

INSPECTION REPORT

HALFPENNY LANE JUNIOR, INFANT & NURSERY SCHOOL

Pontefract

LEA area: Wakefield

Unique reference number: 108204

Headteacher: Mr H Armitage

Reporting inspector: Mrs L Murphy
16173

Dates of inspection: 23 – 26 June 2003

Inspection number: 246772

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Junior, Infant and Nursery

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 – 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Halfpenny Lane
Pontefract

Postcode: WF8 4BW

Telephone number: 01977 722820

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr D Watson

Date of previous inspection: November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
16173	Mrs L Murphy Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Physical education Provision for children in the foundation stage.	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
11358	Mrs V Lamb 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?
19916	Mrs D Kerr Team inspector	English Religious education	How well are the pupils taught?
14851	Mr G Laws Team inspector	Mathematics Geography Educational inclusion Special educational needs	
32139	Mrs A Firby Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
19041	Mr R Linstead Team inspector	Science History English as an additional language	
25376	Mrs L Alvy Team inspector		Support to: How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?; and How well does the school care for its pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Halfpenny Lane Junior, Infant and Nursery School is situated in Pontefract. Just over one third of the 421 pupils travel to it from other parts of town and a minority attend from out of the local education authority. A high proportion of pupils join the school mid-year and a low proportion leave. This is because many choose to stay at the school even though families move out of the local area. The school is bigger than other primary schools nationally. Twenty three per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals which is above the national average. Twenty one per cent of pupils have special educational needs which is about average though two per cent have Statements of Special Educational Needs which is higher than average nationally. The pupils' special needs are wide and varied including moderate and severe learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and impairments in speech and communication, hearing and physical development. The majority of pupils are of white British heritage with a small proportion of Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, Arabic, Palestinian and Albanian heritage. A very small proportion of pupils are refugees and a small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language, some being at an early stage in it. Pupils' attainment on entry is below average. Since the last inspection the number on roll has increased and within the last year a new headteacher has been appointed. The school is an Investor in People and has gained the Healthy Schools Award.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a good quality of education for its pupils and helps them attain standards that are broadly average. The quality of teaching is good and the school is well led and soundly managed. The value for money provided by the school is good.

What the school does well

- Standards in Year 6 in science, design and technology, and history are higher than typically expected of pupils of this age.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- The provision for pupils' personal, social and moral development results in very good relationships, attitudes and behaviour.
- Good leadership engenders a happy and constructive ethos, which pervades the school.
- The governing body is very effective in its work.

What could be improved

- *The school's drive to raise standards in English across the school.
- *Assessment systems and the use of assessment in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.
- The roles and responsibilities of the senior management team including monitoring the quality of the curriculum and the quality of teaching.
- *The rate of pupils' attendance.

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

*The school has already identified these aspects.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvement since the last inspection in 1997 is satisfactory. The key issues identified for action have been addressed satisfactorily. Standards have improved in science, design and technology and history but have taken a dip in English, information and communication technology (ICT) and

religious education. The rate of attendance has also declined. Improvements have been made in the pupils' achievements, the curriculum, and links with parents.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

The table above shows the school's performance from 2000 – 2002. However in 2003 because the school has a higher proportion of pupils who have special educational needs in Year 6 standards are overall not as high as in recent years. By the end of Year 6 standards are broadly as expected for pupils' ages in mathematics, above this in science, but below the expected level in English.

By the end of Year 2 standards are broadly typical for pupils' ages in mathematics and science but below that level in English.

Standards for pupils in Year 6 are higher than typically expected for pupils' ages in history. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standards are also higher than typically expected in design and technology.

Pupils reach typical standards in art and design, geography, ICT, music, physical education and religious education.

Children in the foundation stage are on course to attain the early learning goals for their age in knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development and personal and social development. In language and literacy and mathematics pupils are likely to reach standards below that expected.

Overall pupils' achievement is good. Pupils who have special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make good progress.

Trends in results over time are broadly in line with the national trend. The school's targets were exceeded in 2002.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good: pupils are enthusiastic and keen to learn. They see the value of success.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good: pupils are caring and sensitive to the needs of others
Personal development and relationships	Very good: pupils cooperate very well and accept responsibilities maturely. Relationships are very strong and a distinct feature of the school.
Attendance	Below average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Strengths are in teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. As a result the teaching of English (including literacy) and mathematics (including numeracy) is good. Pupils' speaking skills develop well across a range of subjects. There are some weaknesses in the teaching of more advanced skills in reading and in the use of writing in other subjects. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well and very good relationships contribute to this. Pupils put much effort into their tasks and work at a good pace. They acquire basic skills at a good rate and build up their knowledge well.

Generally, teachers' do not expect enough of higher attaining pupils. In teaching which was unsatisfactory, teachers' planning did not make clear exactly what pupils should be learning and the lessons lacked purpose, so pupils did not learn enough in the time available.

Pupils who have special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language are taught well and make good gains. Overall, the school meets the needs of all pupils well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good: it meets statutory requirements and is enriched with a good range of visits and visitors.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good: pupils' learning difficulties are identified early and pupils receive effective support. Pupils are very well integrated into school life.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good: pupils make good progress in speaking English and in other aspects of their development.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good: the provision pervades the life of the school and enables pupils to get a lot out of life. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. It is good for their spiritual and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good: the atmosphere is very conducive to helping pupils develop physically and academically. Recent developments have made assessment satisfactory, with strengths in English and mathematics but in most other subjects it is unsatisfactory. Assessment is good, however, in the nursery and reception classes.

The school works in partnership with parents well.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory: the headteacher has a clear vision for the school. Much development comes about through subject leadership. The roles and responsibilities of the senior management team are under-developed.

How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well: the governing body is forward looking and very well led.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory: the monitoring of the curriculum and the quality of teaching is at an early stage.
The strategic use of resources	Very good: the school makes very efficient and effective use of its resources to advance pupils' achievements. The school is good at obtaining best value through careful budget control, comparing how well it is doing in relation to other schools and taking on board parents' views. The governing body provide challenge to the school.

The adequacy of staffing and learning resources is good. Accommodation is adequate.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school. • Teaching is good and children make good progress. • The way the school helps children to become mature and responsible. • Children behave well. • Information the school provides. • The way the school responds to their questions. • The school expects children to work hard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of work pupils are expected to do at home. • An interesting range of activities outside of lessons.

Overall the inspection team agrees with parents' positive views of the school – indeed, pupils' behaviour is very good. The use of homework is satisfactory and the range of activities outside of lessons is good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 Standards are not as high this year in English and mathematics as in 2002. The cohort of pupils in Year 6 is a much lower attaining group overall with a significant proportion of pupils who have yet to attain the expected standards and a group where the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels is generally not as high as 2002. Nonetheless, pupils' achievement is good because from a below average level on entry, and a well below average level in speaking, pupils make good gains over their time in the school.

2 In science, by the end of Year 6, standards have risen from average to above the level expected. By the end of Year 2 standards are also much higher having risen from well below average to an average level. This is because teaching has paid attention to making sure that pupils have every opportunity to pursue enquiry and investigation drawing on their knowledge and developing their scientific skills. The very practical approach engages pupils' interest and they enjoy being young scientists posing questions and testing hypotheses. Even though the time given to science is somewhat less than found nationally there is a good balance between each aspect of the science curriculum which means that pupils have a well-rounded experience in the subject. A comparative weakness is pupils' understanding of how to devise their own tests because curricular time is limited. Other than this, the above factors come together well because good leadership has impacted well on the standards pupils attain.

3 Subject leadership in English has also led developments well. The school has rightly prioritised the subject. Good gains have been made in the way that teachers encourage and strengthen the pupils' skills at speaking and listening. Questioning of good quality and high expectations of what the pupils can achieve has raised the level of pupils' speaking overall from well below average on entry to average by the end of Year 6. Because much attention is given to developing the pupils' speaking and listening skills it means that those who are learning English as an additional language progress at a rate similar to those of other pupils.

4 There remains some work to be done in making sure that the teaching of reading uses a consistent approach throughout the school, for example, in guiding pupils' reading. Inconsistency has led to a lack of challenge for some higher attainers in advanced reading skills. In writing pupils are developing a fluent hand and have the opportunity to write for a range of purposes though the use of writing in subjects other than English is limited. A good example of where writing is used well is in history; here opportunities are created for extended pieces and the links between the subject and literacy set a good example of how pupils' literacy can be used not only to consolidate but to improve pupils' skills at writing whilst aiding understanding in the other subject.

5 In mathematics the planning is methodical and is well grounded in the national strategy for numeracy. These factors together with effective teaching mean that the pupils make good gains between Year 1 and Year 6.

6 One reason for the differences in standards between subjects is that there is too little monitoring to check the quality of teaching and the quality of the curriculum, so that approaches vary more than is helpful to learning.

7 The school has a high level of pupils joining the school throughout their school career because of its local reputation of doing good work with children who need extra help to learn. One in every five pupils has special educational needs that the school addresses individually. The pupils with the most challenging needs have a personal plan that sets out targets. However, these cannot always be measured accurately because they are not precise enough. The school is currently in a stage of transition, as the new management team establishes priorities. A revised format for

individual plans is being introduced gradually. Pupils with statements of special educational need generally make good progress towards agreed objectives. These pupils benefit from the enlightened help provided by the team of support assistants. The pupils write well when practising letters in isolation, but are often unable to produce the same quality of presentation in extended writing tasks. Spelling is often an area of concern. Pupils' social skills improve significantly and the levels of confidence and high self-esteem reached by most of these pupils provide a solid basis for improvement in academic standards. No pupil with special needs is allowed to coast along.

8 Pupils achieve well in design and technology throughout Year 1 to Year 6 because of the dedicated days given to the subject. Pupils can really get their teeth into their design projects and see them through rather than having to pack them away after a half hour lesson. They have easy recall of their work because of the good quality curricular provision, the good quality of the teaching and the well chosen topics to study.

9 In history the pupils by the end of Year 6 reach a level higher than typically expected of their age because there are effective links with other subjects and history is not taught in isolation. Furthermore, there are plenty of practical opportunities for pupils to meet visitors, participate in visits and role play to bring the subject alive.

10 Children in the nursery make good progress and get off to a good start. The curriculum is lively, well constructed and well planned. Teaching is good and at times very good and adults are well deployed to encourage pupils' interest and to teach basic skills. In the reception classes the pace of children's learning is sound overall. Insufficient monitoring, for example, in the checking of planning and the management of the school day has meant that the rigour found in the nursery is not so evident in the reception classes.

11 The school's data enables it to track pupils' progress by groups so that it can keep a check, for example, on any differences between the attainment of boys and girls. The school can then take any necessary action. This was the case, when purchasing books and the school looked very carefully at the needs of the reluctant reader. During the inspection no differences were found between the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils who have particular gifts or talents have been identified and from this information a group of pupils in Year 6 receive extra teaching in literacy and numeracy to enable them to make the gains of which they are capable.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12 Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are a strength of the school as at the time of the last inspection. In particular, relationships throughout the school are of very high quality. This is because the pupils like school and respond very well to the values that it promotes. They are enthusiastic learners and work hard in lessons. Parents are very satisfied that their children are learning to behave in a mature and responsible way. Attendance levels are below average when compared to schools nationally, although the rate of unauthorised absence has improved significantly during the current academic year as the school has focused its efforts to this end.

13 In lessons pupils' attitudes to their learning are very positive. They are keen and very willing to learn. They listen attentively so that they are clear about what they have to do. They settle quickly to their tasks, pay attention to their teachers and work well together in pairs and groups, quietly discussing topics when appropriate. They concentrate on their work and enjoy challenges, trying their best when work is difficult. Pupils are co-operative and keen to answer questions and share their ideas. When given the opportunity to work independently pupils apply themselves conscientiously. They talk about their work confidently and try hard to improve and succeed. In a few instances pupils' attitudes to their work are less positive because, although they respond soundly to the teaching it is without much spark. Occasionally, some pupils lose concentration and become noisy or answer questions in an offhand, immature way. Also, timewasting by a minority of pupils who do not settle quickly to their tasks limits their progress.

14 Pupils with special educational needs have a very positive attitude to their work and in the daily life of the school. They work together happily and join in with the rest of their classmates in discussions that involve the whole class or small groups. They know all adults and other pupils in the school value them. For instance, pupils in Year 4 spontaneously applauded a pupil with special educational needs who correctly wrote multiples of four on the whiteboard. Pupils for whom English is an additional language have good attitudes to learning. They are interested in new work and keen to contribute.

15 Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is very good and they keep to the established routines without fussing. Pupils move about the school in a quiet and orderly way and are polite, considerate and helpful towards visitors and each other. For example, pupils open doors without being prompted and wait their turn patiently when queuing for dinner and to enter school. In the playgrounds pupils make very good use of the space available to them and are all happily occupied during breaks, although sometimes they linger rather than move purposefully to their class lines to move promptly back to lessons. During class discussions pupils take turns, listen carefully to each other and respect each other's views. Sometimes behaviour is exemplary. In a religious education lesson in Year 1, for example, pupils showed a lot of interest in each other's special pictures, toys and souvenirs and happily shared their own. As each pupil told the class how special their items were to them, everyone else listened and waited their turn to speak.

16 Pupils clearly understand the consequences of unacceptable behaviour and respond very well to the school's high expectations and system of rewards. Occasionally some pupils find it difficult to maintain the high standards of behaviour expected but the majority respond very well to the guidance provided by staff. Consequently, the school rarely needs to resort to its ultimate sanction of exclusion from school. Two pupils were excluded during the last school year. This was as a result of behaviour that threatened the well being of themselves or others.

17 Pupils respond very well to the systems in the school for promoting personal development. The very good relationships throughout the school make a very significant contribution to pupils' personal development and academic progress. This creates a supportive learning environment in which pupils are interested and engrossed in their tasks, follow advice well and are prepared to have a go to rise to challenges to improve their achievements. Pupils respect their teachers and other adults and learn very well from their good example, to respect their own and others' endeavours and differences. Pupils talk confidently about how much they like their teachers and how they enjoy seeing their friends at school. They develop good working habits and have good levels of independence and personal responsibility as they move through the school. Pupils of all ages are able to approach teachers and support staff confidently and respectfully and are pleased to receive recognition for their successes. During assemblies pupils respect the nature of the occasion and join in the activities in a mature way. Pupils enjoy the clubs on offer and are well motivated to take part in a wide range of activities that broaden their experiences of the world. Pupils talk with pleasure about visitors who come into school to provide them with a range of opportunities.

18 Pupils of all ages willingly accept responsibility. They help with the smooth running of the school, and older pupils carefully look after younger ones. Pupils have the opportunity to volunteer to be monitors and those selected carry out their duties conscientiously, acting responsibly and with maturity. For example, some older pupils volunteer to befriend any pupil who feels lonely or upset. Staff value pupils' views in a range of situations, both day-to-day and relating to specific issues. Pupils make sensible suggestions that the school acts upon when possible and are becoming good young citizens.

19 Pupils' attendance is below the national average. The majority arrive in good time each morning and are keen to start the day. Registration procedures are conducted efficiently and, in general, lessons begin promptly. Since the last inspection attendance levels have dropped significantly in comparison to those in other schools nationally.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20 The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now good throughout the school. Teaching in over three quarters of lessons was good or better. In English and mathematics, teachers have worked hard to become familiar with the national guidelines for teaching literacy and numeracy and the basic skills of speaking and listening, writing and number are mostly taught well as a result. A particular strength is the emphasis placed on oral work. In English and in other subjects, such as religious education, much time is given to discussion. Teachers are very good at asking questions that make pupils think; as a result pupils are articulate, and are confident to speak out in class.

21 A significant strength of the teaching is the way in which teachers manage pupils' behaviour to ensure that lessons proceed in a calm and orderly way. Teachers expect pupils to behave well and pupils rise to their expectations. Relationships at all levels are very good and pupils feel secure and confident in lessons. They know their teachers want the best for them and this helps them enjoy their work and try their best in return. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and find ways of making learning interesting by providing relevant, practical activities that keep pupils actively engaged in their work. In the very good teaching these strengths come together very well so that there is a sense of excitement in learning and very high levels of enthusiasm for the tasks set. In a very good science lesson in Year 3, the teacher's good understanding of the subject of magnetism, the well-planned practical experimentation and very good relationships within the class enthused pupils. They worked hard in groups to carry out their experiments, and high levels of learning were evident. In an excellent religious education lesson in Year 1, pupils were similarly motivated, although in a quieter and more reflective way, as they explained to their partners why the objects and photographs they had brought in from home were very special to them.

22 When teaching is no better than satisfactory, it is usually because teachers' expectations of what higher attaining pupils can achieve are not high enough. Not enough teachers regularly plan challenging work for their higher attaining pupils, and, as a result, these pupils can coast through a lesson without having to try too hard. In English, there are some weaknesses in the teaching of reading because there are still some teachers who do not use the strategy of guided group reading effectively to teach pupils the more advanced reading skills. In general, the quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent from class to class and whilst some teachers give very clear guidance to pupils as to how they could improve their work, others do not. A very small proportion of teaching is unsatisfactory. In the unsatisfactory teaching, teachers' planning does not make clear exactly what pupils should be learning and the lessons lack purpose, so pupils do not learn enough in the time available.

23 Speaking and listening, writing, mathematics, science, design technology and history are notable for the consistently good quality of the teaching. Teachers have expertise in these subjects and provide relevant practical activities that engage pupils' interest. In design and technology, for example, teachers take a whole day for a task so that pupils have time to immerse themselves in the activity and fully experience the process of planning, making and evaluating their product. Writing is well taught because teachers encourage pupils to write at length for a range of purposes. However, other than in history too little use is made of writing. In history, teachers make good use of visits to places of interest, and role-play, to bring the subject alive. These experiences help pupils remember what they have learnt and make their learning relevant to the real world.

24 In the nursery the quality of teaching is good and adults are very well deployed. Children are managed very well and the class is very well organised to allow both the direct teaching of skills and for enquiry and discovery through effectively used resources. Role-play is a strong element of the provision. Often teaching is very good and when this occurs it is because the teaching uses assessment to really match work to the needs and interests of the children. On occasion the challenge for higher attainers is limited. In the reception class there are strengths in the relationships but the planning and expectations are not so high as in the nursery. As a result

children make sound progress but higher attainers are not sufficiently well challenged often being given the same work as others in the class.

25 Pupils with special educational needs are usually taught with pupils of their own age. In most lessons teachers ensure that work matches their ability. Those with significant difficulties are sometimes taught in small groups. In a lesson about Boudicca, Year 6 pupils who would have found it difficult to cope in the main lesson received focused support that helped to improve their understanding. Some receive well-directed individual help as in a good history lesson where the assistants provided stimulating support. In some lessons, the assistants are used flexibly. In a good physical education lesson effective deployment ensured integration with a range of pupils. Initiative is also encouraged because the team of assistants know pupils well. For example, the assistant in one Year 4 class led activities, and in the other the assistant contributed appreciably to the teacher's description of the sinking of the Titanic.

26 The quality of teaching and learning for the pupils learning English as an additional language is good, as it is for other pupils. The strengths of teaching for these pupils are: teachers' good knowledge of English and the stages of their pupils' language development; good management of pupils' activities; and the good teamwork of teachers and support staff so as to promote all pupils' learning. Teachers with these pupils in their classes also benefit each week from the expert guidance of a specialist teacher.

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

27 The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the requirements of the local education authority's syllabus for religious education. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been effectively implemented and similarly the use of additional national guidance in other subjects ensures a clear structure for planning the curriculum across the school. This includes a scheme of work for music that was not in place at the last inspection. The use of a dedicated day for the teaching and learning of design and technology has improved standards including its good links with other subjects such as science and mathematics. The curriculum for the nursery and reception classes is good and is particularly wide in the nursery being enriched by plentiful resources including visits.

28 The good provision for pupils with special educational needs is underpinned by the commitment of all teachers and support staff. Links with outside agencies and local schools are well established. The Code of Practice has been embraced and the co-ordinator is involving all staff in its implementation. The school has also recognised the need to challenge pupils who are gifted or talented. A suitable programme for the extension of skills has been devised in Year 6 in both literacy and numeracy for those pupils identified as gifted and talented. The school does well to give pupils for whom English is an additional language the same opportunities and access to the curriculum as those of other pupils.

29 The pupils' very good relationships, attitudes and behaviour stem from parental support and also from the very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education including citizenship. The achievement of the Healthy Schools Award highlights amongst other things the many opportunities provided for older pupils to support younger pupils during work and play. A well-organised framework ensures the progression of learning from nursery to Year 6. Visits to the fire service for instance and visitors such as the community policeman and school nurse broaden and deepen the pupils' learning. Coupled with strong curricular and other links with local high schools pupils are therefore well prepared for a smooth transfer to the next stage of education when they are 11.

30 The school has improved on the broad range of educational visits and community links reported at the last inspection. Both sport and the arts for instance play a strong part in the pupils'

'extra' experiences. These enrich the curriculum and include for instance, artists in residence, theatre, dance, puppetry and many opportunities to work with sports professionals both in school and out. This wide-ranging provision ensures that all pupils, whatever their different needs and backgrounds, are able to take full part in the life of the school. Contributions from visitors including exciting links with a non-European country broaden pupils' understanding of the world around them.

31 Overall pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and reflects the strong emphasis placed on this aspect of the school's work. The school has embraced new ways of working with pupils to maintain the very good provision from the time of the last inspection. Participation in healthy schools initiatives and the ethos of the school give a holistic approach and enables pupils to make informed choices about a range of issues. The parents' view, that the school helps pupils to become mature and take responsibility, is fully justified. Spiritual development is good. Celebration pervades the life of the school and pupils' achievements in all forms are valued and shared. Of special note are the very sincere, and emotionally moving, weekly sharing assemblies. The creation of a memorial garden provides a good place in which to reflect quietly. Time for reflection within lessons allows pupils to feel a sense of wonder and consider why some things are special. Pupils in Year 1 thought deeply about why some personal possessions are so special and pupils in Year 6 exclaimed "Wow", inspired by the artistic achievement of a former pupil.

32 The very good provision for pupils' moral development together with that for their personal development is exemplified in the very caring nature of pupils and adults towards each other. Adults promote mutual respect within school, the locality and the wider world through international links being made. There is shared care of property and the environment, helping to make and keep the school attractive, clean, litter free and in learning about recycling waste with Groundwork Wakefield. As well as understanding and respecting the behaviour code developed jointly with staff, pupils are encouraged to support those less fortunate than themselves through fundraising and singing in a local hospice and care homes. They consider and respect differences and similarities between people and know well the consequences of their actions on others. The 'Sunny Gang', offer very good peer support for lonely or distressed pupils but all pupils may contribute to this work. They give and receive a lot from their experiences, as evaluations show. "I like children and I find it quite hard when I am on my own. It is good because it helps stop fighting and arguing. We find out what caused the argument and sort it out. I searched for children who needed my help." Many have made new friends through involvement and at least one has set a personal target of learning everyone's name. Pupils' very good responses show strong moral values and very good levels of social maturity.

33 The very good provision for pupils' social development is evident in the many opportunities for pupils to feel part of the school 'family' and develop personal qualities valued in society. They often work in pairs or groups and co-operate well in teams and at play. They are very courteous and polite, showing sensitivity to the needs of others and work hard to achieve consensus. Discussing work in design and technology pupils in Year 6 said, "It hardly ever goes to plan. You can get snappy with one another, but it doesn't last! Once you've got going again – click!" Through the relatively new school council, pupils of all ages are given very good opportunities to work with both the rights and responsibilities of being elected and to develop good leadership skills and to make judgements. A pupil chairs the council, suggestions are discussed at half termly meetings and firm ideas put to staff for negotiation. From this process, for example, the school has made changes to dining arrangements, addressed requests to improve playtime provision and taken on a project to raise funds to refurbish areas in the grounds. The school council has secretarial and financial responsibilities and governors, parents and staff support members. Other pupils take responsibility for playground equipment, telephone duty and, through first aid training, will give help to support staff when they are dealing with minor accidents. There are frequent opportunities to promote very good personal and social skills when preparing for concerts and on day and residential visits.

34 Effective provision for pupils' cultural development means that pupils are proud of their local heritage and make good use of festivals and local events in which they have opportunities to take

part in music, dance, art, sports and reading poetry and prose. For example, in the Pontefract Festival in 2003 a nine year old won the under-16 title and has since been asked to speak at a national competition. Clubs and groups support these cultural activities. The headteacher actively promotes the value of taking part as well as being successful; "We didn't win, boys and girls, but we took part!", whilst presenting T-shirts to the six-a-side football squad. Throughout the curriculum pupils are exposed to cultures from ancient to modern, and are developing an awareness of non-western cultures, particularly through the link with a primary school in South Africa. Pen pals offer a real context in which to make life style comparisons. Reciprocal teacher visits enhance the project, as well as visitors for music workshops. Pupils appear less aware of the multicultural nature of societies, and of cultural gender differences. For example a group of pupils in Year 6 described dance as 'stereotypically for girls', until prompted to consider the Maori haka, some African tribal, and even Morris, dancing. The school's culture strongly promotes equality of opportunity.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35 The school is conscious of its duty of care towards pupils and has developed effective procedures to ensure pupils' well being. Staff know pupils very well and develop very high quality relationships with them and opportunities are provided for pupils to take on added responsibilities. Good procedures are established for promoting high standards of behaviour and pupils know what is expected of them.

36 Parents are satisfied with day-to-day arrangements. The majority agree that they would feel comfortable about approaching the school with any concerns about their child and are particularly satisfied with the way in which the school responds to their questions. Parents are also satisfied that staff expect their child to work hard and achieve his or her best and help children to become mature and responsible. However, a very few parents feel that help for children needing extra or specific help is not always provided, or is insufficiently focussed to be fully effective. The majority of parents are satisfied that their child likes going to school.

37 Overall, the school provides a well-maintained learning environment. Staff carry out assessments of risk for example of transport and venues in preparation for trips out of school that are of a satisfactory standard but are not sufficiently detailed to include the implications in meeting all of the specific needs of some pupils. Statutory risk assessments of the school site and activities are satisfactory. Appropriate procedures are established for administering medication during school hours and pupils who are hurt or become ill are cared for considerately. The school is careful to record accidents and first aid and to inform parents of anything that may need further attention.

38 The school has good procedures in place to manage arrangements for child protection, in line with those laid down by the local education authority and in conjunction with other support agencies. Key staff have received training and are aware of appropriate responses should they have concerns about a child's welfare. There is a very good formal programme for personal, social and health education that provides a forum for pupils to express their views and feelings. Participation in events supported by outside agencies help children to learn how to look after themselves.

39 Procedures to monitor pupils' attendance and punctuality are good and are fully implemented to provide support for pupils who develop erratic or infrequent attendance. Punctuality is expected and patterns of lateness are mostly effectively responded to. However, in the reception classes this is not always the case. Good attendance is well promoted throughout the school by attention to what is expected and by providing rewards for pupils who attain a very high rate. Even so the school has yet to raise the level of attendance to a national level.

40 The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour mean that pupils are

expected, and encouraged, to be well behaved at all times. No incidents of bullying were seen during the inspection. Pupils know who to turn to for help if they need it and do not feel under threat in school. Parents are satisfied that behaviour is well managed by staff. The staff set very high standards for behaviour during lessons, based on a system that makes expectations clear to all pupils and focuses on acknowledging successes. Pupils respond well to this positive approach. The school's general approach to discipline is shared with parents and support is requested from home should a child have difficulty in achieving an expected standard in any aspect of school life. Non-teaching staff, including lunchtime supervisors, make a very significant contribution to good behaviour and standards during breaks. Arrangements for pupils to eat lunch ensure a calm and friendly environment and very positive social occasion. A very good feature of this school is the attention paid to the quality of experiences made available to pupils during breaks and lunchtime. It ensures that all pupils can pass the time happily in an activity of their choice. It also reduces the potential for unacceptable behaviour that stems from a lack of worthwhile opportunities. Outdoor areas are very spacious and provide a range of surfaces and environments for pupils to walk, play and sit. Monitors from Year 6 make constructive contributions by diligently managing the system that provides games equipment for pupils to share.

41 Pupils with special educational needs are identified at an early stage. This is important, since many pupils require extra help. Teachers and support assistants know their pupils very well. However, the records that they maintain do not follow a standard format. Too often they concentrate on attitude rather than progress. Consequently, the co-ordinator is not able to monitor consistently the progress of these pupils. In its planning, the school recognises the need to develop more precise targets that can be tested regularly. Arrangements to assess the achievements and progress of pupils for whom English is a second language have improved since the last inspection and are now good.

42 The school supports pupils' personal development well through providing a clear framework for conduct, both in respect of behaviour and attitude to work. Staff are conscientious in establishing and maintaining very good relationships with pupils. They help pupils to develop in confidence through carefully balancing praise for good work and effort with guidance on what is expected in order to achieve the high standards set. Pupils' personal development is supported by acknowledgments of significant achievements as well as opportunities to help in class and generally around school. Opportunities are provided for pupils to take special responsibility as they move through the school. Pupils throughout Year 3 to Year 6 elect representatives to make up the school council and this provides a very good opportunity for pupils to take an active part in various aspects of school life. The school welcomes pupils' suggestions and takes their contributions seriously, discussing them fully and implementing desired changes as far as possible. As well as contributing to the personal development of all pupils through opportunities to take an active role in school life, staff provide opportunities in lessons and special events for pupils to take to take personal and group responsibility. The school takes part in fundraising events that help pupils to develop responsible attitudes towards the needs of others and take part in projects to raise pupils' awareness and skills in order to become good citizens, for instance in relation to an appreciation and care of the environment. A good range of clubs take place outside lessons that add an extra dimension to pupils' experiences, although provision for pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 is not so well developed as that for older pupils. Significant aspects of pupils' personal development are included in annual reports for their parents. These provide a very good means of acknowledging pupils' good points and boosting their self-esteem.

43 Procedures for assessing pupils' academic progress in English and mathematics and science are good. The school tracks pupils' attainment levels carefully using information provided by early assessments in the reception classes and a range of nationally recognised tests including the national tests at Year 2 and Year 6. Information is recorded systematically, passed to the next class and used by teachers to target the individual support some pupils might need. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Procedures for monitoring these systems and checking on the progress that pupils have made is not yet as rigorous. In subjects other than English, mathematics and science the systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are at an early stage of development and no one system is applied consistently across the school. Therefore

the use of this information to plan lessons and support learning is also inconsistent. Pupils' personal development is monitored effectively and targets set are shared with both pupil and parent.

44 At the time of the last inspection the school was judged to be providing a welcoming, caring and supportive environment and continues to do so.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45 The school has good links in place to enable parents to be actively involved in their children's education. Parents hold the school in very high esteem and value the way that the school works. A very few parents feel that the school does not work closely enough with them to provide specific information or support for individual needs.

46 The school provides parents with high quality information and seeks their views on aspects of school life. The prospectus is very clear about the attitudes and values that the school promotes and includes clear information about school life in general as well as an outline of the day-to-day procedures. Teachers are available to parents informally day-to-day and provide useful information during very well attended formal consultations. Written reports on pupils' progress are specific to individuals and include significant aspects of pupils' academic progress and personal development. The school invites parents' comments about their children's progress and provides an opportunity for parents to discuss reports with class teachers. Parents receive frequent newsletters providing a good range of additional information to keep them up to date about activities in school and the wider community. Parents are generally very satisfied with the information provided for them but some would like more about the curriculum so that they can help their child with work on particular topics.

47 The school welcomes parents' involvement and provides a good range of opportunities for parents and staff to work in partnership. Parents are consulted if problems arise concerning their child with a view to home and school working closely together to help the child. However, a minority of parents expressed dissatisfaction with the arrangements for homework, particularly that work is sometimes not set when expected and at others too much is given to be completed in too short a time. Parents would also like feedback about the homework that their children do. Although inspectors find that homework is generally satisfactorily used by teachers there are inconsistencies across the school in the amount and regularity of what is set, so that parents do not always know what to expect and cannot easily plan to help. In mathematics homework is set that often encourages families to work together to solve mathematical problems. The school frequently invites parents to see the school in action. Several parents regularly work in classrooms helping teachers with general classroom duties and listening to pupils read. There is a dedicated parent, teacher and friends association that organises special fundraising and social events that many staff and parents, as well as other family members, support. Parents are very well involved through attendance at special events, such as assemblies, concerts and sports days. The majority of parents take up the opportunities to be involved in their children's education. The school provides opportunities for parents to attend workshops and information sessions on a range of topics to support their children's learning but attendance at these events is variable.

48 Effective links between home and school that were reported at the last inspection are continuing to contribute positively to pupils' learning and personal development. In a very few, specific instances communications between home and school are not thorough enough to fully support pupils with specific needs and their parents.

49 Parents of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs are kept fully informed. A significant number of parents have elected to send their child to Halfpenny Lane because they appreciate the inclusive ethos of the school. Some feel that communications could be improved, although most parents and carers feel confident that specific needs are carefully considered and dealt with appropriately. All parents are involved fully in the objectives set for their child. The good links between the school and the parents of pupils learning English as an additional language

support the pupils' progress effectively.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50 A clear commitment to the needs of all pupils permeates policies and procedures. In the past year a focus on including all pupils has stimulated an atmosphere of tolerance and ambition. The headteacher has been in post for just over one year and in this time the senior management team has recognised - and built upon - the positive features inherited from the previous headteacher. The deputy headteacher has been a valuable link in this transitional phase. Nevertheless, unambiguous guidelines that require staff to approach management tasks in a coherent manner have yet to be embedded. The strategic organisation of the curriculum and planning overly relies on subject co-ordinators.

51 Staff with a leadership role take their responsibilities very seriously. Co-ordinators have a strong sense of commitment but this is not always bolstered by scrupulous attention to detail when overseeing the quality of teaching and learning. As a consequence, strategies for improving standards are not fully developed in all subjects.

52 Radical changes to the provision for special educational needs have been instituted this last year. In the new format the targets in individual educational plans are at times too general. Consequently, specific skills that staff need to concentrate on are not always obvious. In addition, procedures for the evaluation of targets are imprecise. As a result, the co-ordinator is unable to monitor effectively the progress being made by individual pupils. The governor linked to the special educational needs programme has a very significant role and knows the pupils very well. Members of the governing body ask searching questions and help to keep staff on their toes. The training needs of classroom assistants are identified and met. The leadership and management of the provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language are good overall. The school uses the extra funding it receives for these pupils effectively, so as to improve their progress and access to learning mainly through providing extra individual support.

53 The headteacher has quickly moved forward in setting up projects and providing leadership but the monitoring of the curriculum and the quality of teaching has yet to be prioritised. There is a wide variation in the quality of teaching and consequently in pupils' learning - it varying from excellent to unsatisfactory. For example, the good and often very good quality of teaching in the nursery is not replicated in the reception classes in part because the reception teaching has not been monitored well enough. Similarly there is a significant number of pupils who do not attend assemblies because they are busy with other tasks. Though the tasks are worthwhile during the inspection these pupils did not take part in an Act of Worship: the lack of an effective monitoring system had not picked this up. Similarly when a significant number of pupils arrived late in one class and the start of the lesson was delayed considerably the management was not monitoring well enough and then acting to bring about a prompt start.

54 Many of the job descriptions for subject leaders and senior managers are generic and do not make clear enough what is expected of particular staff. As a result the management by the senior team and how their roles and responsibilities are allocated and support one another are unclear. The monitoring of teaching is limited. Through a lack of monitoring relative weaknesses in teaching have not been identified – neither have strengths, which could provide examples of good practice for others to follow. The checking of teachers' planning is irregular and so planning at times lacks clarity resulting on occasion in unsatisfactory teaching.

55 The school development plan is presented in tabular format, which provides easy reference. An appropriate range of headings provides clarity though evaluation including responsibilities is unclear. Generally responsibilities are not always vested in named personnel and where this is the case, accountability is unclear. Priorities for development are appropriate though the success criteria are insufficiently linked to standards and little use is made of quantifiable data to measure success.

56 The governing body is very proactive and properly involved in setting the budget and monitoring spending. The school has carefully and quickly addressed its deficit budget from the last inspection yet at the same time been able to extend the accommodation. The cost of educating pupils in this school is low and the quality of education provided is good with pupils achieving well. This results in the good value for money that the school provides. Governors act as a very good critical friend to the school and ask challenging questions always with the pupils' best interest at heart. A revised format for committees inspired by the chair is serving the school very well. The chair has been central to the organisation of a very good quality handbook for governors; this provides basic information that governors need at hand and will help to induct new governors to the governing body and enable governors to take on new roles such as chairing committees.

57 There is a good match of teachers and support staff to meet the needs of the curriculum and support those pupils who have special educational needs. Care is taken to ensure that classes are provided with sufficient support staff. There is sufficient, effective administrative support to meet the needs of the school. The school is revising information for staff through developing a useful handbook on school procedures and specific information for support staff in various roles. New staff are well supported during their induction to the school and documented information is also being revised for them. This is an area where the school's status as an Investor in People is helping to develop its procedures.

58 The accommodation is well maintained and very clean and provides a very positive learning environment. Space is adequate although provision for ICT and music is constrained. The ICT room is uncomfortable as it is small and not well ventilated. It is equipped with appropriate seating for a limited number of pupils, however, sometimes pupils have to inappropriately and with some difficulty share the seats. This results in lost teaching and learning time. There is insufficient, suitable space for instrumental music tuition. The areas between classrooms are very well used for a wide range of activities. The library is easily accessible by all pupils and very well used to support independent learning. The outside area provides a wide variety of environments that are very well used by staff to enhance the pupils' learning and leisure experiences. Outdoor provision for physical education is particularly spacious. The hard play area is well zoned so that all pupils can play safely and with enjoyment. The school is adequately equipped with learning resources. Most resources are in good condition and readily accessible.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59 The headteacher, other staff and governors should:

- (i) Continue to raise standards in English across the school;
[Paragraph numbers 3, 4, 64, 65, 79, 81 and 82]
- (ii) Improve assessment systems and the use of assessment in subjects other than English, mathematics and science;
[Paragraph numbers 43, 111, 117 and 129]
- (iii) Make clear and implement the roles and responsibilities of the senior management team to include monitoring the quality of the curriculum and the quality of teaching;
[Paragraph numbers 10, 50, 51, 53 and 54]
- (iv) Improve the rate of pupils' attendance.
[Paragraph number 39]

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	69
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	52

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	9	35	21	3	0	0
Percentage	1	13	51	31	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	38	383
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	87

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	10
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	14	90

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	10

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	34
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	34	26	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	25	27
	Girls	22	23	24
	Total	47	48	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (89)	80 (85)	85 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	27	28
	Girls	22	25	22
	Total	47	52	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (85)	87 (96)	83 (95)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	27	34	61

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	22	24
	Girls	32	27	32
	Total	53	49	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87 (72)	80 (83)	92 (89)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	23	25
	Girls	30	29	32
	Total	51	52	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (77)	85 (81)	93 (89)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
361	2	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
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 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	17.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.2
Average class size	27.4

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	17
Total aggregate hours worked per week	283

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	38
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	78

Financial information

Financial year	2002/2003
	£
Total income	998238
Total expenditure	990138
Expenditure per pupil	2352
Balance brought forward from previous year	12588
Balance carried forward to next year	20688

Number of pupils per FTE adult	12.7
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

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	4

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	387
Number of questionnaires returned	111
Percentage response rate	29

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	40	2	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	61	38	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	59	1	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	46	13	4	3
The teaching is good.	60	39	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	45	8	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	34	4	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	39	1	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	45	43	8	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	38	45	8	0	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	43	5	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	36	18	5	15

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

60 The quality of teaching is good and often very good in the nursery; in the reception classes it is satisfactory overall. A weakness is that at times, particularly in the reception classes, it presents too little challenge for the higher attainers. Children's attitudes are very good in the nursery and good in the reception classes.

61 A rich and stimulating learning environment supports a very lively and rich curriculum in the nursery. Children learn at a good rate through purposeful play; a child was overheard to comment 'We're always busy, always doing allsorts!' and this sums up the fruitful days in the nursery. The curriculum is not as enriched in the reception classes though aspects of creative work are well catered for through the deployment of teaching assistants.

Personal, social and emotional development

62 The quality of teaching is good. Children make good gains in the nursery and these are consolidated satisfactorily in the reception classes so that overall children's achievement is good. This means that children are on course to reach the early learning goals in these aspects of their development. From a low starting point children gradually take on responsibility for themselves and learn the correct way to behave. This was the case, for example, when they chose to take their snack in the nursery using the time as a social opportunity with friends to share healthy food and discuss the world about them. The nursery is set out to encourage this kind of mature response and adults provide the guidance for children to complete one task before moving on to another. Younger children learn much from working alongside older children. In the reception classes, children build on this soundly. Relationships are good and teachers make sure that children take their turn when speaking in a group and that they listen carefully to others' contributions. Although children are patient in the reception classes often sitting for a length of time awaiting their tasks, this is an aspect where the teaching in the reception classes does not build well enough on the independence established in the nursery. The children are polite and respectful to adults because they see good role models in the adults in school.

Communication, language and literacy

63 Children achieve well in the nursery from a well below average start and satisfactorily in the reception classes. By the end of their time in the reception classes children are on course to attain a level below that typically expected of their age. Most children become attentive listeners because they have ample opportunity to listen to stories and rhymes and become engaged in simple conversations. In the nursery children learning English as an additional language benefit greatly from the way in which the teaching uses the activities in which children show interest to develop their understanding. For example, a child engrossed in printing with sponges shaped in the form of transport was engaged in conversation to extend her vocabulary in relation to travel and also in connection with the printing activity. The child's understanding developed well because the teaching was clear and natural. In the reception classes the quality of teaching is sound and this enables children to extend their speaking skills at a reasonable rate though at times too little is expected of them, for example, when working in the shared area where conversation is skewed to the adult directing activities and at times does not make sure that children contribute sufficiently well.

64 Role play of very good quality is nurtured well in the nursery. This helps very much to increase children's delight in language and provides many opportunities for them to practise new words, for example, in role play about travelling. In the reception classes this aspect is not as strong. Though role play is set out, for example, as a seaside shop there is far less time spent by adults engaging children in play and as a result the fast gains made in the nursery are consolidated rather than stepped up.

65 Children in the nursery develop skills at making marks and forming letters well because they have plenty of opportunities to write for good reasons in their play. They write lists and attempt their names, thus, beginning to understand the importance of the written form. By the end of their time in the reception classes children can copy words and are beginning to write their own, drawing on their understanding of letter sounds. For example, a middle attainer wrote 'plyd' for played which was a good attempt. However, the work of the higher and average attainers are often very similar because the planning does not make clear how each group will be challenged to do their best. This results in much work at a similar level. In independent writing spaces are often missed between words and a mixture of lower and upper case letters are used. Children are presented with interesting ways of producing their writing for example making booklets about visits and keeping a diary of 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' and in these instances children enjoy reading their booklets. At times little sense of urgency as regards timekeeping in the reception classes means that lessons do not always start on time. The outcome is that early arrivers waste time awaiting others. The school's management has not checked this sufficiently well to ensure that the first lesson, often literacy, begins on time.

66 Children in the nursery and reception classes love books and enjoy sharing stories. In the nursery, children naturally refer to reading matter to find information as when they 'read' travel brochures to find out about booking holidays. In the reception classes the below average group often make spontaneous comments about their stories that they share. Middle attainers accurately read the names of familiar characters and can talk about favourite stories such as Cinderella. Higher attainers read simple stories with confidence and expression and often one book is not enough and they want to read more. Support from home helps pupils' progress in reading because it is organised well by the school.

Mathematical development

67 From a below average start, by the end of the reception year the majority are on course to attain at a level below that typically expected. In the nursery counting and work with numbers is a natural occurrence and well taught through activities such as baking when children are taught how to measure ingredients by getting scales to balance. In one such lesson, the adult was clear about the intended learning from the activity and helped children to come to a better understanding of estimation and the concepts of 'more' and 'less'. Good quality questioning such as 'And what does that tell us?' helped children to better understand the concept of balance.

68 The quality of teaching in the reception classes is satisfactory. Strengths are in the relationships between staff and pupils, the practical tasks set for children and the use of rhymes to help children to count. Higher attainers can match numbers to 10 and beyond but the speed at which they work is relatively slow. Once it increases accuracy is often lost. Middle attainers can identify missing numbers by counting aloud. The below average children are working with numerals to six and make sound gains. Children's language to discuss mathematics is below average overall. Planning in the reception classes is a relative weakness. It mostly identifies activities rather than clear learning objectives. Because the main focus of the lesson is not always clear the resources are not always wholly appropriate to teach particular skills. For example, children were presented with a square of 100 numbers when learning new numbers to 13 and this they found confusing; it inhibited their understanding of counting on. Sometimes there is very little planning at all. This has not been monitored sufficiently well by the management of the school.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

69 Good teaching in the nursery and sound teaching in the reception classes means that children are on course to meet the early learning goals. Children in the nursery make good gains because the curriculum provides many opportunities to engage children's natural curiosity around a particular topic. For example, children had observed trains at first hand and then had very good opportunities to engage in role play, buying tickets, waiting at a station and boarding the play train carefully to ride around the playground. Toy trains that moved in a range of ways were provided for pupils to investigate though the challenge for higher attainers was limited because there were no models that could be taken apart to show how they were powered. The children have very good attitudes and try to do their very best.

70 In the reception classes relationships are good and children develop an early understanding of aspects of geography, history and science. In outside play, for example, children delighted in filling plant pots with soil to plant flowers. They derived much satisfaction from the tactile qualities of the compost as it ran through their fingers. Children played alongside each other watering the plants and raking the compost but opportunities were lost for the adult to intervene and take children's language and understanding on.

Physical development

71 Good teaching in the nursery and sound teaching in reception is differentiated by the quality of the planning. In outdoor play in the reception classes activities are organised well and safely and children have a sense of contentment. Nonetheless it is not as well organised as that in the nursery because the links to the topics being studied are not as strong and the focus of the learning not as clear. Good links are made to numeracy through rhymes and songs. Older children can steer tricycles and higher attainers can easily weave in and out of obstacles. Lower attainers find it hard work to bike uphill. Skills such as using scissors and paintbrushes are taught well in all classes. For example, in the reception class children used paintbrushes of different sizes to paint with water onto a wall. Good links were made with the story being studied in literacy and children created an undersea mural getting better at outlining starfish and underwater plants. Children make good improvements through using small tools to create pictures and models.

Creative development

72 Good teaching in the nursery and sound teaching in the reception classes brings about a good rate of achievement for the children and they are on course to attain the early learning goal in their creative development. In music the teaching and resulting learning is good in the reception class. As a result pupils sing clearly and harmoniously. Pupils are well motivated and good links are made to numeracy through the choice of songs and counting rhymes.

73 The use of shared accommodation outside the reception classrooms is satisfactory in providing a range of creative activities but the adult guidance is at times too prescriptive and inhibits children's opportunities to really experiment with a range of resources though skills are taught carefully such as using scissors to cut round curved lines.

74 In role play higher attainers in the nursery are often inventive for example taking on play from the travel agents into play about pirates 'You can book your holiday now pirate – do you want a holiday on a pedalo?' Higher attainers work collaboratively while lower attainers watch and learn from others.

ENGLISH

75 Standards in English in Year 6 are below those typically expected and lower than they were at the previous inspection. Last year the school saw a big improvement in standards in the national tests for seven and 11 year olds. This year's results are not as good as there is a larger than average percentage of pupils in the year groups who are lower attainers. Nevertheless, pupils'

achievement is good for a majority because their language skills are lower than average when they enter the school. Pupils with learning difficulties make at least as good progress as their peers because of the consistently good support they receive from classroom assistants and specialist teachers. Pupils who do not speak English at home achieve as well as their classmates.

76 Standards of speaking and listening are average because pupils are given plenty of opportunities in lessons to discuss their work and to speak in formal situations and they do well to catch up. In reading higher attaining pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise more advanced skills. Although standards in writing are slightly below average, the school has worked hard to improve the teaching of writing over the past year and is already seeing success, with standards improving throughout the school.

77 The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. A significant strength of teaching in all aspects of English is that teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well. The quality of relationships at all levels is high and this ensures that pupils feel secure and confident in lessons. This is an important factor in the successful teaching of speaking and listening which is good throughout the school. Teachers give pupils many opportunities to ask and answer questions and discuss their work in lessons. Because pupils feel secure in class, and they know that their opinions are valued, they are confident to express them without fear of ridicule. Teachers make good use of role play to encourage pupils to express themselves confidently and plan opportunities for pupils to discuss in pairs and groups to help them clarify their thinking. These methods were demonstrated very well in a successful lesson in the lower set in Year 6. Pupils studying 'The Suitcase Kid' were asked to work in small groups to discuss and agree a question they could ask the teacher, who was in role as one of the characters in the story. After quiet and enthusiastic discussion they identified a good range of sensible questions that helped them discover more about how the character in the story felt about her situation. Higher attaining pupils are very confident to talk in a variety of formal and informal situations, for example when explaining their work to the class at the end of the lessons or when discussing their views with adults. The teaching of speaking and listening supports pupils' personal development well, as they learn to respect each other's viewpoints and experiences. Pupils report that they enjoy class discussions because they make lessons more interesting.

78 The teaching of reading is satisfactory. The school has a number of successful strategies in place for teaching the basic skills of reading. By the end of Year 2 pupils have developed appreciation of books. They enjoy stories and understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction writing. They know their letter sounds and the sounds of some common letter combinations so they can sound out words they do not recognise. Higher attaining pupils build new words confidently and read with good expression. Lower attaining pupils are less confident but still have a number of different ways of working out what new words mean. Pupils read regularly to teachers and classroom assistants who check their progress through the reading scheme, and enjoy reading to parents at home and on the very successful weekly reading afternoons. By the end of Year 6 pupils read an appropriate range of texts both in English lessons and in connection with work in other subjects. They know how to skim and scan reference documents to help them find the information they require and can research information in the school library.

79 There are some weaknesses in provision that limit what higher attaining readers in some classes achieve. Teachers work hard to hear pupils read individually but some do not make good use of guided group reading to help pupils develop the more advanced reading skills. Where it has just been introduced into a class, some teachers are still finding out the best ways of managing the rest of the class to ensure that they can give uninterrupted time to the direct teaching of one group. In a Year 2 class where the strategy was working well, levels of learning were good. A group of six pupils working with the teacher responded very well to questions about the text. Their descriptions of the different characters were perceptive as the teacher guided them to the clues within the passage, and they read aloud with interest and expression.

80 The teaching of writing is good. Teachers have worked hard to improve their teaching over the past year and the results are beginning to show in pupils' work though there is some way to go for those capable of higher standards. From Year 1, pupils are encouraged to write independently

and for a range of purposes, sharing their news and views - their opinions of their reading books for example - and higher attaining pupils are able to punctuate their sentences accurately. By Year 6 higher attaining pupils write at length for a wide range of purposes in English. Their independent writing is neat, accurate and well presented and they use vocabulary and different writing styles for effect. A good example was seen in one pupil's diary of a shipwrecked man: 'When sight returned to me I saw the treacherous lands yonder! There was fire – lots of fire – clearly this was once a fertile place but now it was burning!'

81 Teachers make good use of national guidance for teaching writing and support pupils' learning well by giving them good examples to follow, encouraging them to use powerful vocabulary and helping them analyse what makes the work of other authors effective. Pupils' writing skills are developed well in history where the detail of their written work helps teachers assess what they have learnt in the subject. Writing is used insufficiently well in other subjects such as religious education. Teachers are beginning to use ICT to support writing but recognise there is scope for further improvement. Teachers' planning is based securely on national guidance for the subject and this ensures that lessons are purposeful and pupils learn at a good pace. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs in particular receive good support from classroom assistants who help them take full part in the lesson.

82 There are some weaknesses in the teaching of writing that the school has still to address. Higher attaining pupils do not always achieve what they could as few teachers plan work specifically to challenge them. Teachers' marking of pupils' writing is inconsistent and whilst some pupils receive very clear guidance about how they can improve their work, others do not. In general pupils have positive attitudes to their writing, and try hard to present it well and make it interesting.

83 The leadership of the subject is good. English has been a priority for development for some time and the school is constantly looking at ways to improve standards. Some teachers have now developed considerable expertise in the subject. There are thorough systems in place for assessment and to check individual pupils' attainment and progress. Teachers set individual targets for pupils that are shared with parents. The lack of systematic monitoring of teaching is a weakness that results in school policy being inconsistently applied and best practice not always being identified and shared. The school is well placed to raise standards in the future.

MATHEMATICS

84 By the end of Year 2 standards are typical for pupils' ages. This represents good progress since many pupils enter Year 1 with levels of understanding that are below average. Well organised lessons and strong relationships underpin the good achievement that is maintained throughout Years 3-6. Despite the significant proportion of pupils with learning difficulties, overall standards remain average when pupils move on to secondary school. This indicates satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.

85 Thorough planning has ensured that key elements of the subject have been addressed systematically. All teachers pay great attention to the development of mental strategies. Pupils automatically consider different methods for tackling problems. For example, in a good lesson in Year 2, pupils volunteered several ways of working out the number halfway between 0 and 700. A sustained focus on mathematical investigations is also having a positive impact on standards. Teachers in Year 4 take shopping at the greengrocers as a theme and interpret information so that all levels of ability are challenged. This type of activity is now a regular feature in all classes. A recurring weakness is pupils' ability to estimate accurately.

86 All pupils practise number work regularly. The clear arrangements for target setting ensure that teachers continually adapt their planning so that this constant reinforcement provides a solid knowledge base. This attention to detail pays off because work is consistently pitched at the right level. In Years 1 and 2, where pupils of all abilities are taught together, teachers plan tasks that pupils can understand. In a very good lesson in Year 1, the teacher provided activities for three

levels of attainment when teaching pupils to identify 'half past' the hour. A pupil whose first language is not English was fully involved in the lesson.

87 In Years 3 - 6, pupils are taught in 'sets' with pupils of similar levels of attainment grouped together. Within this narrower range, teachers continue to adapt tasks such as reading bus schedules where questions have different degrees of complexity for different levels of attainment. In Year 6, the most able pupils are withdrawn once a week to receive effective, intensive support. The school is rightly proud that two pupils obtained the level expected of average fifteen year olds in their national tests in 2002.

88 Homework is used imaginatively, and often encourages families to work together on an investigation. Families in Year 2 were asked how to measure 4 litres of water using only containers for 3 and 5 litres. This generated real interest. Pupils really enjoy their lessons. They contribute enthusiastically in whole class discussions and work very well independently. In a Year 6 class lower attaining pupils constructed their sets so that their addition of consecutive numbers was demanding. Throughout the school, pupils use key mathematical language quite naturally. In a very good Year 2 lesson about capacity, pupils used terms such as 'unit of measurement' without prompting. In this lesson the preparation of resources was thorough. Every detail had been anticipated, so that pupils could experiment individually.

89 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The support provided in most lessons is very good, particularly when classroom assistants are fully involved in lesson planning. Occasionally, support is less effective. However, pupils with statements receive particularly well focused support since their needs are fully understood. Classroom assistants show immense patience at all times.

90 In mathematics lessons that were observed, teaching was always good or very good. However, the quality of marking is variable. Generally it consists of ticks or crosses although teachers regularly discuss targets with individual pupils. There are satisfactory opportunities for applying numeracy skills in other subjects such as science and geography, where graph work is consolidated. Information and communication technology is under-represented in mathematics lessons and makes too little contribution to pupils' progress.

91 Leadership is good. The co-ordinator has established flexible 'setting' of teaching groups and carefully analyses pupils' performance to ensure that arrangements are secure. There are good links with local secondary schools. During the inspection pupils in Year 6 were working on an agreed 'bridging unit'- work that begins in the primary school and is to be continued next year in the secondary school. Assessment procedures help both pupils and teachers to gauge progress accurately. Insufficient time has been set aside for comprehensive monitoring of teaching across the school, and procedures are too informal. They lack rigour and so make too small a contribution to improvements. All staff are fundamentally involved in substantial training programmes.

SCIENCE

92 Pupils' results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2002 were close to the national average and the average for similar schools. There was no significant difference between the standards of boys and girls. The work of the present Year 6 pupils shows that standards are now above those typically expected. Well over a third of the pupils are achieving the level above that expected for their ages. This is an improvement since the last inspection. There has been an even bigger improvement by the end of Year 2 on last year's results. Standards are now broadly typical and similar to those at the time of the last inspection, although in the 2002 national tests they were well below. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, achieve well overall as they move up through the school.

93 The strengths of the subject are:

- consistently confident and good quality teaching which has turned the tide of mediocre standards;
- the good balance in learning between the different aspects of science;
- pupils' enthusiasm for science because teachers make work relevant and challenging;
- the development of pupils' skills in thinking and working scientifically; and
- their persistence in pursuing enquiry and investigation.

Areas for improvement are:

- the time and priority given to science which have been reduced by the focus in recent years on English, mathematics and ICT;
- opportunities for pupils to devise their own tests and ways of recording findings; and
- arrangements to check and track each pupil's gains in scientific skill.

94 Pupils in Year 6 have good knowledge of all the required areas of study. They have a good understanding of scientific ideas, method and language, and know how to ensure that tests are fair. However, they do not have the independence expected by Year 6 in raising scientific questions or in devising investigations.

95 The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, an improvement since the last inspection. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching and learning varied from very good in a Year 3 lesson to good in the other years. Teachers' good knowledge of the topics ensures that pupils learn scientific facts and develop understanding of scientific language. In Year 6 there is good coverage of most aspects of science, building well on the work done lower down the school. However, pressure from the national tests in May results in emphasis on scientific knowledge rather than investigation, with a big focus on investigation after the tests to restore the balance. Pupils' comment that: "The revision was harder than the tests." reflects this situation, but also highlights teachers' commitment to pupils achieving their best.

96 There is a lot of variation between classes in the degree to which teachers match tasks to pupils' previous understanding. This is well done in Years 1, 3 and 6. In other classes, teachers pitch lessons towards higher and average attaining pupils. As a result, although teachers give extra support, lower attainers, those with special educational needs, and some with English as a second language do not always finish tasks or the recording of new learning. They therefore lose out at times when revising or consolidating new work.

97 Teachers manage pupils and activities very effectively. The key to this is their quick and full engagement of the interest of pupils of all attainments. Pupils therefore give all their energy to new learning, showing determination and commendable persistence in meeting the challenges teachers present. For example, Year 4 pupils commented that: "Teachers put a lot of effort into making learning exciting and fun." and went on to talk animatedly about possible problems and solutions in a forthcoming project to design burglar alarms for their lunch boxes.

98 However, pupils' written work often shows a lack of such independence and initiative in learning. This commonly results from overuse of photocopied sheets which limit pupils' opportunities to decide for themselves how to record what they have discovered.

99 Teachers use question and answer sessions very successfully. These not only improve pupils' scientific thinking, but also develop their speaking and listening skills well. For example, a very good Year 3 lesson began with the teacher enthusiastically taking the whole class through a series of examples of magnetism entirely through discussion, leading them to discover the scientific laws at work. The high quality of science display, particularly in Year 4, for example, of rays and switches, strengthen pupils' growing interest in science.

100 Pupils' mathematical skills develop satisfactorily in science lessons, for example in estimating, predicting and graphing findings. The use of worksheets as the outcomes of learning in most lessons limits pupils' opportunities to develop their factual writing skills. While computers occasionally support learning, this is an area for a great deal of development. Marking is limited and

does not do enough to show pupils how they might improve their work. However, science work significantly contributes to pupils' spiritual development through the beauty and wonder in the natural world and their experiences of scientific laws. For example, Year 3 pupils were amazed to compare the effects of different magnets on paper clips. Science lessons also effectively support the school's initiatives to increase pupils' understanding of healthy living and eating.

101 Good leadership and satisfactory management have raised standards. The co-ordinator is keen to improve provision, and has kept colleagues up-to-date through her own training. She has successfully overseen the introduction of the new national guidelines for science and supported teachers in following them. Monitoring of lessons, though carefully planned, is at a very early stage and is not having the impact it should on the quality of learning. However, the confidence which now underpins both teaching and learning has been the major reason for recent improvements in achievement and standards. The school is now well placed to build on them next year, when science has a priority.

ART AND DESIGN

102 Pupils' attainment is broadly in line with the national expectation by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils usually have good attitudes towards art and enjoy their lessons. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and so pupils make sound progress in developing a range of skills. Pupils take an active part in the lessons; pupils who have special educational needs are supported well by adults who help them progress their work.

103 The curriculum is broad but in the time allocated older pupils do not develop their own ideas and designs before attempting to complete work based on first observations and responses. As a result the standards of work seen remain at a satisfactory level. This was evident in a lesson in Year 6 using mixed media to create a beach composition. No time was provided to experiment with the sponge wash effect, before pupils sketched their ideas from memory adding detail.

104 Pupils experience a wide range of artists and art forms, both first hand and through observation and discussion. They learn to appreciate the work of famous artists, enjoy workshops and visits to the local sculpture park, but vocabulary to discuss their own art work is limited. Year 2 pupils simply refer to shape and colours and say whether or not they like it. They modelled flowers on a work by Van Gogh, were able to select colour and materials and the majority used line well to represent individual blooms. Pupils are able to select different materials and know about mixing primary colours when painting and how adding black or white makes them darker or lighter. Higher attainers produce pieces of good quality.

105 Older pupils continue to be stimulated by the range of materials and experiences on offer; a benefit of the good resources for art. By Year 6, more able pupils can talk about their preferences for different artists and recall work done lower down the school or in Arts Week with visitors. The more articulate can discuss the difference between art and design technology, but for some there is confusion between the two subjects, for example, in the textile design work of Year 5 pupils studying Ancient Greece. Textured woven 'webs' and textile collages illustrating myths and legends, were queried as 'art or technology?' Different grades of drawing pencil and oil-based or chalk pastels are freely available but many pupils are not aware of the different effects that can be achieved.

106 The very good displays celebrate pupils' achievements, and sets off the increasing number of artefacts representing cultures from around the globe. These, and the more recent African influences, are beginning to address a bias towards art of cultures from the industrial west, and link the subject well to music and dance. The lack of formal systems for checking teaching and learning across the school restricts management's view of standards. Informal discussion and monitoring work produced have not yet revealed the weaker areas in teaching which relate to knowledge and understanding to teach subject specific vocabulary and techniques, and planning for

progression.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

107 Pupils' attainment is above nationally expected levels throughout Years 1 to 6. Pupils' attitudes towards design and technology are very good and this is reflected in the higher standards they reach. Pupils' finished work is often very good.

108 One strength is the way links are often made with other subjects in the choice of tasks linked to designing and making. For example pupils in Year 2 studying forces in science designed their own vehicles, learning about fixed wheel axles, joining and finishing skills, as well as testing their finished products in a scientific way using ramps to see which would travel furthest. New skills are taught well, so that when different techniques are needed, for example sewing to join textiles when making glove puppets, pupils have practised in advance of the design stage.

109 Another strength is the management of time and resources when whole days are set aside for design and technology and year groups work both in classrooms and shared areas to complete much of the practical work involved. This dedicated time was described as 'heaven' by Year 6 pupils, who spoke animatedly about previous projects; designer chairs, biscuits, moving toys, recent work on shelters and, linked to their study of Ancient Egypt in history, the challenge of designing a shaduf, using only natural materials available to ancient civilisations.

110 Teachers have a very good understanding of the whole design process, from identifying a need to evaluating the end product. As a result the teaching throughout the school is good and pupils make good progress towards understanding the cyclical process. By the time they leave the school most are able to work collaboratively to complete a design and make task with reference to the intended use of the product. Many use information to assist in design, explain changes, debate choices and say how they might make improvements. Teachers make lessons exciting and memorable and invite parents and carers to participate whenever possible, testing Year 1 pupils' fruit salad or receiving the well-presented, boxed biscuits from pupils in Year 5.

111 Monitoring and assessment strategies are informal and have not allowed the new co-ordinator to gain a firm view of standards across the school.

GEOGRAPHY

112 Pupils reach average standards by the end of Year 6. The subject is taught in blocks throughout the year and this impedes the systematic build-up of skills. Teachers compensate for this by providing opportunities for fieldwork in each year group. When they are involved in this, pupils develop their skills in interpreting evidence more deeply than in classroom-based activities. The curriculum is also planned to ensure that aspects of geography are taught in other lessons. For example, when pupils in Year 5 study ancient Egypt in history, teachers take the opportunity to introduce a study of the river Nile. In some geography lessons teachers miss opportunities to develop skills in the subject and concentrate too much on elements of literacy.

113 In Years 1 and 2, pupils make suitable maps to indicate their route to school. Barnaby Bear is a focus for looking at life in other countries. In a Year 1 class, pupils enjoyed watching him in Dublin, and talking about what they had seen. Ongoing observation of seasonal changes in Pontefract Park inform their work on weather. In a good lesson, pupils in Year 2 were able to plan a route from Pontefract to the west coast of Scotland, using suitable mapping skills. They understand what a key is used for on a map. When writing to a girl who lives on an island, more competent pupils ask thoughtful questions such as "What's beyond the mountains behind your house?" and "Are there any forests where you live?"

114 In Years 3 and 4, pupils benefit from devising a video of their own weather forecasts. One

pupil implores people in Wales to “Watch out for fallen trees because there’s thunder and lightning about.” An impressive display about the Year 4 visit to a landfill site and glass recycling centre highlights the benefits of the variety of fieldwork opportunities planned. This is also a rare occasion when ICT is used in the presentation of pupils’ work.

115 Pupils in Year 5 were able to talk knowledgeably about their visit to Scarborough and to highlight several features about life there compared with Pontefract. An able pupil lucidly described the process of evaporation. Both Year 5 classes are looking into the advantages and disadvantages of the pedestrianisation of the High Street. Groups working in one class produced thoughtful conclusions based on their interviews of local people – for instance the problem created for older people and the increased volume of traffic on perimeter roads.

116 The residential visit to Northumberland provides a substantial basis for much of the work in Year 6. This extended visit has helped pupils to put into practice their research skills and to use geographical vocabulary more precisely. Good links with literacy are demonstrated in the excellent booklets produced after a visit to Malham. One pupil writes: “The scene was magical – a rushing waterfall surrounded by gnarled roots.” Some key skills, such as the use of grid references, are insecure.

117 The recently appointed co-ordinator has already produced a draft policy and a model for medium term planning. This is needed, since teachers adopt individual approaches to this at the moment. Assessment is largely informal and not yet standardised across the school. The excellent display on settlements in Year 4 sets a very high standard to encourage and develop the use of displays. No monitoring of teaching has taken place. Despite this, the quality of teaching throughout the school is maintaining standards at a satisfactory level.

HISTORY

118 Standards by the end of Year 6 are above those typically expected, as at the time of the last inspection. This is a good achievement. By the end of Year 2 they are as expected for pupils’ ages. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress. There are no significant differences in the standards achieved by boys and girls.

119 Strengths in the subject are:

- the use of first hand experience, for example through role play, visitors and visits;
- pupils’ good understanding of chronology through the use of carefully illustrated and captioned timelines in most classrooms; and
- good links to other subjects which broaden pupils’ appreciation of history.

The main area for development is:

- arrangements to check and track the development of pupils’ history skills.

120 By the end of Year 6 pupils’ knowledge and understanding of history, and their skills in finding out about the past are higher than expected for 11 year olds. They compare the reliability of different sources of evidence such as archaeology, pictures, films, living memory, books, artefacts and the Internet. Pupils of all abilities recall and interpret key facts about Ancient Egyptian and Roman civilisations. For example they give good reasons for the end of Boudicca’s rebellion against Roman rule: “The Celts were really a rabble charging a well-organised army.” Pupils also know how life for children and families was different in Tudor and Victorian times.

121 By the end of Year 2 pupils’ knowledge of the past is as expected for their ages. They have higher than usual understanding of why key historical figures such as Florence Nightingale are important. This is because teachers encourage them to discover through imaginative writing how

people might have felt in the past. For example a pupil wrote a diary entry for a visit to Florence Nightingale at Scutari hospital: "Inside it was disgusting. I fainted. I asked Florence if she'd like some help. She said, 'Yes.' "

122 The quality of teaching and learning taken overall is good. During the inspection the quality in lessons ranged from unsatisfactory to good. The good quality of learning arises from teachers' detailed knowledge of the topics, and the interesting and challenging activities in lessons, visits and subject days that give pupils plenty of opportunity to make their own discoveries about the past. Learning is unsatisfactory when there is not enough opportunity for pupils to contribute their ideas and questions.

123 A strength of the teaching is the wide range of opportunities pupils get in nearly all lessons to explore and present new learning. For example Year 6 pupils used multi-media presentations to record very effectively history aspects of their visit to Northumberland. In other year groups pupils use observational drawing, examine artefacts and maps, make models, write letters, research on the Internet, read around topics, produce booklets of findings and watch and take part in plays about the past.

124 Good leadership and satisfactory management have led to the development of a curriculum that interests and stimulates the work of both pupils and teachers. As a result, the school makes good use of the latest national guidance in well-devised work on a set of topics pupils find relevant. However, arrangements to track and check pupils' developing history skills and to monitor teaching are at an early stage. This is the main reason for variations in the quality of teaching. Visits for each year group to places such as Eden Camp, Fountains Abbey, Hadrian's Wall and Beamish increase the enjoyment and experience of history for pupils of all levels of attainment.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

125 Standards are in line with what is expected of pupils by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The higher standards evident at the last inspection have not been maintained because the school has concentrated on other subjects. Nevertheless, over recent time pupils achieve satisfactorily. Pupils enjoy working on computers and have very good attitudes to the subject.

126 Strengths in pupils' attainment are in the use of text for a range of purposes. Pupils easily make corrections, change the style of the print and its position on the screen. For example, pupils in Year 6 used text, images, sound and animation in a multi-media presentation about their residential visit. Pupils downloaded their digital photos onto the computer, organised them and were later able to retrieve them. The higher attainers, in one lesson, quickly organised their slides. In this case, the quality of teaching was good and the task provided a good level of challenge building well on pupils' experience and setting the task in a very worthwhile arena. Pupils' skills and knowledge in using the Internet are also relative strengths. This is because the teaching is clear about how to use the Internet safely and tasks are well suited to encourage enquiry. For example, pupils in Year 4 used the Internet to research Tudor explorers and were overjoyed to be able to discuss their new gems of knowledge with each other quickly empathising with the famous characters such as Drake and Raleigh. Relative weaknesses are in control and monitoring because the school is not well resourced for these aspects. Tasks are challenging for average and lower attainers though there is some lack of challenge for higher attainers. For example, they are sometimes too reliant on the adults and have to wait for adult help rather than be provided with aide-memoires to promote independence and a better rate of progress

127 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. The very good relationships that teachers have with their pupils and the trust that emerges helps to combat the difficulties that arise in using the ICT suite. It is not well ventilated and the seating arrangements do not provide individual seats for each pupil. Teachers do their best under the circumstances but the introductory and final parts of lessons are difficult because the suite is cluttered unnecessarily. This has an

adverse impact on the initial and concluding plenaries.

128 Good opportunities are provided for paired work and pupils very willingly help each other and are sufficiently mature in their approach to learn from mistakes. They enjoy their time using computers because the tasks capture pupils' interests, for example, when pupils in Year 2 used a floor robot to program directions and then transferred their skills to directing a figure on the screen. Higher attainers quickly formed basic shapes using simple programming.

129 Cross-curricular resources are somewhat limited though good use is made of the Internet. The governor for ICT provides good support to the subject and works closely with the coordinator. However, on occasion the coordinator spends too much time on technical assistance because the school has not yet organised alternative support. Assessment is underdeveloped though a good start has been made on compiling samples of pupils' work to inform teachers of the levels that pupils can attain.

MUSIC

130 Standards in music are at broadly the levels expected of pupils by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall although pupils who have additional instrumental tuition draw on these experiences and, as a result, some exceed national expectations. Pupils who have special educational needs, including those who have emotional and behavioural difficulties, play a full part in music lessons. The singing group in Years 4 to 6, led by the music co-ordinator, reaches good standards of performance and is active in the local community, at festivals and events. Some older pupils lack enthusiasm for singing in assemblies, despite adults' good encouragement.

131 The school is now involving more boys than before in learning to play tuned instruments through the successful introduction of guitar groups by a visiting teacher. Accommodation is less than satisfactory for some of these lessons because the school has insufficient rooms to set aside for the tuition. Pupils are rarely offered ensemble opportunities within school, except on guitar with the singing group. Leadership and management of music have not been a priority and as a result time and resources are not used to best advantage.

132 Musical appreciation is a strength of the curriculum. Pupils' skills develop by listening to a wide range of recorded music, in lessons, during lunch and assembly and as background music for some other subjects. Teachers draw attention to the music and its origin or composer, so that pupils listen critically, making informed comment in response. Youngest pupils choose a favourite song for the weekly birthday assembly, to celebrate their special day. In Years 3 to 6, pupils select music for the dining hall on their birthday. They discuss the music sensibly and talk eagerly about possible choices.

133 In Years 1 and 2 singing is tuneful and pupils join in enthusiastically with a piano accompaniment. When talking with Year 2 pupils they burst spontaneously into song to illustrate a point they were making, keeping pitch, pulse and rhythms well. They talked confidently about music and played percussion instruments competently but could not name as many. In lessons pupils co-operate to compose and practise accompaniments to songs such as 'It's going to be hot, hot, hot.' linked to class topics. Their attainment reflects the satisfactory and sometimes good teaching seen and attitudes are very good.

134 Teaching in Years 3 to 6 varies from unsatisfactory to good. In the best lessons, pupils are active music makers and listeners. They know exactly what is expected and respond to the challenge because resources are organised well, the teachers are confident and knowledgeable and have planned activities to support the next stage of learning. In a Year 4 lesson, for example, pupils used everyday objects as instruments to compose layers of sound, which their teacher scored in pictures on the whiteboard. As the teacher conducted, pupils played parts as indicated,

before working in groups to create their own graphic scores and performing for the class. By Year 4, pupils learn about the effect of changing dynamics, and how to do this by using different playing techniques. They can mark dynamics on a score. Progress with composition skills is not maintained, because planning is not checked and teaching is not yet monitored to ensure quality. Less confident teaching and poor subject knowledge combined with poor organisation, slowed the pace and reduced the levels of challenge and opportunity in one lesson, resulting in poorer attitudes, behaviour and progress.

135 The range and number of instruments has improved since the last inspection but time has been squeezed for subject co-ordination, by other management priorities.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

136 Standards are typical for pupils' ages by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Strengths are in pupils' development of skills with small apparatus and they especially love to develop their own games. They draw well on the skills learnt through a good range of external coaching in games such as tag rugby, football, cricket, athletics and golf. A workshop on skipping also developed not only pupils' skills but also their interest in keeping fit. Pupils do well in swimming because of the extra swimming clubs organised for older pupils.

137 The quality of teaching is satisfactory and pupils make reasonable progress. Teaching is calm and purposeful and pupils are well managed. Much attention is given to warming up muscles prior to exercise as was the case in Year 3 when the teacher's lively interest in the subject made sure that pupils were mentally and physically prepared for the lesson. 'Mirror my actions' said the teacher to ensure all developed the routine and built upon previous learning. Learning objectives are shared with pupils so that they know what is expected of them. This helped pupils in Year 6 to quickly set out apparatus upon which to practise a gymnastic sequence. They made sound progress in planning and performing the sequence and higher attainers were quite inventive in their approach. However, insufficient time was given to really polishing the sequence and this led to too little challenge for the higher attainers. Relationships were very good and pupils collaborated well. Overall, too little time is given for pupils to assess and comment on their own work and that of others.

138 Extra curricular provision including matches and inter-schools competitions is a strength. This adds much to the pupils' sense of pride in themselves and in their school. When pupils participate in matches with other schools they are very clear about the importance of taking part and representing their school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

139 Standards for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are average. The quality of teaching and pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. It is good in lessons where there is a lot of discussion but pupils' written work does not match the good standards of their oral work. Standards have fallen since the last inspection because the subject has not been the focus of school development for some time.

140 In lessons, much of the time is spent in class and group discussion and teachers have high expectations of the way pupils listen to one another and respect each other's views and opinions. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well, so that lessons are calm and reflective occasions in which pupils consider aspects of different beliefs, customs and worship. As a result, pupils have a growing awareness of some of the common features of religions. In a Year 2 lesson on special places, pupils could list some of the places of worship used by members of different world faiths such as a temple, a synagogue and a church. They understood that it was important to behave in a

respectful manner if you went into another person's 'special place' and that might mean 'no running around' or 'being sensible with good manners'. By Year 6, pupils recognise how important it is to have a good knowledge of what others believe so that you can understand and respect one another – 'it could help stop bullying and racism' commented a higher attainer.

141 Teachers are good at posing questions to help pupils think hard about what they are learning and work out answers for themselves. They give them plenty of opportunities to share their thoughts with one another, often in pairs or small groups, and encourage them to value and respect each other's views. In an excellent lesson in Year 1, leading into learning about the importance of sacred objects in religious worship, the pupils had brought in special objects of their own. The teacher asked them to think about why the objects were special to them, and they spent some time in quiet reflection before sharing their thoughts with a partner. Pupils' responses were impressive as they chatted to each other, listening with great interest and taking turns to speak. They thought about how they might feel if their object became damaged and had some good ideas about how to keep these special objects safe whilst they were on display in the classroom. By Year 6 pupils have had many opportunities through discussion and sometimes written work to appreciate what can be learnt from a study of religion, and they really enjoy this aspect of their work. 'The words just flow from your hand onto the paper', one pupil explained, 'It's nice to have your thoughts respected'.

142 Teachers are good at ensuring that all pupils, whatever their culture or background, are fully included in lessons. They encourage full participation and make a point of valuing all contributions to the discussion. Pupils from different faiths are encouraged to share their personal experiences and these are valued. In some lessons, however, teachers make assumptions about what pupils believe and there is still a somewhat limited appreciation of faiths other than the Christian faith. Pupils with special educational needs are able to take full part and classroom assistants are often on hand to prompt and give help where it is needed. Pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language join in fully with class discussion.

143 Teachers make good use of artefacts and other resources to bring the lesson alive. This was a strength of a good lesson in Year 4 in which pupils were reflecting on the meaning of 'pilgrimage'. The teacher made good use of a display of religious artefacts to remind pupils of the different faiths they had studied and to help them recall work on pilgrimages to the Ganges and to Mecca. A feature of the good teaching was the way in which the teacher handled the objects reverently, instilling respect and establishing a quiet and reverent atmosphere in the classroom.

144 A weakness in teaching lies in the fact that teachers do not take enough time for pupils to record independently what they have learnt. Much recorded work is in the form of unimaginative and undemanding work sheets that do little to extend or reinforce the aim of the lesson. In Year 4, for example, there was only one piece of recorded work seen for one pupil for the year. This means that teachers do not have the evidence they need to assess how well pupils are doing in the subject. Also, because pupils rarely record what they have learnt, they do not remember their work very well. Pupils in Year 6 struggled to recall what they could remember about the three different religions studied. They were familiar with many key words relating to the different religions but had not built up a crystal clear picture of any of the major faiths studied. A notable exception to this is where work is supported by visits to places of religious interest. Year 2 pupils recalled with enthusiasm their visit to the local church in Year 1, and Year 6 pupils could all contribute to a class discussion on life as a monk in the time of St Aidan, because they had spent a day in role as monks on a visit to an abbey in Year 4.

145 The new co-ordinator has made a very good start to organising the subject but the lack of recorded work means that there is little opportunity for pupils' work to be checked in a systematic way. Teachers' planning is variable. It is broadly based on a combination of the old locally approved syllabus and national guidance for teaching. A new document has just arrived in school that should provide much better support for teachers and ensure the subject is taught in a more systematic way. Teachers and pupils enjoy the subject. It makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development and to the positive ethos of the school and there is good potential for further improvement.