	451,649
Expenditure per pupil	2,247
Balance brought forward from previous year	22,340
Balance carried forward to next year	42,535



*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.4
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	210
Number of questionnaires returned	98

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	32	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	63	32	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	64	33	1	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	45	13	1	0
The teaching is good.	69	30	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	51	41	6	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	23	2	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	28	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	50	42	4	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	74	23	2	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	66	31	1	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	54	33	10	1	2

**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**

48. Excellent provision in the reception class results in a first rate early years education. Children are admitted to the reception class at the beginning of the autumn term of the school year in which they will be five. The very good induction procedure eases their transition into school and usually all children are attending full time before the October half term. Most of the children enter the school with above average levels of attainment although there is a spread of ability with just under forty per cent below this level. All children make very good progress and show very good achievement in the reception class. This is in response to the excellent quality of the teaching provided by the class teacher and team of assistants. The children are extremely mature for their age, confidently participating in the many structured play opportunities and responding responsibly when given a free choice of activities. They are greatly helped by a very well organised, warm and caring environment. There is a strong partnership between staff, parents and children so that the children know they are valued and want to do well to please their teachers.
49. There has been exceptional improvement since the last inspection. The quality of teaching and learning is now excellent. The curriculum planning is exemplary and very good assessment of progress takes place. Individual strengths and weaknesses are quickly pinpointed and reflected in the teaching programme devised for that child. Children with special educational needs benefit from this early identification and the very effective use of specialist help. They also make very good progress. By the end of the academic year, the majority of the children demonstrate attainment well above the Early Learning Goals, in all the areas of learning, and a significant number are already working at National Curriculum Level 1.

**Personal, social and emotional development**

50. The children show very good achievement in their personal, social and emotional development and all but one or two gain standards well above the Early Learning Goals for this area. Behaviour is excellent, mirroring the high expectations of staff and the very good relationships within the class. Children are keen to please. They accept responsibility very well and follow established routines with quiet assurance, being very careful to put personal belongings and school materials away correctly. There is a sense of expectancy as they wait for their teacher to begin and they sustain involvement and perseverance. They are confident in sharing ideas and taking account of the views of others. They also extend their empathy to reacting sensitively to the problems encountered by storybook characters.

**Communication, language and literacy**

51. The quality of teaching and learning in this area of the curriculum is always very good and excellent on many occasions. Nearly all the children are well above average in their speaking, reading, and writing skills and many are already attaining at least Level 1 in the National Curriculum. The daily news session is most effective in promoting very high standards for speaking and listening. Other activities also hone these skills. Children are continually encouraged to talk about a range of first hand experiences, such as what they saw when using a microscope to examine seashells. They become articulate, confident speakers and good listeners. The teacher reads very well with very effective intonation and clear guidance about, for instance, the link between full stops and pauses. There is a definite stress on phonic understanding and an informed focus on difficulties that individual children are encountering. Consequently, children make excellent progress and the teaching of reading is most effective. All recognise familiar words and the majority can read simple sentences. They concentrate and can recall the main events, expressing their own opinions about how a character would react in a particular situation. A particular strength is the teaching of vocabulary, simple spelling and sentence construction within the context of the class reading book, as well as during more discrete sessions. These approaches reinforce each other and promote the very high writing standards that were seen. The overwhelming majority of children can write simple sentences independently, with frequent use of

capital letters and full stops. The quality of their handwriting is also very good, due to the systematic teaching of these skills.

### **Mathematical development**

52. Most children attain standards that are well above average and, in one lesson, all were working close to National Curriculum Level 1 for number work. All are confident in counting beyond 10 and aware, for example, that  $3+4 = 7$ . Children sit at tables, work and concentrate hard. Staff support learning very well by the judicious use of questioning, double-checking, challenge and praise. In one lesson, they were successful in leading a group to understand that reversal works. For example, children understood that  $4+2=6$  is the same as  $2+4=6$  in response to their teacher's questions. The whole room buzzed with purposeful activity. The children are highly confident in showing others what they can do, and all take part in checking their number bonds are correct. Highly skilled teaching leads the children to think carefully and consequently they progress to writing sums, which they clearly understand for themselves. Mathematics is completely integrated into class activities as when class registration is used to reinforce number work and the use of language to develop concepts such as quantity. A range of recorded work indicates that the children benefit from being given a wide experience of practical activities in relation to shape and measure.

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

53. The majority of children enter the reception class with above average general knowledge. Staff are highly successful in enhancing this understanding and children leave this class very well prepared for the National Curriculum subjects of Science, ICT, design and technology, history and geography. Children have learnt about the seaside, their local area and transport. They can draw simple maps that focus on their school. Past events have been recounted and characters described and discussed.
54. There are considerable strengths in the teaching and learning of science. In a lesson seen, the well-planned activity resulted in very good understanding of some of the properties of ice. The children were stimulated by the graphic resources and by very clear questioning that promoted an excellent discussion on how the polar bear got inside the frozen bloc. Children confidently shared their ideas about, for instance, the use of a fridge. They responded well to the teacher's high expectations, including the correct use of language such as the word transparent. Their written work for this area of the curriculum indicates the very good teaching of a scientific approach, with a sustained requirement that pupils use the word '*because*' and demonstrate a simple understanding of a fair test.
55. Standards were also very high in a design and technology lesson where pupils were constructing a model of an underwater world. They thoroughly enjoyed this activity, working well together in planning and evaluating their work. Attainment was equally as high in an ICT lesson where children benefited from a highly structured approach to the teaching of ICT skills and excellent demonstrations by the teacher. They are confident users of computers, able to log on independently. By the end of the lesson they had acquired the ability to select and drag an item into 'Mrs Grindley's shopping basket'. ICT is frequently used to support learning in other aspects of the curriculum.

### **Physical development.**

56. Observation of a lesson in physical development indicated that children attain high standards. This was due to very good planning, so that the teacher had a systematic and informed approach to extending skills and awareness of space. In the lesson, children used gymnastic equipment with increasing expertise, and improved their ability to balance and climb. Confidence and imagination grew and very good teaching strategies resulted in the children giving high quality evaluation of their progress. The class participated well in this and consequently all benefited, as they did from the careful use of their expertise to demonstrate a particularly successful move.

## Creative development

57. Children enjoyed the role play area that was organised during the inspection as the seaside shop. They were eager to dress up as shopkeepers and use their imagination when acting out the role. High quality artwork is on display, indicating very good ability to mix and change colour. Children create well-planned three dimensional theatres and puppets. They produce finely observed and executed drawings of shells. Overall, the quality of art surpasses the expectations set out in the Early Learning Goals. This is also the case for music. In a lesson, for example, the children demonstrated above average standards when composing sounds to represent the seaside and playing them on unpitched instruments. The children evaluated their work carefully and some then produced a better sound. Learning is also enhanced as a result of the very good teamwork between the teacher and support staff, which enables a number of small groups to be taught at the same time.

## ENGLISH

58. Pupils' standards have risen since the last inspection from above average to well above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The standards observed in the inspection match the pupils' performances in National Curriculum tests. Most pupils are uniformly well above average in their speaking and listening, reading, and writing skills by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils also show good achievement year on year in English, as they do much more than just improve their reading and writing skills. They enter Year 1 with communication, language and literacy skills well above average. Pupils build on these skills as they move through the school and also considerably develop and extend their vocabulary, reasoning, questioning and discussion skills. These high level skills are also used to very good advantage to assist learning in other subjects. Both boys and girls contribute to lessons to much the same extent, and all regularly behave very well, displaying very good interest and enthusiasm for their work. The very high standards are the result of a very well-structured curriculum and very good use of the National Literacy Strategy, adapted to meet the pupils' needs; whereas at the time of the last inspection there was no detailed scheme of work and little planning to ensure continuous progress. Regular monitoring by the headteacher and subject co-ordinator has helped to ensure that teaching is now very good and consistently challenges and stimulates the pupils. There are now very good procedures to track pupils' progress and teachers use these very well so that the work set matches the needs and abilities of all the pupils. These improvements continue to have a strong and positive impact on pupils' learning.
59. Standards in speaking and listening are well above average by Year 2 and by Year 6. Throughout the school, pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. In Year 2, they understand and respond to a variety of everyday classroom and other familiar instructions, statements and questions. Their ability to respond in clear speech, using Standard English, is well above average. Most pupils use a wide vocabulary and generally speak in properly constructed sentences. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have good listening skills because their teachers insist on a high standard of listening, whether to adults or to each other. By Year 6, pupils listen attentively to their classmates so that their contributions to discussions are relevant and focused. Pupils are encouraged to speak clearly and to take the initiative in putting forward their views. They speak well to each other, with as much respect as they show to adults because of the consistently good examples that adults give to them. Their clarity and lack of ambiguity also contribute strongly to their personal development. This is largely because misunderstandings are removed, constructive criticism is perceived as the help it really is and relationships grow stronger in consequence. There is an increase in the breadth of vocabulary as pupils move through the school. This is partly a result of targeted vocabulary being consciously planned by teachers as an aspect of lessons in all subjects. All teachers regularly use good strategies for promoting speaking and listening; for example good questioning to promote discussion, oral summaries, and at times role play. Drama was not much in evidence during the inspection week, except for "hot seating" by the younger children, but an annual production (this year, "The Pirates of Penzance") gives good opportunities for pupils to participate and develop their dramatic skills.
60. Pupils' standards in reading are well above average by Year 2 and Year 6. All pupils are taught an

appropriate variety of reading skills such as using letter sounds, pictures and context to help make sense of words. In Year 2, lower attaining pupils, including those with special needs, read sentences accurately, talk relevantly about characters in the books they read and support their preferences with examples. They are learning to be independent and are already expected to read without much intervention. The range of books read independently includes such authors as Jacqueline Wilson, Roald Dahl and J.K. Rowling. Average and higher attaining pupils offer opinions on events and characters and make confident predictions about how a story might end. Pupils use their research skills well. In Year 2, all pupils explained correctly how to use the library but in practice lower attaining pupils tended to search at random within the correct section. Older pupils also make effective use of the Internet to locate information. In Year 6, pupils read with much fluency and accuracy. Lower attaining pupils read aloud with expression and comment perceptively on events and characters. Average attaining pupils are beginning to see different layers of meaning in the text, and higher attaining pupils take this even further through a very good understanding of some of the structures and techniques used in characterisation.

61. Standards in writing are well above average by Year 2 and Year 6. The majority of pupils write in a clear, intelligible script by Year 2. Handwriting is usually joined. Work in books shows increasing accuracy over time. Lower attaining pupils in Year 2 produce short stories with well-linked ideas that are beginning to engage the reader. Their spelling and punctuation are satisfactory. Average attaining pupils link their ideas into longer pieces, often using adjectives very well and regularly making use of new words they have learned. They punctuate their work well. Higher attaining pupils use more complex punctuation such as speech marks, question and exclamation marks very well and introduce detail into longer sentences to hold attention. Thanks to a developing command of adjectives, the pupils write with feeling. Opportunities to write for a variety of different purposes throughout the school are very good. By Year 6, there are very good opportunities in many subjects such as geography and history for pupils to write factual accounts and they recount events very well. There are increasing opportunities for creative writing and particularly poetry. Year 6 pupils produce good examples of extended writing, showing a good sense of register. The vast majority of pupils are competent writers who are becoming aware of the power of words and using them adventurously to very good effect. For example, in a mystery story a higher attaining pupil wrote: "Max felt scared and uneasy; he was silently whimpering." There are many examples of very competent word-processing, which supports pupils' drafting skills well. There are planned weekly lessons in the ICT suite so that pupils' skills develop systematically.
  
62. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall in the school and has improved since the last inspection. A key feature of the school's approach lies in the excellent relationships between pupils and teachers. These are well demonstrated by effective questioning which draws everyone in, and by the value teachers place on all pupils' contributions to discussions. In consequence pupils' speaking and listening skills develop very well and subsequently support their reading and writing. Teachers plan carefully, and clearly identify what the learning for each lesson will be. These aims are clearly explained to pupils in simple language at the start of the lesson. This gets the lesson off to a brisk start and helps pupils pay attention to what they are learning. A wide range of teaching methods is used, which helps to involve all pupils in their learning. Examples include whole-class, paired or group discussion and "hot seating". The teachers ask a good range of questions, often directed at particular pupils to match their attainment or to hold their attention. Speaking and listening, reading and writing develop in a balanced way because teachers make sure that each skill receives appropriate emphasis. The management of pupils is consistently very good, enabling lessons to run smoothly without interruption and, as a result, pupils learn very well. Teaching assistants work very well alongside teachers so pupils, especially those with special needs, have the benefit of more individual attention to further their learning. Teaching assistants also work independently, and very well, to provide additional support to specific groups of pupils especially to help them read and write more effectively. Marking is regular and positive and includes the setting of personal targets for pupils. Homework is set regularly and supports learning. All lessons finish well. Teachers carefully review with the pupils what they have learned by asking key questions or asking pupils to talk about what they have gained. This helps to reinforce the pupils' new knowledge and further their speaking skills. Consequently, they talk about what they have learned and have good knowledge of their own learning.

63. The leadership of the subject is very good. Documentation is comprehensive and there has been very good monitoring of teaching that has helped to provide a consistent quality of provision. Very good assessment systems have been established, which allows the school to track each pupil's progress carefully through the school. The information gained from assessments is used very well and contributes to the high standards in English. Resources are good, with many new reading books recently purchased to expand effective class libraries. Very good use is made of resources in the community, Year 4 for example producing a good school newspaper after experiencing a day with the "Yorkshire Evening Post". The school library is, however, not fully catalogued or indexed, which does not help pupils to develop their skills as well as it should.

## **MATHEMATICS**

64. Inspection shows that the school makes very good provision for mathematics. There are strengths in the very good quality of teaching and learning, with excellence in teaching evident in Year 6. Teachers have high expectations and provide a rigorous challenge for pupils in most lessons. Pupils informed inspectors that they find their lessons interesting because most of their calculations and activities show the relevance of mathematics to real life. As a result, pupils do their best and show good achievement throughout their time in school. The 2002 national tests show that more than 90 per cent of the pupils in Year 2 attained at least Level 2, with almost 60 per cent attaining the higher levels. These results match the national average, and are not as high as in previous years. However, the school has analysed these results carefully and implemented action to improve the curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2. This work is being effective and the provisional test results for 2003 show a significant improvement on 2002, with 100 per cent of pupils attaining Level 2 and almost 90 per cent attaining higher levels. The Year 6 pupils in 2002 did very well in their national tests and the school's results are in the top five per cent for the nation, as well as in the top five per cent for similar schools, with two thirds of the pupils successfully attaining the higher Level 5.
65. Currently, children leave the reception class and enter Year 1 with attainment that is well above the average for their age. The school's assessment shows that, over their time in Years 1 and 2, almost every pupil increases their attainment by more than two national curriculum levels. The pupils currently in Year 2 are doing well and are about to enter Year 3 with attainment that is well above average. School data has been verified as accurate by inspectors and shows that the majority of pupils also attain more than two national curriculum levels in Years 3 to 6. These results demonstrate that pupils show good achievement, and add value to their attainment, in Years 1 and 2 and also in Years 3 to 6. Good achievement is also evident in the way pupils learn and use mathematical vocabulary so that they can discuss their investigations with accuracy, and present well argued reasons for their findings. In addition, all pupils learn to use their numeracy very well to help with learning in other subjects, for example, through using accurate measurements and graphs in science and geography. The pupils currently in Year 6 demonstrate very high attainment, and most are confidently working and thinking at the higher Level 5.
66. Pupils in Year 1 count with confidence beyond 100 and select the appropriate coins for values up to £3.00. In Year 2, pupils use appropriate short cuts for subtracting, for example, nineteen, by taking away 20 and adding one. They also understand how to add and subtract numbers up to one hundred, and are confident to tackle calculations involving one thousand. During the inspection, the pupils in Year 3, were using brackets with accuracy to show that  $53 + 32 = (50 + 30) + (3 + 2)$  and were counting confidently in 100's to and from target numbers such as 923. Pupils in Year 4 work very hard, and their books show they have sustained a high work rate throughout the year. Higher attaining pupils work to two decimal places and understand the relationship between fractions and their decimal equivalent. In a lesson seen, most of the pupils were confident in using their three and six times tables and understood that multiplication is the inverse of division. They were also able to use this knowledge to find and check which numbers were missing from the calculations their teacher set. Pupils in Year 5 mentally calculate doubles and halves of numbers beyond a thousand. They understand the meaning of 'congruent' and define terms such as 'parallel' with mathematical accuracy. During a lesson, the pupils used these terms very well to discuss how to ensure that reflective drawings were accurate, and went on to use positive and negative coordinates to plot these shapes in two quadrants, with higher attaining pupils using four

quadrants with ease. The books of Year 6 pupils show that lower attaining pupils know that the prime factors of 54 are two multiplied by three cubed, while higher attaining pupils use terms such as two to the power eight with accuracy. Most pupils can work to four decimal places and can discuss the relationship between number facts such as,  $7 \times 9 = 63$ ;  $63/90 = 0.7$ ; and  $63/0.0007 = 90,000$ . They have secure mental strategies for calculating percentages and can interpret, for example, tables for travel company holiday prices, discounts and supplements. In addition, Year 6 pupils were observed using computers to set up spreadsheets to assist in the analysis of extended number sequences. Here, the pupils used their reasoning skills very well and deduced that it was improbable for numbers to be in one sequence as they did not possess the characteristics their analysis had identified. They confidently tested their hypotheses with one another and expressed their thoughts with clarity and accuracy, demonstrating high level thinking skills usually seen in secondary schools.

67. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall, with good teaching in Years 1 to 3, and the best teaching observed in Years 4, 5 and 6. In particular, the teacher in Year 6 has a high level of mathematical knowledge and sets exceedingly high expectations and challenge for what the pupils can do. This leads the pupils to be inspired to do their very best. For example, in a lesson also observed by mathematics teachers from a secondary school, the teacher led a discussion about multiplication and division facts at a very high level that led pupils to demonstrate their knowledge that if they divide one side of an equation by ten thousand, they balance the equation by multiplying the other side by the same amount. The pupils were set the task of finding the right holiday to match the profile of a family and really enjoyed using real information from travel brochures to match the price and requirements for each one. Pupils' books show that interesting and challenging activities such as these are routinely set for the pupils and are marked with rigorous accuracy so that pupils are clear about how well they do and work hard at improving their understanding and performance. This teacher is also influential in helping other teachers and provides exemplary practice upon which they are able to model and improve the quality of their work.
68. In all lessons, teachers and assistants work well together and make sure that every pupil is included in learning. During the lessons observed, the following very good features were noted:
- Teachers identify and use mathematical vocabulary with consistent accuracy, and this leads pupils to discuss and reason with clarity. For example, in a lesson for Year 5, the teacher emphasised the words, 'reflection, congruent, parallel, reversal, and image', explained these, and used them where appropriate. This led the pupils to use the words in reply and the benefit of earlier lessons was seen when pupils were able to 'draw a scalene triangle in the first quadrant and list the coordinates' with a clear understanding of all the terms being used.
  - Teachers use very good methods that make pupils respond quickly, enjoy calculations and think for themselves. For example, in a lesson for Year 4, the pupils used whiteboards to record their answers within the time taken for the teacher to say, 'one, two, three, show me'. The pupils were also asked open questions such as, 'how will I check  $7 \times 8 = 56$ ?' and this led to pupils thinking for themselves and producing a range of valid strategies. In a lesson for pupils in Year 1, the teacher encouraged the pupils to play a 'bingo' game and cross off the number bond on their boards that was not shown to the class. They enjoyed this game and thought much harder about the numbers that make 20 as a result. Also, in a lesson for Year 3, the teacher used the overhead projector well, so that pupils could see different patterns of numbers and quickly calculate from the pattern the number of shapes present and the number hidden.
69. Since the last inspection, there has been very good improvement in the subject. Standards have risen, the quality of teaching and learning has improved, and the attainment of the pupils is now very well assessed and analysed. The co-ordinator is extremely knowledgeable and leads the subject with a very clear vision for every pupil to do the very best they can. The school's curriculum goes beyond the requirements of the National Curriculum and the National Numeracy Strategy and the outcome is clearly seen in the pupils' high levels of attainment and confidence. The co-ordinator has rectified the 2002 dip in standards in Year 2 and has appropriate plans to continue to further develop the subject.



## SCIENCE

70. Teacher assessments of the Year 2 pupils in science in 2002, showed that pupils' attainments were above the national average. The 2002 national test results for pupils in Year 6 were in the top five per cent in the country and well above the average for similar schools. The school has successfully maintained high and improving standards in science since the last inspection. The pupils in Year 6 in 2002 achieved exceptionally well when their test results are compared to how they did when they were seven, and there was no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
71. Inspection evidence shows that attainment by the end of Year 2 is well above average. These results are higher than at the previous inspection and differ from recent teacher assessments. Inspectors find that this assessment is somewhat cautious, and does not sufficiently reflect the high standards the pupils are reaching, particularly in their oral work. Pupils show good achievement in Years 1 and 2. The standards reached by the pupils currently in Year 6 are also well above average, with outstanding skills in scientific enquiry. Achievement in Years 3 to 6 is also good.
72. The main reasons for the rising standards and good achievement are that pupils develop excellent investigative skills that they use very well in all aspects of the curriculum. This curriculum is also planned exceptionally well. It both supports and enhances the very good teaching that is a feature of the science provision. There is a strong emphasis on teaching pupils to think in a specific and enquiring way and a continued focus on the correct use of scientific language. Pupils also learn to use a wide range of presentation and recording methods and these are also important contributory factors to their success as young scientists.
73. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 benefit from their teachers' strong subject knowledge and the many opportunities to learn from first hand experience. Investigative skills are highly developed. In one lesson, the school field and the local environment were used most productively to extend an understanding of mini- beasts and their habitat. Year 2 pupils were engrossed by what they saw and the teacher's highly effective use of prompts and 'why' questions resulted in very good learning. By the end of the lesson, pupils were able to make some commendable links between the mini-beast's environment and their characteristics. For example, that long grass at the edge of the school field offered shade and protection to a certain type of small creature. Pupils in Year 1 were equally engaged in a practical activity that centred on investigating different growing media for bean seeds; their interest heightened by apt references to Jack and the Beanstalk. Very skilled teaching resulted in pupils being able to offer simple predictions about where the plant would grow quickest, referring to stones and water.
74. By Year 2, pupils can show their results in a chart or graph and these skills are extended in the older classes. Very good learning occurred in a Year 6 class that was studying different methods of presenting data. The teacher's very knowledgeable and clear explanations enabled the pupils to understand the difference between discrete and continuous data. Pupils were able to suggest examples of appropriate use of this within a scientific context, for example, the relationship between speed and the stopping time for a car. Careful teaching reinforced conceptual knowledge and pupils made some praiseworthy comments about the relevance of the force of gravity. A Year 5 class worked hard to construct a device to measure the effectiveness of seed dispersal, offering very good predictions and measuring accurately. They responded positively to the knowledge of their teacher who was highly successful in using open ended and challenging questions to motivate pupils and promote their thinking skills. Numeracy is also very well developed in science lessons.
75. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The work observed in lessons mirrors the standards seen in pupils' books and on display. Pupils throughout the school are keen and involved, as a result of the motivation generated through their teachers' knowledge of the subject. Lessons are well planned with well-defined learning objectives, and these are made clear to the pupils. Teachers are confident in teaching the subject and produce lessons that have a very good

range of teaching and learning styles, thereby interesting the pupils. All of these aspects help motivate the majority of pupils who enjoy the practical and problem solving activities and have very positive attitudes. This is very beneficial to pupils with special needs who also make very good progress. Teachers ensure that pupils have a very good knowledge of a fair test and have very high expectations about their potential for scientific thought. Pupils are continually required to explain why they are making a specific prediction and how they come to a particular conclusion. Summary sessions are used well to consolidate and assess pupils learning. The emphasis on specialist vocabulary and report writing also strongly enhances the development of pupils' literacy skills

76. The co-ordinator leads the subject in an exemplary fashion, setting very high standards. The curriculum is planned extremely well, and teachers make sure that they meet the varied needs of all the individuals in their classes. National guidelines have been successfully included in the school's scheme of work, and these have also influenced the development of a structured and detailed approach to the teaching of investigation skills. This is a great help to teachers. A very good assessment scheme is in place that also includes the close monitoring of pupils' scientific enquiry skills. The information gained is used very well to plan future lessons and activities, as is the careful analysis of national test results. Prompt action is taken to successfully rectify any weakness identified. However, there is room to further improve the monitoring of teaching and learning in the classroom and the effectiveness of science homework.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

77. Standards in art are average by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, and have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils use an appropriate variety of media and their efforts, although not extensive, are suitably displayed around the school. Overall, there is a satisfactory level of achievement. Pupils have experienced a range of artistic techniques such as collage and printing. However, not enough time is given to the subject, and this limits the pupils' ability to reach high standards. The teaching of art and design alternates each half term with design and technology, which restricts the opportunities for pupils to regularly develop their knowledge and skills. There was no discernible difference in the achievement of boys and girls, or pupils with different ethnic backgrounds. However, little very high quality work was seen, indicating that the higher attaining pupils remain unchallenged.
78. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory. By the end of Year 2, pupils achieve satisfactorily and have experimented with cold and warm colours, painted portraits and explored tools and techniques related to textiles, drawing and clay. Pupils in Year 1 gained from the teacher's assiduous efforts to develop the skills required to paint and paste shapes on textiles. In one lesson, a well-planned discussion enabled the teacher to review the good work done by some of the class. Consequently, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, increased their understanding. They also benefited from the good support they received from capable and well-briefed teaching assistants.
79. In Year 6, pupils' sketchbooks indicate sound progress but some lack meaningful comments by pupils and teacher. Evidence of pupils' self-evaluation is variable. The sketchbooks do not demonstrate sufficiently high expectations for artistic endeavours that match the high standards evident in other subjects. There was only a little evidence of pupils studying and interpreting the work of a wide range of artists from diverse periods and cultures. Large-scale group and 3D work was under-represented. Year 4 pupils did refer to the work of Seurat and used the computer to create a picture in the 'pointillism' style. This class layered paper to create texture, patterns and pictures, enhanced by the careful use of wax crayons. They benefited from the teachers' clear demonstration of how to make thumb pots. Pupils enjoyed the activity and followed instructions well. However, the nature of the task did not allow for high levels of imagination and creativity, and these aspects are generally underdeveloped throughout the school. Literacy, however, was well developed in this lesson with pupils required to write about their tactile responses. Year 5 pupils have also worked with stencils and Year 6 sketchbooks indicate some appropriate work on observational drawing.

80. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. The new co-ordinator was appointed just over a year ago and also leads music in the school. Art is not yet one of the school's priorities for development. Nevertheless, an appropriate start has been made to raise standards. An art week has been held and external advice sought. The current scheme of work is based on a commercial publication, which has served a purpose in offering a structure and support to teachers. However, it is too 'craft' orientated and the school has not given sufficient emphasis to national guidelines for developing creativity throughout the art curriculum. The co-ordinator is also aware that assessment of the pupils' artistic skills is unsatisfactory. This has been identified for improvement, and there are appropriate plans to assess pupils against the National Curriculum level descriptors. A good marking system has already been introduced and work has begun on the introduction of an art portfolio for each pupil. However, more work is needed to make sure that teachers have sufficient subject knowledge to challenge pupils to reach standards that match their high levels of attainment in other subjects.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

81. Standards at the end of Year 2 are average, as they were during the last inspection. Standards are also average by Year 6. This represents a good improvement since they were below average for the last inspection. Owing to the school's timetabling arrangements, it was not possible to observe many lessons. Judgements are therefore based largely on an examination of pupils' work, photographic evidence, discussions with staff and pupils and the examination of planning documents and records. Since the last inspection the school has revised its curriculum and teachers have undertaken suitable training and this is effective in ensuring that the achievement of boys and girls of all ages and abilities is now satisfactory.
82. Pupils in Year 2 have made puppets. The vast majority of pupils sketched their designs with reasonable clarity. They were starting to evaluate different techniques, for example, whether a glued or stitched joint is better in given circumstances. Average and higher attaining pupils described how they have solved simple problems in joining things together and photographs show that the outcomes are satisfactory. This process of evaluation is not always done well. For example in work on axles, a higher attaining pupil decided after review that it was necessary to change the wheels of a model car, but did not give any explanation. Lower attaining pupils draw less clearly and make few evaluations of their work. In general, pupils know they have made something but are less clear about describing the sequence of their work and how they could do it better. They have only limited ideas of whether their creations are actually fit for a specific purpose.
83. Pupils in Year 6 have been working on moving mechanisms including pulleys and cams. These will be connected to motors at a later date. When questioned, pupils showed that they had a reasonable idea of the constraints of materials and available resources in constructing a model, but had little experience in considering a user's needs, for example, in the case of a toy. They have built model shelters, but have not examined sufficiently the essential features of a shelter or any significant real life application. Apart from the consumption of "healthy sandwiches" there was no evidence that any products were tested in normal conditions of use.
84. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Planning documents show that all strands of the subject are covered. All pupils undertake the same tasks. In lessons observed, lower attaining pupils, and pupils with special needs in particular, played a full part, thanks to appropriate support material and adult help. There is in general only limited emphasis given to the skills of evaluation and subsequent review of designs, methods and materials. This means that all pupils and higher attaining pupils especially, do not regularly have the stimulus to design the most effective products with the best quality of finish. There was no evidence of the use of any ICT design software and only limited word-processing. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards their work were none the less good and they enjoyed learning. They related well to all adults and when engaged in group tasks co-operated well with each other.
85. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The head teacher currently oversees the subject due to recent staff changes. She checks teachers' plans but there is no regular monitoring of the

teaching of design and technology. The assessment system is satisfactory. It follows the expected broad outcomes of the nationally recognised scheme of work used by the school, but lacks detail to help determine precisely how well pupils learn and hence to support future planning in the most effective way. The school has given sufficient emphasis to the subject to address the weaknesses identified at the last inspection but not enough to raise standards to match those in the majority of other subjects. To do this, the school should ensure the subject is included more often on timetables, make sure teachers have sufficient knowledge of the subject and set expectations that enable pupils, especially those with higher attainment, to work at higher levels.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

86. Attainment is well above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils' achievement in geography is good. There has been very good improvement in the subject since the last inspection and the quality of teaching and subject leadership is now very good.
87. Year 1 pupils study the local area and show a good knowledge of its environmental features. Pupils in Year 2, develop their geographical enquiry skills through asking questions about litter and recording their observations. This is done well, and the collection of data also aids the development of their numeracy skills. Pupils' books show that their writing is very good, and indicates a high level of knowledge and understanding. They are able to recognise local features and use the correct vocabulary to describe them. Pupils can select information and phrase it in accurate geographical terms as indicated by their work on 'Barnaby Bear in Dublin'. They describe his visit in relevant detail and pinpoint his location on a map, using symbols very well. The pupils' work on St Lucia is of a very high standard for seven year olds. They describe the similarities and differences between the Island and the local area extremely well, with good use of secondary sources of information.
88. By the end of Year 6, pupils have very good mapping skills and a thorough understanding of weather around the world. Year 4 pupils have produced high quality work on settlers and settlement, and show their knowledge by 'creating a new settlement' based on applying their understanding of the features of this aspect of geography. They explain their reasoning and demonstrate very good mapping skills. A lesson observed in Year 5 resulted in pupils making very rapid progress in the development of their skills of deduction as the result of high quality teaching. The teacher was most effective in combining her formal teaching of how to interpret data, with challenging questions to confirm understanding and increase the pupils' participation. Consequently, pupils quickly improved their in-depth knowledge of the similarities and differences between their lives and those of children in a Kenyan village. The Year 6 class have a very good understanding of scale and relief maps, and use specialist vocabulary such as tributary and floodplain correctly. Teachers give a continuous focus on discussion, correct vocabulary and problem solving activities. This helps all the pupils to learn easily, including those with special educational needs. The quality and different styles of writing and reading provided in lessons and activities also helps to develop the pupils' literacy skills.
89. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers plan their lessons very well and make some excellent use of resources, including parental help for activities such as the Year 2 Dublin project. Residential visits and the local environment are used meticulously to enhance understanding and skills. This often results in high quality work, as shown by the class display of the current Year 6 on the features of the River Wharfe. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and have a wide range of teaching and learning strategies that engage the pupils. Teachers have high expectations for what pupils can do, and they respond accordingly and enjoy their work.
90. The leadership of the subject is very good. The curriculum and individual lessons are planned very well. The scheme of work provides very effective guidance for teachers and they build consistently on what pupils already know as a result. This is a key factor in the school's success in teaching geography. Assessment is very good and shows clearly how well pupils are doing. It is analysed very well and the co-ordinator has full information on the curriculum covered and the standards in

school. This information is also used to plan further improvement. Good resources for learning are provided but there is still scope for more geographical computer software.

## **HISTORY**

91. Standards at the end of Year 2 and 6 are average and have been maintained since the last inspection. The achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 pupils work hard and are productive. They develop an appropriate sense of the passing of time and know some key events that indicate this. Younger pupils comment on seaside holidays in the past and appreciate that they are not the same as now. Year 2 pupils draw Victorian clothes and washing utensils and understand how they differ from the present day. These pupils gained benefit from their visit to a local museum and enjoyed their study of homes and toys from past eras. Work in their books indicates a factual knowledge of events such as the Gunpowder Plot and people such as Florence Nightingale. Literacy development is well supported throughout by activities such as writing in the style of Samuel Pepy's Diary. There are, however, too few opportunities for pupils to reach higher levels of attainment through explaining and suggesting the consequences of the main events or changes they study. There is insufficient emphasis on pupils identifying some of the differences in the way the past is represented and interpreted.
92. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 study a good range of people and events. These include the Ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Romans with references to the Anglo Saxons and Vikings. The history of Horsforth is studied, as are the Tudors and Henry VIII and his wives. Pupils write well and work hard, showing good factual recall. History makes a positive contribution to their literacy skills and to their personal development. Pupils demonstrate empathy for the plight of others, including poor children. However, there are few examples of higher level work that link the cause and effect of past events and changes and pupils are insufficiently encouraged to offer explanations and results of these.
93. Teaching and learning is satisfactory, representing a balance of strengths and areas that require development. Teachers work hard to cover a wide range of topics and to motivate pupils through a detailed curriculum. Literacy skills are well developed and opportunities are planned that promote personal development. However, there is too little challenge for higher attaining pupils. Teaching in the lessons seen during the inspection was satisfactory. Good use was made of a wide range of primary and secondary resources to motivate Year 4 pupils who were involved in a study of their local town. In one lesson, the teacher had prepared an appropriate list of questions to interrogate the 1851 census but there was too little time at the end of the lesson to develop views about how the data linked to trends and a wider significance. A previous visit to a local Victorian centre had engaged the interest of the Year 2 class and formed a good background to a lesson on the life of a chimney sweep. The pupils responded with feeling to the boy's hard life but there was insufficient stress on providing information to allow the pupils to have a broader perspective on Victorian England and bring detail and depth into their work.
94. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. History had previously been managed and taught throughout the school by a part time specialist who recently retired. A new co-ordinator was appointed in September 2003 who is also responsible for geography. The development of the history curriculum, however, has not yet been a school priority. Resources are well organised and planning is detailed, with references to a lot of 'living history' and theme days. Very good use is made of the local Victorian centre and there are interesting Roman and Greek days. Artefacts are borrowed from the local loan service. The development of literacy skills within history is good. However, a structured assessment system is not in place so it is unclear whether pupils are doing as well as they should. Also, detailed monitoring of teaching and learning is not in place and there are too few opportunities for pupils to attain at higher levels. Teachers have had insufficient training in current approaches and expectations for the subject. To raise standards, the school needs to give more attention to helping pupils to develop higher-level skills of historical interpretation, and the analysis of cause and effect in past events.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

95. Since the last inspection, the school has made good improvements to the curriculum, teachers have improved their skills with computers, a networked suite of computers has been provided, and all staff are now clear about the skills pupils are expected to gain over their time in school. Each class uses the computer suite twice a week, once for a lesson for the pupils to develop computer skills, and once to use computers to help learning in other subjects. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning has improved and standards have risen to be above average by the end of Year 6. School documents show that the improvement in standards has been most marked since the computer suite was completed. This is because all pupils are now taught effectively and have many more opportunities for practising their skills than previously.
96. Inspection evidence shows that the pupils in Year 2 are all achieving satisfactorily and using keyboard skills, word processing and drawing graphs and diagrams at Level 2, the expectation for their age. The pupils currently in Year 6 are all working at Level 4, with one third of pupils working within the higher Level 5. These attainments are just above average and have been brought about by good achievement over the last two years since networked computers were provided. Inspection shows that pupils in Years 1 to 6 are working hard and doing as much as they can to learn new skills or improve what they can already do. Standards are now set to continue to rise, provided the current momentum for improvement is sustained and the good quality plans for development in the subject are implemented.
97. Recent work in school shows that pupils in Year 1 use computers to make symmetrical patterns and they can match text to pictures effectively. By Year 3, pupils modify and refine their word processing, send and receive electronic mail and use tables to record information. The pupils in Year 4 can create art work, program the movements of a turtle on screen and prepare, for example, advertisements with effective and eye catching layout. Year 5 pupils use spreadsheets to calculate the varying costs of, for example, a party. They use CD-Roms and the Internet for research; make use of 2D and 3D representations of plans and models; and process digital images. By the end of Year 6, pupils can create complex repeated graphic designs; use spreadsheets for a variety of purposes; evaluate Internet pages and sites; combine digital images and text; and prepare presentations with due regard for their intended audience.
98. The quality of teaching is good, with teachers managing pupils and behaviour particularly well. A very good feature is the way teachers choose higher attaining and lower attaining pupils to work as partners and take turns at the computers. This leads to the pupils learning from one another and making sure each has a fair turn, with the ability to have immediate help from a partner without needing to wait for the teacher. In addition, teachers use the network well for whole class demonstrations and for showing the class good examples of what pupils can do. This leads to the pupils watching their screens closely and very quickly learning the skill being taught. Another good feature is that pupils come to see the relevance of their work on computers. For example, in a lesson for pupils in Year 5, they brought their work on defining slang words from literacy and realised how the computer could accept all their entries and quickly sort them into a class dictionary. Another example was seen in a lesson for pupils in Year 4 who were clear that the skills they were learning in making decision trees would be used again in their science lessons later in the week. Improvements can still be made in the level of teacher's computer skills so that new technology is used more frequently as a routine aid to learning. In addition, whilst assessment is effective and identifies clearly what pupils have learnt to do, teachers have yet to routinely plan to extend the skills of higher attaining pupils who gain computer skills at home as well as in school.
99. The co-ordinators for the subject have good plans to develop teachers' skills and increase the range of technology that can be used by teachers and pupils in class. Good leadership from the co-ordinators has already produced change in the school and is leading to rising standards. In particular, each subject co-ordinator has been given the expectation for developing and extending the use of information and communication technology in their subjects, and this work is effective and steadily increasing the application of technology across the curriculum.

## **MUSIC**

100. Standards are now average by the end of Years 2 and 6, and most pupils are achieving satisfactorily over their time in school. Recent work to improve the quality of provision and raise standards is beginning to be effective and the pupils currently in Year 1 are already above average in their musical skills. The school has appointed a new co-ordinator to lead development in the subject and since September 2002 she has implemented a published music scheme to help class teachers to plan and deliver their lessons. Sufficient tuned and un-tuned instruments have been provided for pupils to develop their instrumental and composition skills and all pupils now listen and evaluate an appropriately wide range of music. However, there are still insufficient opportunities for pupils with the potential for higher attainment to develop and extend their skills and a number of these pupils are underachieving. This is highlighted by areas that work well. For example, pupils rehearsing a forthcoming production sing well, with expression and feeling. Favourite hymns are sung well in assemblies, but in lessons, the quality of singing can be below average, and not enough emphasis is given to helping pupils to sing well at all times. Within the last year, a recorder club and choir have begun, and the co-ordinator has also organised a project for pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 to work with professional musicians. The outcome of this work is reported to be of a higher standard.
101. Too few lessons were seen to make secure judgements on the quality of teaching and learning. However, the published scheme is being used satisfactorily by teachers and this is ensuring that most pupils have regular opportunities to develop a suitable variety of skills. The subject is taught very well by the co-ordinator and a lesson observed was led with infectious enthusiasm that motivated the pupils in Year 1 to concentrate on improving their playing and following a graphic score with accuracy. The outcome was a good quality performance by the pupils, using body percussion, to simulate the dynamic range of a rainstorm, influenced by previously listening to music by Debussy. This lesson worked very well because the teacher was sufficiently confident to use the published scheme just where needed to assist learning, rather than relying upon it for planning and delivering the whole lesson. Also, the teacher set high expectations for pupils to be accurate in their singing and concentrated on improving their posture and breathing so that they were aware of how to improve the quality of their singing. Since the last inspection, satisfactory improvement has been made in the subject. However, the co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and is now providing leadership of good quality that is helping teachers to gain confidence. She has brought about a rise in standards this year, even though there is still more to do. The school and the co-ordinator have appropriate plans for improving the subject and building on the foundations already laid. These need to be implemented systematically so that the high standards now evident in Year 1 continue to develop throughout the school, and pupils with the potential for higher attainment are enabled to further extend their skills.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

102. Standards in physical education are above average by the end of Year 2 as they were during the last inspection. By the end of Year 6 standards are also above average, which is a good improvement on the average standards noted in the last inspection report. The good achievement of boys and girls of all abilities is consistently demonstrated within lessons and also in the school's participation in a wide range of matches, tournaments and competitions.
103. By the end of Year 2, photographs and records show that pupils balance well in gymnastics. Their ball control observed in lessons is well above average. They pass to each other in a variety of ways such as rolling, throwing and kicking. They are able to predict and therefore show a good tactical response by intercepting a partner's move. Higher attaining pupils also introduce a controlled bounce to passes and maintain control over longer distances and at greater speeds than their classmates.
104. By the end of Year 6, the vast majority of pupils exceed the national expectation of swimming 25 metres unaided. The school ensures that every pupil in Year 4 undertakes a programme of lessons with the aim of swimming 50 metres. If any pupil does not accomplish this in Year 4, then lessons are repeated in Year 5. Games such as tennis, demonstrate the consistently good co-ordination of the vast majority of pupils. For example, Year 6 pupils showed good racquet skills both forehand

and backhand, right-handed higher attaining pupils developing backhand returns particularly well when challengingly paired with left-handed opponents. The skill of evaluating both their own and each others' performances is well developed thanks to teachers' probing questions and detailed feedback so that pupils consistently choose, combine and apply techniques, skills and ideas with accuracy and a fast-developing precision.

105. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good overall. There are major strengths in teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject so that pupils have high quality models to follow. Good attention is given to matters of health and safety. Whilst teachers stress the need for warm up and cooling down routines they do not always provide opportunities for pupils to discuss the effects of exercise on the body and hence consider the benefits of regular exercise to health. Pupils with special needs are fully involved thanks to appropriate resources and specific support from teaching assistants. All pupils learn to express themselves and discuss work using appropriate terminology because key words are emphasised. Their numeracy skills are also reinforced thanks to attention given, for example, to measurements of distances jumped. There is little use of ICT; there is occasional use of a digital camera to capture for example movements in gymnastics but this has more of an artistic than a developmental focus. The good support given by highly experienced instructors through the local Sports Partnership, particularly the staff of the linked sports college, is well deployed. In consequence pupils have plenty of expertise to guide them and make them think hard about what they are doing so they achieve well. Their very good attitudes and behaviour, and especially high quality relationships with each other and all adults, mean that they learn well and with enthusiasm. Extra-curricular opportunities extend learning well for pupils in Years 3-6. The range includes dance, games, outdoor pursuits, and athletics. Several teams regularly compete against other schools. There are, however, few additional events provided for younger pupils.
106. The subject is well managed. Lessons are not monitored but the co-ordinator checks teachers' plans and takes opportunities, for example during extra-curricular sessions, to see what pupils can do. The very good links through the Sports Partnership with other schools, and especially the sports college to which the majority of pupils go after Year 6, means that skills and resources have been improved with good effect. A particular benefit is the development of outdoor pursuits which have become a regular feature in the main curriculum in Year 3-6, as well as a popular component of the residential experiences provide for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Plans and policies have been well developed in conjunction with partner schools and a new assessment system is similarly being prepared. The current basic assessment system is effective because of the good quality of feedback given by staff, their commitment to the sports partnership being a significant factor in the rising standards.