

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **GIRNHILL INFANT SCHOOL**

Featherstone

LEA area: Wakefield

Unique reference number: 108168

Headteacher: Mrs S Lowe

Reporting inspector: E Jackson  
3108

Dates of inspection: 7 - 9 October 2002

Inspection number: 246765  
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 Nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hardwick Road Featherstone Pontefract West Yorkshire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Tuffs
Date of previous inspection:	12.1.1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3108	E Jackson	Registered inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music Physical education Educational inclusion English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19366	W Walker	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
30243	A Heakin	Team inspector	Foundation Stage English Mathematics Religious education.	
12060	P Peaker	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Geography History Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Girnhill Infants and Nursery is a smaller than average school in Featherstone, about three miles east of Wakefield centre. It is situated in an ex-mining area, and there is severe unemployment and economic hardship locally. The school serves mainly an estate of largely local authority housing. Inside, the school buildings are light, clean and spacious, on a sloping site that makes disability access difficult. The nursery and reception classes are currently in a detached building close to the main school. Of the 139 pupils on roll, about 50 per cent are eligible for free school meals. The roll has been falling recently, but is variable, and the school could accommodate up to 240 pupils, plus the nursery, which has 36 children currently, split between the morning and afternoon sessions. At the moment there are three girls to every two boys in the school, with far more girls than boys in Year 1. More pupils leave or join the school during the school year than is usual for schools of this type nationally. About 20 per cent of the pupils have special educational needs, close to the national average, but there are none with a statement of their needs, which is below average nationally. These pupils' needs range from learning and behavioural difficulties to partial speech and visual impairment. There are no pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, and none learn English as an additional language: this is below the national average. Pupils' attainment at entry to the nursery covers a wide range, but is generally well below average. By the time the children enter Year 1 their attainment has improved to be below average overall.

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

Girnhill Infants is a good school, showing strong potential for further improvement. The recently appointed head teacher is already providing clear and determined leadership, and has taken difficult but necessary decisions to stabilise the school's finances. The whole staff have welcomed the pace of change since April, and have taken on new responsibilities willingly. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are fulfilled, and are very supportive of the school. The quality of teaching is very good for children in the nursery and reception classes, and it is consistently good for pupils in Years 1 and 2, building well on previous learning. Standards are often well above those achieved in schools in similar circumstances, and led to a national School Achievement Award in 2001. Pupils with special needs also make good progress in their learning. All pupils have full access to the whole range of learning opportunities provided. Given the good progress made by the pupils from the good quality of education provided, and the average funding received, the school provides good value for money, improved since the last inspection.

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

- The head teacher is leading school improvement well, supported enthusiastically by a strong team of teachers and support staff who have adapted well to the many changes she has introduced.
- Provision for children in the nursery and reception classes is very good.
- Children make good and sometimes very good progress from entry to the nursery to leaving at seven because they respond well to the good and sometimes very good teaching they receive.
- Standards of attainment in reading, mathematics and science are generally above those in schools in similar circumstances, and in line with the national average at expected levels.
- The school timetable is well organised to give the pupils a good range of learning opportunities, enriched by good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are good, supported by the very good relationships fostered at all levels of the school.

### What could be improved

- Pupils' attainment in writing by seven.
- The focus of lesson planning on what individual pupils and groups of pupils should achieve.
- The outdoor learning environment, including pupils' opportunities for a range of play activities.
- Levels of attendance.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. Most of these areas already form part of the school's current development plan.*

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

Good improvements have been made since the last inspection, particularly effective since the head teacher's appointment in April 2002. Recent improvements have seen a successful integration of the reception and nursery classes, and clearer and more focused planning at all levels. Staff confidence has also improved, and this is beginning to affect positively the progress children make in their learning. All the key issues from the last inspection have been tackled, mostly successfully. Pupils now have planned opportunities to investigate and experiment in mathematics and science, and the staff have adopted the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies to improve standards in English and mathematics. Pupils also have more opportunities to research their work from books. There is now sufficient time for religious education. The governing body is involved in development planning, and is becoming more involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work through the information it now receives. The improvement of writing, including spelling, is still a focus for development, as is the review and updating of some policies and schemes of work. There is a clear and achievable schedule for this in the current improvement plan. Attendance is also still an issue, although the school's procedures to promote better attendance are very good.

### STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
Reading	D	E	B	A
Writing	B	C	D	B
Mathematics	D	D	B	A

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average   E

The table shows that results vary from year to year. For example, whilst results in writing have fallen, results in reading and mathematics have risen. This may reflect the changes in staffing that have occurred, or the difference in the prior attainment of these groups of pupils. Compared to the national average, the school's results in 2001 were above average in reading and mathematics, and below average in writing. However, compared to the results in similar schools, the school did very well, with results well above the average in reading and mathematics, and above them in writing. Results in 2002 in the tests have fallen again, and are below the school's overly ambitious targets, because a high percentage of the group had special educational needs. In science, the school's results were in the top five per cent nationally, and in comparison to similar schools. The school justifiably received a coveted School Achievement Award for its results in the 2001 national tests. The targets for the current Year 2 pupils are again high, and they are on track to be close to achieving them in 2003.





## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good: the pupils enjoy school, and generally have positive attitudes to their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good: it is very good in the nursery and reception class, where the children quickly learn the routines. It is generally good at playtimes, in the dining hall and in lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships at all levels are very good, and a strength of the school; pupils' personal development is good, although the staff could promote independence more in Years 1 and 2.
Attendance	Well below average, but the school has very good procedures to try to improve attendance. There are plans to involve parents more.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	Very good.	Good.

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, and there was no unsatisfactory teaching seen during the inspection. This is a big improvement since the last inspection, and indicates the impact of new appointments, and how hard the staff have worked to improve their work. Support staff make a good contribution to the children's learning. The children in the Foundation Stage make good and often very good progress in their learning because the teaching from the teacher and support team is very good. The quality of relationships between the staff and the children across the school is key to the effectiveness of the teaching. When children become tired or lose concentration, in general they are brought back to their tasks by skilful management of the lesson by the staff. Literacy teaching varies from being satisfactory to being very good, and maths from satisfactory to outstanding. They are both good overall, and lead to good learning of basic skills. In the very good or outstanding lessons, pupils make very good progress because the pace is swift, the teacher's subject knowledge is very good, and the tasks set interest the pupils. Occasionally, teachers' lesson planning does not focus sufficiently on what different groups of pupils will be expected to achieve. ICT is improving, and exciting lessons linking with art and design were observed. One lesson was quite amazing when reception children used the interactive display screen very confidently to slowly reveal letters in learning their sounds! The teachers have written the individual learning plans for those with special needs in their class, who make good progress.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good: the timetable is well-organised to allow full coverage of the National Curriculum for Years 1 and 2; nursery and reception children receive their full curricular entitlement. Good links are made across subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good: their learning plans focus on their individual needs, and they are often well supported by support staff.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good: the staff ensure that the development of the whole child is an important part of the school's work. They have worked well to develop the pupils' development and it is now good in every area.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good: care and welfare are strong, and assessment is good; teachers know the children well. Occasionally, they do not plan lessons tightly enough based on their knowledge of the pupils.

The school's work with parents is satisfactory, and there are plans to develop these links further. Parents think highly of the school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The head teacher provides good, clear leadership, and is well-supported by the acting deputy, the rest of the staff, and the governors. Recent developments have been many and fast, and improvement is moving ahead rapidly.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	All statutory responsibilities are fulfilled, and the governors support the school well. They have made good appointments recently. Finances were not monitored carefully enough last year against likely pupil numbers.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory and improving. The head teacher has put good systems in place, including action and development plans with clear evaluative requirements.
The strategic use of resources	Finances have been pulled back from the brink; time, staff and learning resources are well deployed; best value principles are implicit in the new plans.

Staffing has been reduced, and this is having some effects on teaching and learning in Year 2, and lunchtime supervision. It is adequate, however. The indoor accommodation is fine, and beautifully kept by the caretaking staff. Outdoor accommodation for the nursery and reception is inadequate, as are the play areas for Years 1 and 2. The site is inaccessible for those with impaired mobility. There are good resources to support most areas of the curriculum.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Children like school, the teaching is good, and helps children. They work hard, and make good progress.</li><li>• The school is well led, helps children become mature and behave well, and parents feel comfortable talking to staff.</li><li>• Staff work closely with them, and there's a good range of activities outside lessons.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Homework.</li><li>• Information they receive about progress.</li></ul>

The inspection supports parents' positive comments, and finds that progress information is satisfactory, as are homework arrangements.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. When they first enter the nursery, pupils' attainment covers a wide range, but is generally well below average, particularly in speaking and listening. They make good progress in the nursery and reception classes, and enter Year 1 having improved to be below, rather than well below, the expected average in all the recommended areas of learning. The children's personal, social and emotional development is very well promoted by the nursery and reception staff, so that many of the children are close to the levels expected by Year 1. The new arrangements for the nursery and reception children to be taught in what was previously only the nursery area have been successfully introduced by the staff. The staff work well together, and the careful grouping of the children for different activities ensures that they receive effective help when they need it. The staff's high expectations linked to well-organised and planned learning opportunities mean that the children develop confidence in themselves and increase their understanding in such areas as communication, language and number well.
2. Results in national tests at the end of Year 2 vary each year, partly because of the changing prior attainment of the different groups of children that pass through the school. For example, reading results jumped from being well below the national average in 2000 to being above the average in 2001, then back to below average in 2002. However, compared to schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, reading results were well above average in 2001, and above average in 2002. The pattern for writing and mathematics results is similar to those for reading. Teachers' assessment of pupils' attainment in science has fluctuated from being in the top five per cent nationally in 2001 to being well below average in 2002. Evidence provided by the school suggests that the 2002 group had far more pupils with special educational needs than usual, and than is the case nationally. This explains the fall from the previous year. As many of the pupils with special needs in Year 2 in 2002 were girls, this also explains the unusual pattern of boys outperforming girls in the national tests.
3. There is currently no significant difference between the attainment and progress of boys and girls. They make good progress in lessons in Years 1 and 2, and those in Year 2 are on track to achieve the ambitious targets set for them in all tested subjects in the 2003 national tests. The quality of teaching is good in literacy, numeracy and science, helping the pupils to build well on the skills learned in the nursery and reception classes. If the targets are achieved, this would lift the school's results to be in line with the national average for 2002 in reading, writing, mathematics and science, and above average in spelling. This would also compare very well with results in schools in similar circumstances for 2002. It also maintains the levels of attainment seen at the last inspection.
4. Pupils with special educational needs learn very effectively. They make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Individual learning plans are thorough, enabling teachers and teaching assistants to provide targeted work that supports this progress. These pupils generally have good attitudes to their learning and work with enjoyment and concentration.

5. In English, the school has quite rightly identified writing as an area for development, and is taking positive steps to improve this aspect of the pupils' development. The national literacy strategy has been successfully introduced and adapted, and has supported the school in addressing key issues from the last inspection, which were to increase opportunities for pupils to use books for research and to improve spelling. Good initiatives are in place to further develop the current good use of literacy across the curriculum.
6. In mathematics, the results of the national tests in 2001 show attainment to be close to the national average and well above that achieved in similar schools. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher levels was also above the national average. The more recent unconfirmed test results show that while the percentage of pupils achieving the higher level has been maintained, results are generally lower. This can be explained by the high percentage of pupils who had special educational needs. The successful adoption of the National Numeracy Strategy has improved the development of pupils' oral and mental strategies for solving problems and recalling number facts in numeracy sessions, and in other subjects such as science.
7. Work in art and design has improved since the last inspection. Year 2 pupils achieve remarkably good work using an art program on the computer, linked to mixed media design work based on native Australian and African patterns. This is the more praiseworthy as the staff have only recently begun an intensive period of training in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in the classroom and in the ICT suite. Good work is also undertaken in history and geography, developing pupils' research skills, a weakness at the time of the last inspection. Investigative work in mathematics and science has also improved, and pupils have become more confident than reported then in using their understanding of number or posing their own questions in science.

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

8. This is a happy school. Most pupils arrive in good time with a smile on their face, ready to start the day. They enjoy meeting their friends and greeting their teachers. Their behaviour in class and about the school is generally good, but, as at the time of the previous inspection, some pupils can be over boisterous and easily become restless in lessons. Relationships at all levels are very good and are a strength of the school. The overall rate of attendance is well below the national average. This is a weakness, but the school has active plans to try to improve it.
9. Children make a very good start in the nursery. They experience the excitement of new friendships and the stimulation of new learning in a happy and secure environment. Even the youngest children have few qualms about taking leave of their parents and settle down almost immediately to their various activities. Here and in the reception class they react very well to the high expectations of the staff, learning to share with other children, taking turns to use equipment and tidying up when requested to do so. Although they lack rich language skills, they develop a level of personal independence and confidence which stands them in good stead as they move through the school. Their progress at that level is not always consistent. Their attention span is limited and whenever lessons lack pace or focus a few pupils show that they can easily be distracted. Nevertheless, all are familiar with the rules, know what is expected of them and generally are keen to be involved and to get full benefit from their time in class. They show great affection for their teachers and other members of staff, and are very courteous and welcoming to visitors. They have the confidence of knowing that their

contribution to a lesson will be valued and they will have a chance to be involved, whatever their individual level of skill or accomplishment.

10. In all classes, behaviour is rarely less than good, and often it is very good. Pupils show, for example, that they have the self discipline to sit very quietly by a musical instrument without touching it, or to be totally silent as they concentrate hard when practising their individual gymnastic movements. This contributes positively to their learning.
11. Pupils also behave well outside the classroom. They move about the school in a calm and orderly manner, holding open doors, and behaving courteously. Sometimes, when not directly supervised, they run around corners or jump down stairs, but generally they negotiate the rather complex building with care and without mishap. Lunchtime is a very civilised occasion, where pupils show good manners and converse with each other quietly. The effect of the good relationships developed with lunchtime staff, who are always cheerful, is a great help here. At play some pupils, mostly boys, are over boisterous. Occasionally, games of football tend to dominate the whole of the hard play area, so that other pupils cannot play quieter games. Some pupils also engage in a play form of "kick boxing" which can be intimidating, particularly for those who do not wish to take part. In conversation, however, pupils show no concerns about oppressive behaviour. They clearly are confident about approaching members of staff if they need assistance and they know that bullying is not tolerated. There have been no exclusions in the last year.
12. The school is characterised by very good relationships amongst all the pupils and members of staff. There is a clear sense of community and this is a real strength of the school. Pupils work and play well together, supporting each other and sharing resources amicably. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Children learn early in their school life to accept some responsibility for their actions and to recognise the rights of others. This message is reinforced for all pupils through the well structured programme of assemblies and through the daily interaction between pupils and members of staff in the course of daily life. All classes have "star helpers" who, in turn, take responsibility for classroom routines, such as delivering registers. They carry out these tasks effectively and very willingly. The good condition of learning resources and the building bear testimony to the care shown by pupils for property, following the high expectations of the whole staff. The headteacher is currently reviewing the opportunities for pupils to assume whole school responsibilities and to be more active in the day to day organisation of the school. Overall, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, and well equipped to cope adequately with the pressures of school life. They would, however, benefit from more opportunities to plan and organise their own work. This shortcoming was also identified in the previous inspection report.
13. Levels of attendance continue to be well below the average for similar schools nationally. Most pupils attend regularly and on time but the poor attendance record of a few pupils and some routine lateness detracts markedly from the learning opportunities available to them. Much inappropriate absence is also caused by parents taking children on holiday during term time. This practice disrupts the continuity of learning for the pupils concerned. It also has an adverse effect on learning opportunities for their colleagues when teachers have to devote extra time to compensate such pupils for the lessons they have missed. The headteacher recognises that the situation can be improved only with the co-operation of parents and she is working hard to achieve that.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching and learning have improved well since the last inspection. During the inspection, no unsatisfactory lessons were seen, and one in three was very good, with one outstanding lesson. Overall, teaching and learning are good, and very good in the Foundation Stage of nursery and reception classes. Here, the teacher and support staff have responded superbly to the head teacher's restructuring of the class arrangements, with both classes in the nursery building for the first time. The features of the high quality teaching throughout the school are in the teachers' high expectations of the pupils' involvement and progress, the use of time, the work of the support staff and the teaching of basic skills. The main weakness is in the way teachers plan learning objectives for the different groups of pupils in their class in lessons other than literacy and numeracy.
15. The work provided in class for pupils with special educational needs is generally well-matched to their needs in literacy and numeracy sessions and this helps them to make good progress against the well-defined targets set in their individual learning plans. There is good liaison between class teachers and teaching assistants, the latter having a very clear understanding of the work they will do with the targeted pupils because of the clarity of the planning. The teaching assistants know the pupils well and are skilful in providing not only support and encouragement but allowing pupils to try hard for themselves as far as possible.
16. The reception class teacher has taken on the new role of leader of the Foundation Stage in the nursery building very well. The two nursery staff have also accepted the changed arrangements with an excellent professional attitude, particularly as one of them is at a lower responsibility level than previously. The whole team work together extremely well, and the children benefit. Parents have also accepted the change well, and the interchange of information between staff and parents at the beginning of the day is helpful in settling the children effectively. The quality of the relationships between staff, parents and children is an important element in the success of the changed arrangements.
17. Equally important is the shared understanding amongst the Foundation Stage staff of how young children learn, and the layout of a learning environment that will best support their progress in all the required areas of learning. The class area is very effectively organised into a range of areas to support the children's growing language and number development, their creative skills, and to provide opportunities for them to explore their world through play on their own or with other children.
18. In Years 1 and 2, the staff have adapted the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies effectively to meet their pupils' needs. This is evident in the good progress made, and the standards attained in national tests at seven, leading to a School Achievement Award last year. There is a good concentration on the basic skills of reading, writing, spelling and number skills, and good links are beginning to be drawn between different subjects to practise and apply these skills. For example, writing skills have improved in history work, and spelling is practised during ICT sessions. The staff have rightly identified writing as an area for further improvement. As part of this, the head teacher joins the Year 2 teachers to group the pupils by attainment, to provide more focused teaching. She adds very good understanding of how to teach the subject, and the pupils make very good progress from her teaching.



19. The teachers and support staff generally manage the pupils with skill, understanding and good humour. They establish good relationships, but also let the pupils know what they expect. The classroom rules are discussed, and good incentives are given for pupils to achieve rewards. Between them, they have a good range of techniques to maintain control, including singing little whispered rhymes together to remind the pupils of their expectations. Occasionally, a few pupils, usually boys, lose concentration or do not want to do their work. Support staff often help to bring them back on track, but sometimes their behaviour disrupts the flow of the lesson.
20. The teaching of art and design is particularly successful, as is the teaching of aspects of design and technology. In these subjects the teachers interpret the subject guidance well, and give the pupils good opportunities to develop a range of skills using a good variety of resources and materials. Good links are made between these and other subjects through work based on themes, including with literacy and numeracy.
21. A good feature of the teaching and learning is the organisation of the daily timetable. This ensures that each subject has its essential place, and that frequent opportunities arise to practise and develop such aspects as ICT and physical education skills. This links with the generally good quality of the teachers' planning. They interpret the subject guidance well in the main, and support one another well from their own areas of particular knowledge and understanding. The involvement of support staff in this is good, and they demonstrate good skills in interpreting the plans when working with the pupils in such areas as extra literacy or numeracy support. A relative weakness in teachers' planning of other subjects than literacy and numeracy, however, is that they do not define what they expect of the pupils. Both higher and lower attaining pupils in some lessons are expected to do work which is aimed at the middle-attaining group, and therefore both groups underachieve. The lower attaining pupils are doing work which is too hard for them, and the higher attaining are doing work which is too easy. Examples of this were seen in science and physical education.

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

22. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good. The school fulfils the statutory requirement to teach all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. The school is still working on one of the key issues from the previous report, the need to complete policies for all subjects to enhance continuity and progression.
23. Well-organised literacy and numeracy sessions based on the national frameworks are taught in each class daily and have a positive effect on the standards pupils achieve in reading and mathematics by the age of seven. The school has adopted the national guidance for most subjects, adapting it where necessary to its pupils' needs. A suitable allocation of time is given to all subjects. The school timetable is creatively organised to give pupils a good range of learning opportunities, enriched by good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school has a well-equipped computer suite to which all classes have access. The use of computer programs in art, for example, is having a positive effect on achievement in this subject throughout the school. Topics in some subjects are taught over two years to accommodate pupils in the mixed year classes. Arrangements within these classes work well when teachers ensure that the content of the lesson is well matched to the learning needs of the pupils in the class.

24. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs, enabling them to make good progress towards achieving their targets. The recommendations of the new national Code of Practice have been implemented successfully. Support for these pupils is usually within the classroom so that they are able to follow the same curricular experience as the rest of the class. Some pupils receive one-to-one support from a teaching assistant for a short time each week for the development of literacy and numeracy skills. Specifically trained teaching assistants also work with identified pupils on the additional literacy programmes of work, some of which are also classroom based. Individual learning plans for pupils with special needs are drawn up by class teachers. These are of good quality with clear, short-term, achievable targets. They are reviewed and revised termly to make sure that they are still right for the pupils' current need. All pupils with special educational needs have the same opportunities as other pupils to take part in every aspect of school life.
25. The skills and strategies that pupils must learn in literacy and numeracy are well taught by teachers. Although much remains to be done to raise achievement in writing, teachers take many opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in support of learning in, for example, history and geography. Such opportunities for pupils to write for a range of purposes could now be developed further, including the further use of information technology.
26. Teachers give pupils many opportunities to express themselves orally and these are strengths in many curriculum areas. Pupils have confidence but often lack expressive language. The staff are sensitive to this and, as in an art lesson seen, for example, encourage pupils to try and say why they responded with awe to one pupil's work.
27. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is based on the national guidance for the early years curriculum. The staff plan together methodically and imaginatively to provide a broad and interesting curriculum for all the children. Tasks and activities challenge them, and combine with the very good relationships to provide a stimulating and safe learning environment where children can flourish.
28. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities, more than is usually provided for infant pupils. For example, pupils' attainment is enhanced by the provision of clubs covering art, science, information technology, singing, drama and gym. These activities are offered in rotation to focused groups of pupils by teachers. Year 2 pupils perform at a home for the elderly. Experiences beyond the basic curriculum also come through a good programme of visits and visitors to the school. Pupils have visited Bretton Sculpture Park, Kirkstall Abbey, and Tropical World in Leeds. Following a visit to see Beauty and the Beast, they will receive instruction on the making of African masks by Leeds Armouries staff.
29. In 'Big Arts Week 2002', a local artist worked with pupils to create a banner of children's portraits which is now displayed in the hall and celebrates their hard work and creativity. Their achievements in art have been recognised by success in competitions organised by a local newspaper and a supermarket. The school has good links with the local high school whose kiln they use to fire work done in pottery. There are currently plans to enlist senior pupils as 'artists in residence'.
30. Overall, the curriculum helps the school to achieve its stated aims. It is successful in providing the climate, opportunity and learning environment for pupils to achieve confidence and success in all aspects of school life. It develops each child's potential by offering a broad, balanced range of topics in line with the National Curriculum.

31. Since the previous inspection, teachers have worked well to develop the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils and it is now good in every area. The quality of this provision is exemplified in the very good relationships which characterise the school, in the high quality of the display which enhances the environment and stimulates the mind, and in the opportunities which are found in the curriculum to reinforce the many aspects of personal development.
32. Many of the strategies the staff use to develop pupils' spiritual awareness and sensitivity are implicit in their day-to-day teaching. For example, all staff take care to value individual pupil's written and spoken contributions. They always treat them with great respect and are rewarded by the manifest affection which is shown and by the excitement which they are able to engender amongst children who trust them. A reception child, for example, gasped in wonder when using a lens to examine a sunflower; older pupils broke into applause when another pupil counted in 10s from 7 to 107; the quality of an abstract design by a Year 2 pupil provoked a spontaneous "Wow!" from other members of the class, an occasion built upon by the teacher exploring why they had had this reaction. Attractive displays, such as those for autumn in the classrooms, or that on harvest from around the world in the entrance hall, promote a sense of wonder and an appreciation of beauty. Assemblies are used very effectively to promote both spiritual and cultural awareness. Pupils are introduced to Christian teaching and tradition and are given an insight into other world religions and their celebrations, such as the story of Eid and the special nature of the Jewish harvest festival. Assemblies are also the occasion for a communal act of worship, usually in the form of a prayer and short period of reflection.
33. Pupils' moral development continues to be good and this is reflected in their good behaviour and in the positive attitudes most of them display. All pupils know the difference between right and wrong. They learn this through the "Golden Rules" which are widely displayed and are applied consistently throughout school, the classroom rules which are negotiated with their individual teachers each year, and through the consistent reinforcement of good behaviour by all members of staff. When unacceptable behaviour occurs teachers generally refer to the rule which is being broken and explain the consequences if such behaviour continues. Wherever possible staff highlight positive attitudes and encourage pupils to work together and support each other. The very attractive indoor environment, which the caretaking and cleaning staff take real pride in maintaining at a high standard, encourages respect for property and its upkeep. There is in the school an ethic of hard work which is reflected in the endeavours of all the staff and which, amongst the pupils, is expected, rewarded and celebrated.
34. The school works hard on the social development of its pupils. The personal, social and health education programme is currently under review but staff are very sensitive to the needs of those in their charge and lose no opportunity to reinforce social skills. In the nursery and reception class particularly, the staff have high expectations of the children and succeed in giving them confidence and self-esteem. During the inspection a visit by reception children to the library to find books relating to baby care, combined with a visit to a chemists' shop to purchase baby care products was very well organized and effective in furthering social awareness and skills. Throughout the school pupils benefit from outside visits and learn how to behave and react to different environments. Collaborative work in the classroom is encouraged and teachers constantly emphasise to pupils the importance of considering the effect of their actions on others.

35. Pupils' cultural development is effectively promoted through visits and visitors, through assemblies and display. Within the last year pupils have at various and appropriate times discussed and celebrated all the major Christian festivals, as well as those from Sikhism, Buddhism, Chinese culture, Islam, Hinduism and Judaism. They have visited a Catholic church and a synagogue, celebrated the Queen's Golden Jubilee, distributed Harvest goods to the elderly, even enjoyed a "Conker Fun Day" in recognition of British traditions. They study varied literature and learn how people live in other countries. Through art, music and dance they increase their awareness of their own and other cultures in Britain and the rest of the world.

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

36. This is a caring school where the children feel safe and secure. Teachers know their pupils very well and have their best interests at heart. The good practice found at the time of the previous inspection is still in place. Action has been agreed with the local authority to resolve the traffic hazards and to resurface the crumbling tarmac near the main entrance, both areas of concern that were then identified. Several of the policies relevant to health and safety are also currently being reviewed.
37. The school has devised a way to test children's attainment as they enter the nursery, and another for reception children. The adults continually assess children's development and use the information to plan for their needs. This planning, combined with very good relationships and knowledge of the children, ensures that all children in the Foundation Stage make good progress against their prior attainment.
38. The very warm and trusting relationships which teachers develop with their pupils helps to create an environment in which even the most vulnerable children grow in maturity and self esteem. From their early visits and daily contacts with parents, the staff get to know pupils in the context of their family and this helps to give children the confidence to share their worries and get the support they need to cope with the problems of daily life. Staff are very understanding and supportive, fully meriting the response from several pupils, who said that what they liked most about their school was "the teachers" (which includes support staff).
39. This caring environment is reflected in the school's approach to health and safety. There is a range of well-established policies covering most aspects of school life. This was illustrated in exemplary manner when a visit to the local library and chemist's shop for reception children was organised by a qualified assistant in the nursery. The trip was planned in detail; meticulous briefing was given to the parents and helpers about the children they were to escort, the route and their responsibilities along the way and at the destinations. The route was very effectively supervised throughout the trip by the assistant who organised it; very particular care being taken at all road junctions. At this stage the headteacher and governors rightly recognise the need for a review to bring these several policies together and introduce a more formal structure into the practice and the monitoring of health and safety matters. The school complies with locally agreed procedures for child protection and the designated person ensures that the latest guidance in this area is made available to all members of staff. A whole school policy for personal, social and health education is currently being prepared. In the meantime the school makes good use of assemblies and dedicated lesson periods, often in the form of "Circle Time", to promote healthy living and build the self-confidence of pupils.

40. The low levels of attendance were a cause for concern at the time of the previous inspection and they remain so now. The headteacher is very conscious that regular and prompt attendance is much in the interests of pupils' welfare and safety and has recently agreed with the governing body an action plan identifying strategies to improve the situation. The school intends to build on the good support already received from the education welfare officer to refine the analysis of attendance data so that pupils at risk of under achievement from non attendance can be identified and supported. Other strategies include working more closely with parents and giving the education welfare officer a higher profile with both parents and pupils. The school also places much emphasis on the importance of good behaviour, both in class and around the school. Pupils already know what is expected of them and are well aware that bullying or any form of oppressive behaviour is unacceptable. The introduction of "Golden Rules" has proved to be very effective in motivating pupils to the good standards that are seen in school. Class teachers are themselves committed to high standards and are consistent in their efforts. However the effectiveness of their endeavours is limited by the lack of a coherent, whole school discipline and behaviour policy. Plans are already in hand to review this matter with the whole staff.
41. New procedures for checking pupils' learning and progress are good. The school has also developed a thorough plan for the improvement of record-keeping and assessment. Teachers know their pupils well and it is intended that individual targets to be set later this term will be realistic and meet the pupils' needs. Parents and pupils will be involved in this process. Pupils already have group targets in writing and mathematics.
42. In addition to the National Curriculum statutory assessment at age seven, the school uses two other commercially produced tests to develop further a picture of each pupil's performance. Work in all areas of the curriculum is assessed each half term and pupils are assigned a level of achievement at the end of each year.
43. There are clear procedures for the early identification of pupils with special educational needs. The school tracks all pupils from the time of their entry into the school and gains a good picture of those pupils who are experiencing difficulties which are then addressed by the individual learning plans that are drawn up for them by the class teacher. Pupils' gains in academic and personal progress are recorded termly and parents are informed. The school gives consistent support to these pupils in the development of their skills. Teaching assistants, when possible, work alongside pupils in the classroom promoting learning and self esteem most effectively.
44. The needs of the gifted and talented pupils are recognised and accommodated in the higher achieving groups, but the school is in the early stages of specific plans and provision for these pupils. The head teacher currently teaches literacy for the higher attaining Year 2 pupils very effectively.
45. Teachers know their pupils well. For example in mathematics, planning shows that teacher assessment from the previous day sometimes brings about changes for the following day to match perceived needs. Good teacher questioning, as seen in art, is a fruitful way of assessing pupils' understanding throughout the lesson. Teachers try to make their marking of pupils' work interactive, but pupils do not always read or respond to the comments in their books.
46. It is planned to formalise the good practice seen in an assessment policy to be written in consultation with all staff in the spring term.

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

47. The school continues to enjoy the confidence of parents. At meetings and through the questionnaire parents indicate a near unanimous view that their children like school, work hard, behave well and make good progress. They consider their children to be well taught, the school to be well led, and the staff to be very approachable. Reservations were expressed by a small number of parents about the quality of information they receive about their child's progress and about the homework provision. In the latter case there is a perception that some of the work lacks challenge, particularly in the quality of the reading books. The shortcomings that the previous report identified in the prospectus and the governors' annual report have been resolved. These documents now comply fully with statutory requirements.
48. The quality of information provided for parents is good. The school has clear lines of communication and the documentation is unambiguous and precise, helping to ensure that parents are aware of the work of the school and the associated procedures, events and development. Very good features are:
- the weekly newsletter which is interesting, informative and also predictable in the sense that parents know when to expect it;
  - the curriculum information specific to each year group, presented both at meetings and by letter;
  - the procedures and advisory documentation for new entrants to the school;
  - the daily accessibility of teachers and other staff, and the warm invitation to parents to take advantage of it;
  - the whiteboard which is placed daily at the front entrance with notes to remind parents about immediate priorities.
49. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents have been revised and now comply fully with statutory requirements. The annual reports on pupils are detailed and give parents a clear idea about their children's work and effort over the previous year. They are less precise about pupils' level of attainment, a feature which some parents would appreciate.
50. Parents of children with special educational needs are kept fully informed about the progress of their children. They are involved in discussing their children's individual learning plans at regular intervals and encouraged to provide additional support at home.
51. Efforts to involve parents more fully in the education of their children have continued since the previous inspection. There is a small but enthusiastic group of parents and friends who help in the classroom and give valued support with supervision on visits out of school. More parents are being encouraged to stay at the start of school to share a book with their children. The benefits of shared reading in the home have not been fully realised in recent times due to a shortage of resources but the school has already taken steps to improve that situation. Other initiatives included in the school's development plan are aimed at increasing the parental involvement in children's learning in the home. For example, the school is in the course of introducing high quality year group "home learning packs" which involve parents and children working together on specific projects. In addition the school plans to work closely with parents in setting and monitoring individual targets in literacy and numeracy. These developments represent very good practice but it is too soon to judge their effectiveness. The evidence at present available suggests that the school's links with parents make a positive contribution to pupils' learning at school and in the home but they are still under-developed.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The leadership and management of the school have gone through a number of phases in the last two years. Because the previous substantive head teacher was requested by the local authority to lead developments in another school, and then left this school altogether, there have been two acting head teachers up to April this year. This had an unsettling effect, and financial control was not rigorous enough. There is no question of financial impropriety, but a healthy surplus became a potential deficit as insufficient concern was given to the effect of falling pupil numbers on the school's budget. Further, the experienced deputy head teacher retired in July, and there is now an acting deputy.
53. The governing body took great care in appointing a new head teacher in April, and their care has so far been well rewarded. The newly appointed head quickly took stock of the school's financial situation, and instituted an immediate plan to bring it under control. This required redundancies and lost hours for staff, and the cancelling and returning of goods that had been ordered. Her prompt and determined action has ensured that the budget now has a small surplus, but she is realistic about the likely effect of a continuing fall in the number of pupils on roll on staffing levels and likely spending. Staffing is satisfactory currently, but the effects of loss of support staff is felt in Year 2, for example, when some pupils need extra help with their work but none is available.
54. The head has taken a firm grip of the school's development planning, and has instituted a shortened and revised improvement plan that sets out clear and effective priorities, with specific and measurable outcomes. Her leadership here has been very good in this short time. The governing body reports that the information it now receives is sharp and focused, enabling it to keep track of developments more effectively. Governors appreciate that their previous monitoring of the budget was weak, but feel much better equipped since that experience to keep on top of the information they receive. The head has also instituted a number of immediate reforms and changes to the way in which the school works. This has included major changes to staff deployment to make full use of the fewer support staff, creative timetabling to cover the curriculum more effectively, and a reorganisation of the Foundation Stage. She also acts as the special needs coordinator, and has fully implemented the guidance in the recently revised national Code of Practice.
55. In all these changes, she has received wholehearted support from the rest of the staff team. They recognised that improvements were necessary in a number of areas, and despite the uncertainty in leadership of the past two years, have worked hard to help the new head establish herself in the school. The acting deputy head has been influential here, and the staff work very closely as a team in planning their lessons, and in assessing the pupils' progress. They recognise that the speed and scope of recent change have been fast and far-reaching, but also accept that this is for the improvement of the pupils' quality of education and standards of attainment: in this, they are one with the head. The agreed priorities now are to improve attendance, pupils' standards in writing, to work more closely with parents, and further develop ICT. Performance management is well-established for staff development and raising standards, and the head has already observed all staff teaching, and held individual discussions with each of them about their roles.
56. These clearly stated responsibilities have implications for the staff's management roles in the school. In a small school such as this, everyone has multiple responsibilities without extra pay. They have taken on the new expectations of their leadership, monitoring and evaluation of these areas very professionally, and the revised action plans that they have produced point the way forward successfully within the overall

review and development drawn up by the head in consultation with them and the governors. Subject leadership in key areas such as English, mathematics and science is good, contributing well to the overall management of the school. Similarly, support staff take a full part in the life of the school, and contribute very well to its overall success. Individual governors also work closely with the school, both as link governors for aspects of the school's work, but also as helpers in classrooms. They also act as links to the views of parents, who are very supportive of the school, and of the new head.

57. The management of special educational needs is good. There is effective and caring provision. The headteacher who has responsibility for co-ordinating special educational needs has developed procedures for early identification of pupils' difficulties effectively. There are clear guidelines for the deployment and effective use of the teaching assistants who work well with teachers and have a good effect on pupils' learning. The policy has been revised in line with the new national guidelines for pupils with special educational needs.
58. The school operates efficiently on a day-to-day basis, due to the skilled work of the secretary. She maintains good systems for routine organisation, and liaises well with parents and other visitors. The school runs as a well-organised institution.
59. The accommodation is now generous for the number of pupils, although the nature of the sloping slope has led to difficulties in ensuring that it is fully accessible to all potential pupils and staff. The classroom for children in the Foundation Stage is large with good facilities to support children's learning experiences. There are good quality resources. However the outside play areas need some planned reconstruction to make them into a good quality play area where children can safely explore and further develop their physical skills. This is also the case for much of the outside environment. There are raised paths and steep steps all round the building, and the head and staff are considering ways to improve the outside environment on behalf of the pupils.
60. Overall, there is great potential in the quality of the leadership and management provided by the head teacher, staff and governors to take the school forward effectively, and there is a very strong determination to implement change to improve pupils' opportunities to learn.

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

61. In order to continue to improve the quality of education and the pupils' standards of attainment, the head teacher, governors and staff should:
  - (1) Build on the work already underway to improve pupils' standards of attainment in writing by:
    - a. ensuring that the work pupils are expected to do extends what they know and can do at a level appropriate to their age and understanding;
    - b. developing further the pupils' opportunities to write for a range of purposes in other subjects than English, including using ICT;
    - c. involving parents as closely as possible in supporting their children's growing confidence in writing, and in developing the range and complexity of the children's spoken and written vocabulary. (paragraphs 5, 79, 80)



- (2) In weekly and daily planning for lessons and activities, teachers and support staff should clarify the progressive levels that different groups of pupils will be expected to achieve, based on the information available about what these groups and individuals already know and understand. This should not be additional to current methods of planning, but should refine them to focus on learning outcomes rather than activities. (paragraphs 14, 15, 21, 81, 90)
- (3) In order to provide an outdoor learning environment that complements and extends the good quality of the indoor environment:
  - a. initiate a comprehensive survey of the outdoor environment in terms of its accessibility, and its suitability as a play and learning environment for the potential range of children at the school;
  - b. with help from the local authority and any other competent and interested parties, including parents and the local community, create designs for the progressive improvement of the grounds to meet the identified learning needs of the pupils, including for the nursery and reception pupils to have easy access to a high quality, safe outdoor learning area;
  - c. seek funding and sponsorship from the full range of public and private providing bodies in order to implement the plans at the earliest opportunity. (paragraphs 59, 67)
- (4) Continue to work with the local authority and parents to raise levels of attendance to at least meet the average achieved in infant schools nationally. (paragraphs 8, 13, 40)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	35
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	11

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	11	17	6	0	0	0
Percentage	3	31	49	17	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 nearly three percentage points

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y1 – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	23	112
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	NA	52

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y1 – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	27

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.5

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.8

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	26	19	45

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	23	25
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	40	40	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (77)	89 (82)	93 (93)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	25	26
	Girls	17	17	19
	Total	40	42	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (75)	93 (89)	100 (93)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

**Ethnic background of pupils****Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	112	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.2
Average class size	21.5

#### **Education support staff: Y1 – Y2**

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	43

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65
Number of pupils per FTE adult	11.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001/2
	£
Total income	359,920
Total expenditure	329,703
Expenditure per pupil	2,322
Balance brought forward from previous year	30,691
Balance carried forward to next year	30,216*

\*This larger than average surplus had been allocated for spending in the 2002/3 budget. Further, the planned spend was considerably in excess of income, and has led to difficult decisions to try to balance the budget by April 2003.

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 22.2%

Number of questionnaires sent out	158
Number of questionnaires returned	35

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	28	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	69	25	3	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	60	34	3	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	49	34	11	0	6
The teaching is good.	71	26	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	66	23	11	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	86	14	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	31	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	49	45	6	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	57	40	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	43	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	49	42	6	0	3

## **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**

62. The provision for children in the nursery and reception classes is very good overall, and a strength of the school. This is because the staff team works tirelessly to create a vibrant, busy atmosphere for learning. Both classes provide children with a good start to their formal education. At the time of the inspection there were 48 children attending the nursery part-time and 9 full-time children in reception. The Foundation Unit is staffed by a full-time teacher and nursery nurse and two part-time nursery nurses, with occasional extra support from other staff and parents.
63. Recent changes instituted by the head teacher have caused a review of the provision for children under five. Until last term, the reception children were taught in a classroom in the main building and nursery children were catered for in a separate building. The fall in pupil numbers has led to the creative amalgamation of the nursery and reception classes into the original nursery building. Staff have adapted to these major changes with full commitment and the best interest of all children paramount. Joint planning is of good quality and the organisation of activities to extend the learning of all children is managed well.
64. Children's standards of attainment when they enter the school are well below those expected of children of this age. By the end of the reception year the majority of children have made good progress towards the recommended Early Learning Goals in all areas of the curriculum. Children who have special educational needs are supported well, take part in all activities and make good progress.
65. Children are admitted each term, in line with local authority policy. Children are carefully inducted into the nursery, with their parents, over about a week. When children join the reception class they start to attend full-time, but this is also achieved gradually, starting from attending for half days, then adding lunchtimes and only attending full-time by the second week. Staff are very sensitive to the individual needs of children and are flexible in their approach so that children settle in well. There is an open door policy and parents are welcome to visit and discuss their children's progress, an opportunity that they use and welcome.
66. The previous inspection report found good progress in children's learning. This continues to be the case. The new Foundation Stage curriculum has been introduced and staff plan their work effectively to take account of the progression towards the set targets. Good use is made of initial assessment information to identify what the children know and can do on entry to the nursery and reception classes. Continued assessment carries on throughout the year and this allows staff to plan well for children's next stages in learning.
67. Further development is needed of the outside play area to stimulate children's physical development. The lack of markings and the present limitations of the grounds restrict the potential learning for all the children.

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

68. By the end of the reception year children have made good progress and are close to achieving the expected standards. Children enjoy coming to school and the majority happily leave their parents or carers at the beginning of the day. Staff deal sensitively



with children who are a little tearful, and during the inspection one little girl from reception was prompted to be kind and caring to a younger child who was upset, bringing tissues and trying to amuse him. This illustrates also how the staff encourage the children to help one another. The initial session in the morning is a free choice activity and children from both classes socialise, learn to share toys and develop from individual play activities to joining in with more co-operative play. These skills are reinforced at other times when the children play outside sharing bikes and gardening activities. Emphasis is placed on teaching children to play together and be sensitive to each other's needs. They listen well at story time and respond to encouragement to tidy up after they have used toys and games. The staff work hard to establish routines, such as the procedures for snack-time, and establish boundaries for behaviour. Children in reception are encouraged to be independent when they change their clothes for physical activity and most of them manage this successfully early in the school year.

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

69. Children achieve well. They have very low communication skills when they join the school but their competence improves considerably, especially in reading. By the time they reach Year 1, they are likely to have improved to be below average in general. A few achieve as expected, possibly even higher, but most are still well below average. The theme during the inspection week was '*Babies*' and all children were involved in a range of activities. The reception children went on a visit to the local chemist to buy baby items and to the local library to find 'baby books'. Later in the week, reception children were given the opportunity to talk with a small audience of nursery children about their experience. This was a very good opportunity for children to improve their speaking and listening skills. Children of all abilities join in imaginative play in the home corner and with construction toys. When children arrive at the beginning of a session they recognise their name labels in the cloakroom and transfer them to a registration chart to show they are in school. This is a helpful activity in encouraging children to realise that words are significant and to start recognising their own names.
70. The classroom is provided with a listening station and a good range of books for children to use. Reception children are interested and enjoy using books. They know that words and pictures go together and join in with familiar refrains but do not yet recognise individual letters or sounds. Children are given regular opportunities to develop their writing skills throughout the day. An office with writing materials in the outside covered area is used well by nursery children to become familiar with mark-making activities as they make lists and write letters. The older children learn in the focused literacy sessions how to make their marks into letters and progress to copying sentences at first over the adult's writing, then below it. As they feel more confident the children use their special 'Try' books to see if they can write their sentences without adult assistance. A strength of the curriculum is the way adults encourage children to write about their experiments or out of school visits in their own way.

### **Mathematical development**

71. Children make good progress towards the expected targets, but many are likely to be still below average by Year 1. Younger children have frequent opportunities to join in with counting activities. For example, the teacher uses registration time as a good opportunity to reinforce counting and calculation as the children work out how many are in school in each session. Reception children join in with number songs counting to ten, but lose confidence when trying to count back from ten to one. They gain an initial understanding of measurement when they learn the word 'longer' 'shorter' and place

items such as pencils and tape next to each other to compare the different sizes. They learn to place items level with each other so they can make a better comparison. At every opportunity adults reinforce the idea of longer and shorter during play and social activities. A visit to a country park was used well as children counted insects, birds and pylons and produced a class block graph to show all their totals. Children learn to form their numbers and to calculate one more or one less than a number under ten. They count objects and correctly match pictures of groups of objects to the given number under ten. Teaching of number skills is effective because adults use a range of good quality resources and consistently interact with the children. The outside covered area is used well to give opportunities for children to explore capacity and weight. Trays of conkers are available for children to experiment with balancing and water containers are used to discover 'empty' and 'full'. Good quality classroom display supports children's understanding of basic two-dimensional shape.

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

72. Children make good progress in this area of learning, although they will probably still attain below average levels by Year 1. Adults take time to make the classroom stimulating and interesting with a range of good quality toys and displays of children's creative work. During the inspection, the 'M' table held a range of items to reinforce the 'm' sound. The magnet was of great fascination as children attempted to lift paperclips with paper between the clips and the magnet. Interesting displays such as acorns and leaves plus a nearby magnifying lens encourage children to appreciate the changing seasons and the intricacies of nature. Before the summer holidays children had planted sunflower seeds. Unfortunately, due to intruders, all these appeared to have been displaced but to everyone's surprise a seed grew in a crack between the wall and paving stone and a huge sunflower appeared at the beginning of term. Children now compare their own height with that of the flower and use a magnifying lens to examine at close quarters the features of their giant plant. The school makes the best use possible of the existing outside area and gardening is a regular feature of the day for nursery and reception children. For example, they learn to clear away the debris of leaves and plants ready for the planting of winter bulbs.
  
73. Children learn about friendship and become aware of beliefs or ceremonies that are special to particular groups of people. For example they celebrate Harvest, Poppy Day and Diwali. Children in reception have very good access to computer technology to support their learning. In a very good lesson children enjoyed a reading game based on the interactive whiteboard. They had great fun tapping the screen and discovering hidden letters. Children concentrated hard as they tried to predict what letter might be revealed. Not only did they learn to tap and drag symbols on the screen, they also reinforced their recognition of the alphabet. The topic at the time of inspection was *Babies*; part of the overall topic based on *Myself*. Earlier children had been visited by 'Baby James' and photographs show how interested they were in seeing how much bigger they were than the baby and how he had to be fed and looked after. Both nursery and reception children were able to take part in baby bathing and talk about the changes that happen as they grow up. They know babies need to be cared for and treated gently and are greatly amused as they see how small baby clothes are in comparison with their own, realising that babies cannot walk and unlike the class do not wear shoes. Based on this experience, the reception children had to compile a list of baby items to be bought at the chemist and the following day accompanied by staff and parent helpers went off to buy the items. This helped these older children to gain a sense of locality, to plan their own learning and gain in confidence.

## **Physical development**

74. Children make good progress in this area of learning, and are on track for most of them to achieve just below expected levels by Year 1, particularly in manipulating small objects, and using such tools as scissors effectively. They enjoy indoor and outdoor physical education. In the hall children move around the room in a variety of ways such as walking, jumping and hopping. They experiment with slower and faster ways of moving and then attempt to move in different directions. This was a very challenging task and children had great difficulty in moving backwards or sideways. However they behaved very well and put a great deal of effort into trying to change direction successfully. Children know they must warm up before any physical activity and enthusiastically shake and stretch before they start their lesson. The Foundation Stage classroom has easy access to the outside play area and all children have regular opportunities to use the bikes and trailers. Planning shows that children also have a dance session where they learn to move to the sounds of percussion instruments. Children have daily opportunities to handle glue sticks, scissors, paintbrushes and to explore malleable materials. When making balls and snakes children reinforce their number work because the staff encourage them to count and compare the sizes. Adults are always on hand to encourage model making and to give children praise for their efforts in construction and so encourage further efforts, for example, in making bird feeders from tubes and bottle-tops.

## **Creative Development**

75. Children make good progress in their creative development, and some will attain expected levels by Year 1. However, a significant minority may well only achieve well below average levels. They have daily opportunities to use paint and develop their hand control as they experiment with brush strokes. They make leaf prints that are attractively displayed to form a tree and make free drawings of trees, and explore colour as they paint, for example, Baby James, and work out the parts of the face they still need to include. They use junk materials to produce collage for example a tree silhouette. Computer programmes are used effectively for children to create seasonal pictures, and make repeat or symmetrical patterns. Children also make symmetrical patterns by using paint and folding their paper to see the mirror image revealed. The classroom has a good range of musical instruments for children to experiment with or to use in adult led activities. In class activities, children learn number songs readily and become more confident in performing the actions and joining in with the rhymes.

## **ENGLISH**

76. In the national tests in 2001 pupils' performance was close to the national average. Standards in reading were above national expectations at the age of seven and well above the national average in comparison with similar schools. Standards in writing were well below national expectation though close to the average when compared with similar schools. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher levels was above national standards in reading and below in writing. The more recent unconfirmed test results in 2002 suggest an overall decrease, which is explained by the higher percentage of pupils with special educational needs and the changes in staffing. As many of the pupils with special needs in Year 2 in 2002 were girls, this also explains the unusual pattern of boys outperforming girls in the national tests. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory because the key issue of improving writing continues to be a focus for the school.

77. The pupils who are seven achieve the expected level in speaking and listening. This marks good progress because they start in Year 1 with lower than average attainment in communication skills. This improvement is because staff throughout the school take every opportunity to talk with and question pupils, not only during lessons but also in more social situations such as lunchtime. In music lessons, for example, good opportunities are given for pupils to listen to and appraise their own performances when they use instruments to explore sound. In science, pupils are able to discuss their predictions and actual outcomes when they complete a heartbeat experiment. Teachers encourage pupils to talk and are very patient in allowing them sufficient time to think about their answers before responding. The very good relationships between adults and pupils are helpful in encouraging pupils to talk and become confident in their own abilities to communicate effectively.
78. Achievement in reading continues to be high, with all pupils including those with special educational needs making good progress. The school gives additional time for reading above the time allocated within the literacy strategy. This decision has helped to improve the standards of reading. Pupils in Year 2 read non-fiction texts to find facts effectively, use a contents page to locate information and know the difference between fiction and non-fiction. In listening to a fiction text they appreciate the way the author has used particular words to create a 'scary' atmosphere and describe their own feelings of being scared. The higher achieving pupils predict imaginatively the next part of the story. Pupils show interest in their school reading books and use picture or letter clues when they have difficulty with a word. More able pupils read books suitable for their age confidently and fluently. Pupils report that they read at home with family members and teachers' records show that pupils read regularly to an adult in school. More able girls in particular talk enthusiastically about their favourite books.
79. Current standards in writing in Year 2 are below those expected nationally, although pupils were seen to be making good progress during lessons. A strength of the school is in the way that teachers plan for pupils to use their recording skills in all areas of the curriculum. For example pupils write and illustrate booklets in history based on *The Great Fire of London*, describing the lives of factory girls in the last century, and type words as they learn to save text on computers. Younger pupils recount known stories such as *The Three Little Pigs* or *The Gingerbread Man* in their own words. They learn to plan their own stories to include setting, title and characters with a beginning, middle and conclusion. Older pupils write instructions for making a model bus or a pizza and record their research about centipedes and spiders. After reading a poem or a story they learn to write about their likes and dislikes. Pupils make good progress in improving their handwriting and spelling so by the age of seven more able pupils write clearly with correct use of full stops and speech marks. Lower attaining pupils are given good adult support to help them copy sentences under the teacher's writing, and improve their irregular letter formation.
80. The teaching of English and use of the literacy strategy is consistently good, so that pupils achieve well. The initial part of lessons is used effectively to reinforce the spelling of more frequently used words. Teachers manage the pupils well and give them varied and challenging activities. Lesson objectives are clear and teachers explain tasks and activities well so pupils lose no time in settling to their work. When teaching assistants work in the lessons they offer good quality support that helps less able pupils contribute to lessons and make good progress against their prior attainment. The school has been forward-thinking in planning to improve the standards of writing for pupils in Year 2. This has been done by organising a weekly lesson in which Year 2 pupils are grouped according to attainment to work on specific writing skills. This has only just been introduced, and the higher attaining pupils benefit from very well planned and taught

work that is suited to their needs and very effectively extends and livens up their creative writing. However, the planning for the other pupils requires revision so that the work is more closely targeted to their specific needs. In all lessons, pupils behave well and respond with interest to their teachers. They try hard to concentrate and the majority are learning to work independently.

81. Subject leadership is sound. However, recent developments in the school since the head teacher was appointed mean that the co-ordinator now has more clearly defined responsibilities to develop the subject and is enthusiastic about expanding this role. This is evident from the action plan, which includes a higher involvement with parents in encouraging them to use literacy games and activities with their children. The plan also stresses analysing pupils' performance and reviewing the planning procedures. Resources for the subject are good and accessible to the pupils, especially books. The central library space is not easy for the pupils to use, however, and the co-ordinator is hopeful of eventually relocating it. Assessment procedures during lessons are good. However the use of assessment data to create individual or group literacy targets for pupils and to make accurate predictions of future attainment is underdeveloped. This has been identified by the school and is a key action area for improvement.

## **MATHEMATICS**

82. Pupils achieve well in the subject. They come into the infants with low attainment and when they leave at the age of seven they are achieving in line with national expectations, representing at least good progress. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well when work is planned specifically for them or when they have additional adult support. Where the additional support is not available these pupils make limited progress in understanding mathematical concepts. There are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls. The school has satisfactorily addressed the key issue from the previous inspection which was to raise standards in using and applying mathematics.
83. By the age of seven, pupils use their knowledge of addition and subtraction to calculate money problems up to a pound. They measure accurately to within the nearest centimetre and know the difference between odd and even numbers. Pupils survey their eating and drinking preferences and display the data as tally charts or bar graphs, making good links between mathematics and their science and Healthy Eating programme. Younger pupils identify and name common two- and three-dimensional shapes, recognise coins and use a number line to help their calculations, and learn the importance of place value when they work with tens and units. Pupils learn to estimate and then check their results. In an excellent lesson based on time, pupils closed their eyes and tried to imagine how long a minute might be. By using the egg timer they gained a real feeling of the length of a minute and this was further reinforced as pupils estimated and checked how many times they could bounce a ball in 60 seconds.
84. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently at least good. The National Numeracy Strategy is in place and teachers plan their lessons accordingly. Pupils are taught in single classes and within those classes pupils are grouped according to their attainment. This allows teachers to plan group activities that are suitable for pupils' needs. The strongest teaching is characterised by good assessment used to determine what children have learned, and what they need to do next. This means that teachers question pupils well and change their lesson focus if pupils have difficulty or if they grasp a concept more quickly than the teacher expected. The quality of marking is good, with teachers making useful suggestions to help pupils with their learning.

85. Teachers plan a good range of activities to maintain pupils' interest. At the beginning of lessons, teachers use oral activities that include good use of pupils' individual number resources and counting games. When these activities are lively, within pupils' ability and include the whole class, pupils are interested and enjoy themselves. As a result they have a positive attitude to mathematics. In a lively Year 2 lesson, for example, the class enthusiastically demonstrated their knowledge of counting in twos as they chanted their *Two's Rap* including actions. This bright start set the tone for the rest of the lesson and pupils participated eagerly in a range of practical activities planned to consolidate and extend their understanding of time. Relationships are very good within the school and adults praise pupils' efforts and encourage them to achieve. Pupils are given increasing opportunities to take responsibility for their work by considering carefully how to solve a problem and discussing it with a friend. Teachers make sure key vocabulary and equipment are on display in the classrooms as helpful reminders to pupils about the mathematical skills they are learning over time. In all lessons it is clear that teachers have high expectations and are committed to helping pupils improve their levels of attainment.
86. The National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced to the school but there is insufficient emphasis on the final whole class session in daily lessons to consolidate and extend learning. However, the school has already recognised this and has included it in the subject action plan. The use of information and communication technology is the only part of the action plan not to be fully implemented, but this is also under review. The subject co-ordinator has a more clearly defined role, agreed with the head teacher, and the plan for setting individual targets for pupils in consultation with parents is underway. Strategies are also being developed to use assessment information more effectively throughout the school to predict pupils' future attainment and analyse gaps in their learning.

## SCIENCE

87. Teachers' assessment of pupils' attainment in science has fluctuated from being in the top five per cent nationally in 2001 to being well below average in 2002. Evidence provided by the school suggests that the 2002 group had far more pupils with special educational needs than usual, and than is the case nationally. This explains the fall from the previous year. As many of the pupils with special needs in Year 2 in 2002 were girls, this also explains the unusual pattern of boys outperforming girls in the national tests. The target for this year's group of Year 2 pupils is demanding but achievable, and would return the school's results to the levels expected of seven-year-olds. Currently, the attainment of the Year 2 pupils covers a wide range, but the majority are at a level lower than might be expected even at this early stage of the year. However, the quality of teaching and the pace of learning are good, and the signs are that the school's targets will be met, maintaining the levels found at the last inspection, and representing good progress. Pupils generally behave well because they are interested in the work, and the teachers and support staff are skilled in managing them as individuals and classes.
88. From work saved from last year, it is clear that pupils experience the full curriculum for the subject, including testing for friction as a force, and considering the effects of heat and cold on different materials. In a lesson for Year 1 and 2 pupils as part of a sequence on healthy living, the pupils performed a series of exercises in the playground to raise their pulse rate. The higher attaining pupils knew that the heart is a muscle that pumps blood round the body, and that exercise makes it 'work faster'. However, they did not know that breathing faster was also linked to the heart rate. Lower attaining

pupils knew that they might die if their heart stopped beating, and that exercise 'is good for you'. Most of these pupils made good progress from the lesson, including those with special needs, because the teacher involved them fully in the practical tests, and led them to greater understanding of the need for exercise by skilled questioning and presentation of information. She focused on the key words for the subject, an important factor in extending the pupils' working vocabulary to accelerate their learning.

89. This was also the case in a Year 1 lesson, where the teacher used a variety of good techniques to prompt the pupils to talk about what they could feel in a 'Feely Bag'. Many of the pupils responded with one-word comments, and the bag had to pass through many hands to elicit two or three words to describe the hidden object. The main focus was on touch as one of the senses, but the teacher determinedly insisted on the pupils attempting to actually describe what they could feel. She adapted her planned approach well when the pupils found it hard to respond, allowing them to name the object, such as 'a peg' or 'a paintbrush'. She then prompted them with questions such as, 'Is it hard or soft?' to encourage their speaking and listening, and greater precision in scientific description. Here, higher attaining pupils knew that touch was one of the senses, and began to understand that skin is the main organ of touch. Lower attaining pupils struggled with this idea, however.
90. The teachers have good working relationships with the pupils which allows lessons to proceed at pace, even when some pupils lose concentration. This is because they use a wide range of strategies to keep the pupils' interest, such as varying active and still sessions skilfully, or asking for 'smart' children to help with the tests. Since the last inspection, teachers have also developed greater skill in teaching the children how to find out for themselves through tests and experiments, an issue from the last inspection, although this could be extended further. For example, higher attaining Year 2 pupils could have been asked to devise their own method to record their test results. The different demands for pupils of differing prior attainment could actually be made clearer in the teachers' planning.
91. The subject is well led, and the coordinator has prepared a good action plan to continue to improve it. She has good influence with her colleagues, and is determined that the demanding targets for 2003 will be met. Good displays maintain the pupils' focus on different aspects of the subject, such as graphs of favourite food and drinks, linking well to mathematics. In one classroom there are some beautifully housed stick insects, adding to the pupils' understanding of life processes, and to their spiritual development. There are sufficient resources to support pupils' learning, but further use could be made of ICT and the school grounds, such as creating a variety of different habitats to resource the minibeast search undertaken in the summer.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

92. Standards at the age of seven are above those expected for this age and pupils' progress is good. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well as a result of carefully chosen topics which interest them. High achievers also do well because of the open-ended themes which give opportunities for ingenuity and originality. There is no significant difference between the art work of boys and girls. There has been considerable improvement since the last inspection in the quality of teaching and learning: both of which are now consistently good. A further improvement in the curriculum since that time is the use of computer software to help pupils explore different ideas and create their own designs. This has led to some good work.

93. Pupils learn to observe carefully and use a wide and varied number of techniques with increasing skill. Year 1 pupils draw from close observation of plants and by Year 2 unusually have their own still-life sketch books. Teachers give pupils a wide range of experiences to develop their skills and knowledge in art. They introduce pupils to paint, pastels, pencils of various thickness, felt pens, collage, pottery and sculpture. They use the work of renowned artists such as Picasso and Kandinsky to inspire the pupils to work in a similar style. Native Australian and African styles and Japanese art are also used well to introduce pupils to a wider range of techniques and forms, including the use of pattern. Particularly impressive pattern work was observed combining work on the computer, collage and felt pens. A visit to Bretton Sculpture Park resulted in the pupils making their own sculptures using art maché. The quality of pupils' work is high, reflecting a willingness to take time, observe precisely and use equipment skilfully.
94. Teachers place great emphasis on the different stages involved in creating a finished piece of work. This helps pupils to recall and review possible approaches and increasingly enables them to make individual and well thought out choices. Teachers encourage high standards and effort and pupils respond well, appreciating that careful work can produce impressive results. This was very evident when a spontaneous 'Wow!' arose from the class when they were shown a pupil's pattern work. Art lessons also make a good contribution to the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills. Teachers frequently ask pupils to be self critical and evaluative. Pupils support and appreciate each other's work and teachers help them to articulate why they find particular work impressive or interesting. The good relationships which teachers have with their pupils enable the pupils to express their ideas willingly, knowing that these comments will be valued. Teachers' knowledge, understanding and interest in the subject are reflected in the quality of the work the pupils produce. This quality has, in two successive years, been recognised in the Yorkshire Post calendar competition. For example, the current calendar features a Year 2 pupil's work and two winning paintings have been chosen for the 2003 calendar. Teachers are very skilful at linking art and design to other subjects in the curriculum. This develops a sense of purpose in what the pupils do. Pupils use their developing computer skills to enhance their work, they make clay pots when studying Diwali in religious education and a visit to Kirkstall Abbey results in impressive pastel drawings.
95. The teacher with responsibility for art and design is enthusiastic and uses the national guidelines imaginatively. The policy has recently been updated. The resources for the subject are good. The Art Club provides pupils with the opportunity to work with materials and techniques in addition to those they use in lessons. As a result, they have produced paintings of a high quality on glass. The subject makes a significant contribution to pupils' cultural development. The school's methods of checking pupils' progress over time are not yet formalised but pupils' work is informally assessed each half term in relation to the targets in the national subject guidance.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

96. Pupils' attainment is in line with nationally expected standards by the age of seven. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress through the school. These findings are similar to those of the last inspection. Teachers and teaching assistants support pupils effectively in the practical work, making sure that all pupils are involved equally in the activities and succeed in their work.



97. Models and recent photographs show that pupils are given a wide range of experiences to develop their skills. A strong feature of the teaching is the review at the beginning of a lesson of work carried out so far. This gives pupils the opportunity to appraise what they and others have done. Through skilful questioning by the staff, pupils are encouraged to evaluate and modify their work - essential elements of design and technology. Such a beginning is helpful in developing their speaking and listening skills. Teachers plan and organise the varied activities in a lesson well, directing classroom assistant support to those who will benefit most. As a result, pupils know what they are to do, no time is wasted and they cover a good amount of work in what is clearly a popular subject. For example, puppets made by Year 2 pupils illustrate that they are acquiring an understanding of the right materials to use for a task and the finished product illustrates that they use tools and assemble components with care. Year 1 pupils designed, made and painted houses using recyclable materials. They also studied and made a variety of winding mechanisms and linked their work to such stories as Jack and Jill and Incy Wincy Spider in their literacy lessons. Making these cross-curricular links is a strong feature of the subject in the school. Pupils are given opportunities to record their comments on their finished product, by writing and drawing. Often the work is directly linked to another subject. The pupils in the Year 1/2 class are studying aspects of the Jewish faith in their religious education lessons. Pupils were observed in a design and technology lesson working diligently to make their own examples of a Torah scroll, carefully writing Hebrew letters on it and making a mantle to cover it.
98. Pupils clearly enjoy their lessons and show good attitudes to the subject. They work with a real sense of industry and endeavour and their concentration and perseverance have a positive effect on their learning. Teachers give them achievable goals and pupils seem determined to do their best.
99. The teacher with responsibility for design and technology has only just taken on the role but she has the enthusiasm and commitment to develop the subject further. The procedures for checking pupils' progress over time are not yet formalised but pupils' work is informally assessed each half term. These procedures allow teachers to plan well the next steps in pupils' learning. The teacher is aware that a design and technology policy needs to be written and this is one of her priorities.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

100. Pupils' attainment at age seven matches that expected nationally. The standards of attainment are similar to those identified at the last inspection. Pupils are making satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress in the acquisition of skills and knowledge. Those with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.
101. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn about different regions of the world together with the names and locations of different countries by focusing on the travels of a soft toy, Bernie Bear. On a map of the world, they identify places the bear visits when it is taken on holiday by staff or pupils. Opportunities arise for pupils to write about the bear's travels and this gives a good focus for the development of literacy skills. The toy's travels over the school year focuses the pupils' interest in the world around them. His visit to Australia led them to discover something about the native peoples and in art they studied native Australian paintings and looked closely at the patterns used. His visit to Mexico raised the pupils' awareness of desert areas and types of vegetation, providing a very real link with their study of a Mexican village through which they make comparisons with their lives in Featherstone.

102. The evidence from inspection is that teaching is satisfactory. Teachers also make good use of support staff to work with pupils who have special educational needs.
103. Pupils are generally very willing and eager to do their work but their speaking skills using subject specific vocabulary are at an early stage of development. They need the very active encouragement from the teacher, as was seen in the lesson in which they described their journey from home to school.
104. The teacher with responsibility for the subject has updated the scheme of work which is based on the national scheme and checks other teachers' planning to ensure full coverage of the national curriculum programmes of study. Resources are good and enhance pupils' learning.

## **HISTORY**

105. Standards for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are as expected for their age and aptitude. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. All pupils make at least satisfactory progress in the acquisition of skills and knowledge, and some make good progress. Where a class has the support of a teaching assistant, pupils with special educational needs benefit from the increased opportunities for adult and child interactions.
106. By the age of seven, pupils are developing their knowledge and understanding of events in the past. Their lessons on the Great Fire of London not only provide them with the factual information but teachers encourage pupils to write at length and make a booklet with contents page not only to tell the story but to give reasons for the fire spreading. They learn that it was because the wooden houses were so close together, and understand that at that time there were no fire engines or telephones to bring assistance. Such good teaching helps pupils to recognise differences in past and present life and to think about cause and effect. Events such as Remembrance Day are used well as an occasion to deepen pupils' understanding of the significance of such events in society. Higher attaining pupils show in their writing that they understand that soldiers died to protect others and that poppies are a symbol of respect, and their death. Topical events such as the death of Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother and the Golden Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth the Second have been used effectively as opportunities for pupils to consider the contributions such people have made to the country. History makes a strong contribution to the development of pupils' writing skills because they are asked to record these events for themselves. The written work of the higher attaining pupils shows a good recall of details and facts. Other pupils recall well but some have more limited skills in sentence construction.
107. Good teaching was seen in a Year 1 lesson in which pupils had the opportunity to handle objects from the past and the present. They were intrigued by some of the items. Their categorising of the objects gave them the opportunity to reflect on changes made over time.
108. The teacher with responsibility for history has identified the need for more resources to develop time lines which will give additional emphasis to pupils' understanding of the past. She is aware that the policy needs to be updated to give subject guidance to teachers and this is one of her priorities. At present, assessment is informal at the end of the learning units from the recently introduced national guidelines.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

109. Pupils attain as expected towards the end of Year 2, maintaining the standards seen at the last inspection. The maintenance of these standards, however, masks a great deal of work and commitment from the staff recently in order to keep pace with the changes that have happened in the subject nationally. This also represents at least good progress for the pupils, half of whom do not have access to a personal computer at home. These standards also reflect the good teaching seen, helping the pupils to make good progress in their learning in the focus activities.
110. For example, Year 2 pupils working in threes opened a program, selected options from a drop-down menu, then highlighted an image. They transferred this to another program to add text, taking turns to manipulate the words using the mouse. Although only half of the group have home experience, they all appeared comfortable and confident in the Windows environment on screen. Both mixed Year 1 and 2 classes tackled this activity, and the high attaining Year 2 pupils, all of whom have access to a computer at home, attained above the level expected for their age. Good links were made for this group between art and design and ICT, as they used a 'Paint' program to extend their pattern-making.
111. A Year 1 class excitedly added facial characteristics to an on-screen outline, discussing in their working groups the range of choices available. They took turns sensibly in using the mouse and the keyboard, and showed good understanding of how to open and use the target programs. Whilst the teacher concentrated on this, a support assistant worked with a group using a keyboard practice board. This involved them in placing the individual letters and some other controls using tiles in spaces. This is a good activity to help the pupils learn the layout of the keyboard; the support assistant did not vary the approach by using games and speed trials.
112. In all the sessions seen, the teachers and support staff were 'having a go' with the relatively new equipment in the computer suite, and doing so successfully. They all used the interactive white screen, with a projected image to demonstrate the activity. They also all involved the pupils fully in the activities, for instance to demonstrate on the whiteboard how to perform different operations. This speaks very highly of their intention to develop their own teaching skills alongside the pupils' learning. There is still room for improvement, but the staff recognise this and are determined to raise their own competence (and confidence) on behalf of the pupils. The interaction between the staff and the pupils in these sessions is humorous but purposeful, and the pupils respond well to the challenges set. The pupils also have opportunities to use control equipment, such as tape recorders, and to learn to handle information in a variety of ways.
113. The subject is a current priority for further development, and the coordinator sets a good example by using the available hardware and software with children in the Foundation Stage. The action plan includes an intention to cover the full subject requirements, including each pupil in Year 2 having an email address, the development of a school website, and the continued use by the pupils of such control equipment as tape recorders and programmable toys. A further target is to extend the use of ICT for general administrative purposes for the staff, which should further strengthen their skills and familiarity with new possibilities.

## **MUSIC**

114. Standards of attainment have been maintained at average levels since the last inspection. The teaching seen was very good, showing improvement compared to the sound teaching previously observed. The pupils really enjoy singing and making music, and also listen carefully and calmly to recorded music, or to other pupils playing their own composition.
115. The subject has a strong place in the curriculum, and the coordinator is a good pianist who leads well. Pupils have good opportunities to sing together in three classes, where they learn a rich variety of songs and hymns. Opportunities are missed here by the staff to help the pupils to read and learn the words to the songs from printed booklets, or from the large screen available in the hall. They sing with enthusiasm, and the older pupils lead well in holding the tune, and making the words clear.
116. In a Year 1 and 2 lesson, the pupils behaved as well as a professional orchestra when they entered the hall, sat by their percussion instruments, and though tempted did not touch them. This took tremendous self-control, and demonstrated the strength of the teacher's relationship with the class. They carried this control into the rhythmic playing that followed, leading well when it was their turn, and listening with good attention when it was someone else's. At the teacher's skilled prompting, they built up a sequence of sounds to accompany a spoken piece, and were excited when they performed the complete work. In this session, many of the essential elements of the subject curriculum were attempted, so that the pupils composed their own small section, listened to it to improve it, and also listened to and appraised other pupils' work.
117. The teachers bring a real sense of enjoyment to their teaching, so that the pupils lift their performance and involvement. This is helpful also in maintaining control. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, the teacher had very good control of the class by using pace and variety to stimulate and maintain their interest. She created a fine sense of tension and excitement by giving silent instructions and challenging the pupils to pass round the percussion instruments silently. This they did with great controlled pleasure. They were then able to benefit from the interesting range of musical activities the teacher had up her sleeve to help them learn when to play and when to stop, when to go fast and when slow, when to play loudly and when softly.
118. The subject action plan is good, and the school and classrooms are well-equipped for the subject. There is a music club at lunchtime for part of the year.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

119. Pupils attain as expected towards the end of Year 2 in gymnastics and games, but were not seen in a dance lesson, although this aspect is taught, and Year 1 pupils attain as expected. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. All pupils have full access to lessons, although a few pupils regularly forget to bring their kit, or have the wrong shoes. The quality of teaching and learning are generally good, based in the teachers' generally sound knowledge of the subject, and their very good relationships with the pupils.
120. During a games lesson outside, Year 1 and 2 pupils used the opportunity presented by having a free choice of equipment from a range in their basket to invent their own game, or practise a variety of skills such as throwing, striking, or skipping. The teacher had provided a very effective way to allow the pupils to set their own challenges, although she could have developed this further by letting pupils demonstrate their

activity to others, or extending the pupils' activities through discussion and suggestion. This lesson was part of a sequence in which the pupils have practised a variety of games and skills, so that they have developed reasonable throwing, striking and fielding skills.

121. In a gymnastics lesson for the parallel Year 1 and 2 class, pupils made good progress in improving their control in balancing, jumping and rolling using mats and low-level apparatus. Here, the pupils concentrated so hard on improving their movements that the only sound was of their feet on the floor, and the quiet direction and encouragement from the teacher. The Year 2 pupils created a good sequence of different actions, the higher attaining showing originality and thoughtfulness. The teacher's high expectations were clearly communicated to them, and they responded very well by working hard, but safely, and behaving very well.
122. In a Year 1 dance lesson, the pupils were in the third week of a series using different styles of music to encourage a variety of dance movements and patterns. They reacted to the theme of puppet movements to Indian music in various ways, but most of them did it with enjoyment and good control of their body positions. A group of boys found this difficult, but the teacher handled their silliness skilfully, not disrupting the lesson for the rest, but suggesting ways for these boys to take a full part. Almost all pupils made good progress, including most of those with special needs, in adapting their own versions of puppet moves to the style of the music. The teacher also helped the pupils to gain some understanding of music from a culture different from their own, and insisted that they value it by responding to it sensibly.
123. The school has good space for physical activity, and the hall has a beautifully kept wooden floor, ideal for dance. There are various grassed areas, although the nature of the site makes them difficult to use effectively. The playground is well-surfaced, though is not well marked, and the surrounding raised areas are not easily adapted to safe physical activity. The subject is well-resourced, and the coordinator is in the process of developing her own knowledge and understanding in the subject in order to lead further developments for the staff. The head teacher has also brought new ideas which are beginning to influence the progress of the subject in the school.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

124. Standards attained by seven-year-olds are in line with the expectations of the Wakefield locally agreed syllabus. All pupils make satisfactory progress in improving their religious knowledge and understanding. At the time of the last inspection the school did not allocate sufficient time to the subject. This has been put right and improvement is satisfactory.
125. By the age of seven, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the principles of Christianity. They learn about the significant events in the life of Jesus and celebrate the Christmas, Easter and Harvest festivals. Pupils visit local churches and gain an understanding about places that are important and special to Christians. They note the unusual sound of a church organ being played and the difference between churches with stained glass windows and those with a more simple design. Pupils understand that the story of *Rama and Sita* is important to Hindus at Diwali just as the story of the *Birth of Jesus* is to Christians at Christmas. Pupils become familiar with stories from the Old Testament such as *Moses and the Burning Bush*. A recent visit to a synagogue has been the basis for discussion about the importance of the Torah to Jewish people, good links being made between the guidance in the Torah, the Ten Commandments and pupils' own class rules promoting consideration for others. Pupils gain a fuller

understanding that rules are a central part of an ordered community. The recent focus on the theme of Judaism has provoked some pupils to produce voluntary homework including accounts of their visit to the synagogue and their own attempts to make Torah scrolls.

126. Teaching of the subject continues to be good. Teachers' planning is linked with the locally agreed syllabus and recent government guidance on the curriculum for religious education. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use good quality religious objects and video materials to reinforce their work. The assembly schedule is organised so pupils become aware of a variety of faiths such as Islam and Buddhism, and celebrate festivals such as the Chinese New Year and Ramadan. In lessons pupils are responsive and contribute thoughtfully and sensibly when they discuss, for example, the Sabbath being important to Jews and Sunday being significant to Christians. Classroom display is used well to show books from a range of religions that are special to followers of those faiths.
127. The co-ordination of religious education is sound. Recent changes in the school mean that the co-ordinator now has clear subject responsibilities and has made a good start in evaluating the present curriculum. She is currently auditing resources and has devised a clear action plan that includes establishing further links with local religious leaders and developing formal assessment procedures in religious education. A strength of the subject is the way teachers consistently reinforce pupils' literacy skills during religious education lessons. This has a positive impact on pupils' overall achievements.