

INSPECTION REPORT

WAKEFIELD METHODIST JUNIOR AND INFANT (CONTROLLED) SCHOOL

Wakefield

LEA area: Wakefield

Unique reference number: 108252

Headteacher: Mr Ron Egan

Reporting inspector: Mr Jean-Pierre Kirkland
4483

Dates of inspection: 9 – 12 December 2002

Inspection number: 246781

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Field Lane Thornes Wakefield
Postcode:	WF2 7RU
Telephone number:	01924 303630
Fax number:	01924 303631
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs S St Clair Morgan
Date of previous inspection:	February 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
4483	Jean-Pierre Kirkland	Registered inspector	Science Music Religious education Foundation Stage	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements How well pupils are taught What the school needs to do in order to improve
9511	Ann Longfield	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents
5902	Michael Harrison	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Geography Information and communication technology (ICT)	How well the school is led and managed
2200	James Stirrup	Team inspector	English Art and design History Physical education	How good the curricular and other opportunities are

The inspection contractor was:

PkR Educational Consultants Ltd
6 Sherman Road
Bromley
Kent
BR1 3JH

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Wakefield Methodist Primary School is voluntary controlled and has 178 pupils on roll, which makes it smaller than average. The school has a pre-five unit which houses children who enter after their fourth birthdays and who are taught along with reception age children. The school lies about a mile to the south-west of Wakefield town centre in an area of below average socio-economic circumstances. The school draws its pupils from a much wider area than the one in which it is located. Most of the pupils are of white British heritage. Attainment on entry is broadly average but with a wide spread of ability. Seven per cent of pupils have English as an additional language; a very small proportion at an early stage of linguistic development. About eight per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs, a figure well below the national average. However, the proportion of those with statements of specific need is double the national average. These needs include medical problems, behavioural and learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is around 14 per cent, again below the national figure. Within the last two years, the school has been granted the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Investors in People, Raising Attainment and a School Achievement Award.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school with some outstanding features. Pupils make very good progress due to very good teaching and learning. The good curriculum, pupils' very positive attitudes to learning and excellent leadership and management ensure that standards are well above average overall by Year 6. As a result, the school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Enables all pupils to make very good progress and reach at least above average standards in most subjects by Year 6, with very high standards in mathematics;
- Values all pupils as individuals, and through very good teaching, enables very effective learning to take place;
- Promotes very positive attitudes to learning among all its pupils, whose behaviour is excellent;
- Uses its very good knowledge of pupils' potential to ensure that the work set matches needs well;
- Provides outstandingly good levels of leadership and management, which focus on improving standards of education throughout the school.

What could be improved

- Aspects of English, especially the opportunities to write for a wider range of purposes and in different styles;
- A closer working partnership with parents in order to improve attendance and punctuality of pupils.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been very good improvement since the school was previously inspected in February 2000 when it was judged to be an underachieving school. This is no longer the case. All the key issues have been addressed successfully. Standards and provision have improved in information and communication technology (ICT), the way staff assess pupils has improved and higher attaining pupils now do much better overall. Results in national tests have risen and have recently been at least above average and often well above average, showing good and often very good achievement by pupils. The curriculum, including that for the children in reception, the quality of teaching and learning and the provision for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language have all shown significant improvement. Most importantly, the leadership and management of the school are outstanding, and have had a significant impact on raising standards and achievement. The school, with very good backing from its governing body, is in a favourable position to make even further improvements.

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	A	A	B	B
Mathematics	A*	A*	A*	A*
Science	A	A	A	A

Key

very high A*

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Results in national tests for pupils in Year 6 over the past three years have been sustained at a well above average level in science. Results in English are above average by Year 6, but not quite as high as in previous years. Results in mathematics for Year 6 pupils have showed them to be in the top five per cent of schools nationally for three years running. The school has also had well above average results and teacher assessments for Year 2 pupils in 2000 and 2001, with the school being in the top five per cent nationally in mathematics and science in 2001. The well above average national test results overall in 2002 still show very good achievement, given the average starting points when children enter the school. Achievement for Year 6 pupils has been consistently very good over the past three years, with excellent achievement in mathematics. Inspectors found standards to be very similar to those recorded in last year's national tests. In other subjects standards by Year 6 are at least average and above average in design and technology, ICT and music. Standards are well above average in geography with very good overall achievement.

Children's work shows very good achievement in reception in all areas of learning. The majority of children are likely to be ready to move on to the National Curriculum towards the end of the reception class. Very good progress continues in Years 1 and 2. By Year 2, pupils have made even better progress and are above average in reading, writing and other forms of communication. Pupils' work also shows very good achievement overall in English, mathematics and science throughout Years 3 to 6. The targets set by the school each year are realistic and the school achieves these. The trend is upward, with even more challenging targets set for the current Year 6 pupils.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good and having a very positive effect of enhancing learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent at work and at play. There has been one short-term exclusion recently.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. There are very strong and productive relationships between the pupils themselves as well as between pupils and the staff.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory and below the national average for primary schools. Too many pupils keep coming late for school. This does not set a good tone for the rest of the day.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is a great strength of the school being very good overall and significantly better than at the time of the previous inspection. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. The main strengths of teaching and learning are:

- Teachers and support assistants know the pupils very well and get the best out of them in terms of learning.
- Staff prepare very good quality lessons, planning clear precise stages in the learning.
- Excellent teaching and learning of basic skills in numeracy in Years 2 and 6.
- Basic literacy skills are very well taught in Year 2 and are good in Year 6.
- Staff are imaginative when teaching so pupils learn through a wide range of different experiences.
- Improved learning due to better teaching of skills in ICT.

The quality of teaching and learning in the reception class is very good due to very clear planning, excellent teaching methods and excellent organisation. Pupils who have learning difficulties or medical problems are very well taught throughout the school and make very good progress. Pupils who speak English as their additional language are also taught very well and their progress is as good as other pupils in the classes. Higher attaining pupils succeed well due to the high challenges provided in most lessons. This is especially true in mathematics and science.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum meets legal requirements and there are some good links developed between subjects. There is a good range of other activities to enhance the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The school fully meets the new legal requirements and pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards their targets due to very good teaching and support.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. There are no barriers to learning in the school and progress made by pupils is very good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school has a very good atmosphere for learning, which is strongly enhanced through assemblies, lessons, additional provision through residential visits and clubs.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. All aspects of child protection and health and safety are secure. The use of assessment to help pupils learn more effectively is very good.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Satisfactory. A small number of parents help regularly in the classroom and their presence is valued by the staff and pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher is taking this school forward with excellent support and teamwork from governors and staff. As a result, this is a school where success and achievement are valued and celebrated for every child.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Excellent. Governors have an outstandingly clear picture of the school. They use this information to support the work of the management and staff very effectively, thereby helping to promote very good learning.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. The school has very effective systems for assuring high quality education and how to sustain this provision. This includes obtaining the very best value for money with the interests of the pupils at the centre of the decisions.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Staffing is very good and support assistants play a vital role in assuring the quality of learning. The accommodation is very good and much improved due to recent extensions. Pupils benefit from good resources, which the staff use effectively to improve learning throughout the school.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents were very pleased about all aspects of the work of the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents raised no issues of serious concern during the meeting with inspectors or on the questionnaires

Inspectors found no reasons at all to disagree with parental views of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards are well above average by Year 6. This represents very good overall achievement by pupils. This is a significant improvement since the school was previously inspected.
 - The main strengths are:
2. **National test results for Year 6 pupils in 2002 were well above average overall.** Results in mathematics for Year 6 pupils have showed them to be in the top five per cent of schools nationally for three years running. Results in science for pupils in Year 6 have been sustained at a well above average level. Results in English are above average by Year 6, but not quite as high as in previous years. The proportion of pupils who do better than expected and reach the higher levels of attainment is broadly double the national picture in mathematics and science. In English, the proportion is broadly similar to the national average. Overall, pupils start the National Curriculum in Year 1 with broadly average levels of attainment. Progress is very good and standards recorded in the national tests are above average by the end of Year 2, with an above average proportion of pupils doing better than expected. Again, in mathematics, the school is in the top five per cent of schools nationally for its results in the national tests in 2002. The very good progress continues in Years 3 to 6 and is reflected by the high standards recorded in the Year 6 national tests earlier in 2002. Achievement for Year 6 pupils has been consistently very good over the past three years, with excellent achievement in mathematics.
3. **Inspectors found standards to be very similar to those recorded in last year's national tests.** The school is sustaining its very good results in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils' work shows above average standards of writing, including punctuation and spelling in Year 2. Pupils read with fluency and expression. Pupils' standards are very high in mathematics. They are very agile mentally. Work shows many are confident with numbers up to 1000, and pupils have a very competent grasp of measurement, different shapes and simple graphs. Pupils love problem-solving challenges and explain their strategies for arriving at their answers clearly. In science, pupils have a very good grasp of how to undertake an experiment, how to record it appropriately, and the necessary conditions for a fair test. Work is well above average for age. Standards in all subjects reach at least national averages by Year 2, and exceed them in design and technology, geography and music. By Year 6, standards in other subjects are at least average, and above average in design and technology, ICT and music and well above average in geography with very good overall achievement.
4. **In the reception class, children's work shows very good achievement in all areas of learning.** Children enter the reception class after they have just turned four. Initial assessments made by teachers after they have entered show attainment to be broadly average. Some have above average physical and personal and social skills. Others are slightly better at literacy or numeracy. On the other hand, a significant number are below what is expected from children of this age, especially in literacy skills. All children attempt a simple drawing when they arrive in the class and this is then compared with a similar drawing at a later stage towards the end of their stay in reception. The progress made is very good. In personal and social development, pupils become more confident and begin to communicate more effectively over time. They

enjoy playing with numbers and objects, which they soon begin to recognise and to sort into categories. In all other areas, children do well and the majority is likely to be ready to move on to the National Curriculum towards the end of the reception class.

5. **All pupils achieve very well.** Each pupil is valued in his or her own right. Staff know and understand the learning and other needs of all pupils. Those with learning difficulties or medical problems are regularly supported and given work that enables them to make the necessary progress. Any pupils with behavioural problems are equally well provided for, so that they have appropriate challenges and interesting work to do. Individual education plans are used very effectively to measure progress and set realistic targets in small steps. Higher attaining pupils also have similar good quality plans. This enables staff to be aware of the kind of work needed to challenge their thinking effectively. The results are very good, with half of the total pupils in the school reaching higher levels by Year 6. There are a few pupils with English as an additional language. A very small proportion needs additional support and help, which is forthcoming and invaluable. Early identification of problems and specific linguistic intervention ensure that these pupils make the same progress as the rest of their friends.
6. **The challenging targets set by the school each year are realistic and the school achieves these.** The trend is upward, with even more challenging targets set for the current Year 6 pupils. Staff regularly keep track of pupils' progress so that these targets are both realistic and help pupils to move to more advanced work as soon as they are ready. Inspectors found that the targets set for this current Year 6 were likely to be achieved, given the current progress and high standard of learning.
 - There is one area for improvement:
7. **Standards in writing are not as high as in other areas of English.** The school is fully aware of this issue, following a careful analysis of test results. Inspectors found that staff were sticking fairly rigidly to a commercial scheme when planning lessons. This does not allow pupils to develop their creativity sufficiently. Also, there are insufficient opportunities in English lessons and across the curriculum for pupils to develop their writing in a creative and extended fashion. Standards, however, remain above average, but below the higher standards in speaking, listening and reading.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils' very good attitudes to learning, their excellent behaviour and the very good relationships within the school are strengths of the school. These have improved since the last inspection.
 - The main strengths are:
9. **Pupils' very good attitudes and enthusiasm to school life contribute very effectively to their learning.** Nearly every parent who returned a questionnaire agreed that their child likes school and inspection evidence supports this. They show an interest in lessons, co-operate well in group work and are appreciative of the work of others as in a Year 2 mathematics lesson and in Year 4 English. Pupils enjoy their work and this leads to much greater progress being made.

10. **Pupils' behaviour is exemplary.** They move around the school in an orderly manner, and are polite and courteous. They show appropriate respect for adults and a good level of self-discipline when in school and in the playground. This excellent behaviour in classrooms means that no time is lost and the quality of learning continues at a high level without disruption, especially in subjects such as physical education, geography and music.
11. **There are very good relationships throughout the school.** The pupils relate very well to each other and with other adults in the school. The staff provide and set excellent examples of professionalism to pupils. Pupils and staff work extremely well together and learning is greatly enhanced. There are very strong relationships between pupils and learning support staff. This led to very good learning in Year 5 mathematics when a small group was withdrawn for additional help.
12. **Personal development is very good.** Ninety-seven per cent of parents agreed that the school helps their children become mature and responsible. Pupils develop in self-confidence and are willing to carry out duties in class and around the school. The older pupils look after the reception children at lunch time. All of this contributes greatly to the way in which pupils learn, not just academically, but about wider issues.
 - There is one area of concern:
13. **Pupils' attendance is unsatisfactory and is below the national average for primary schools.** The rate of unauthorised absence is well above the national average. Overall attendance has declined since the last inspection, and despite the efforts of the school to promote good attendance and punctuality, some parents have not supported this. As a result, the learning of those pupils often late or often absent is not as good as it could be. Registration is completed quickly and efficiently before morning and afternoon sessions.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. Teaching is very good throughout the school. Over a third of teaching observed was judged to be very good or excellent. A further two-fifths of lessons were judged to be good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching seen during the inspection. Teaching has become a great strength of the school and is significantly better than at the time of the previous inspection.
 - The main strengths of teaching and learning are:
15. **The quality of teaching and learning in the reception class is very good.** This is due to very clear planning, excellent teaching methods and excellent organisation. Staff work very successfully as a team and provide children with a very secure and good start to their education. The way in which staff inter-weave literacy, numeracy and other subjects is a great strength. As a result, children are constantly having their learning reinforced as they practice adding, recognising words and repeating sentences.
16. **Teachers and support assistants know the pupils very well and get the best out of them in terms of learning.** Very good quality learning is a strong feature in many of the lessons seen throughout the school. The staff have precise and accurate knowledge of the pupils. They keep very good records of their progress and ensure that the work set matches pupils' needs very effectively. In mathematics and English lessons in Year 2, for example, groups are divided up effectively on the basis of prior attainment and very good challenging work at different levels is given to each group.

When questioning pupils, as in a Year 5 music lesson, the teacher directs specific questions at individuals which challenge pupils' thinking without causing them to feel insecure or having failed. This raises self-esteem and motivation and greatly adds to the quality and rate of learning. In a Year 2 art and design lesson, the way the teacher had organised the learning enabled all pupils to succeed as they developed their understanding of shape and colour using a range of different tools and substances.

17. **Staff prepare very good quality lessons, planning clear precise stages in the learning.** The range of learning experiences provided by teachers and support staff for pupils is also very good, and sometimes excellent. Most lessons start with a session of question and answer where teachers recap effectively from previous lessons in order to assess whether pupils are secure on what has gone before. A very effective Year 2 science lesson teased out the prior learning from pupils so that the teacher was able to build on these experiences when moving on to new work. In Year 5 physical education focusing on developing gymnastic skills, pupils were given plenty of opportunities to reflect on their movements and to share with their friends the successes they were achieving. As a result, all the class benefited from the experiences of others and the rate of learning improved. Pupils who have learning difficulties or medical problems are very well taught throughout the school and make very good progress. Support assistants and very good planning are fundamental ingredients of the success of these pupils. The individual education plans are of good quality and enable staff to set precise targets, especially in literacy, to help move the learning of these pupils forward. Often, either the support assistant or the teacher will sit with pupils in these categories, along with others who are lower attainers, in order to help them and ensure they know exactly what is required of them. When these pupils are taught separately, they also do very well. By making the lesson very practical, relevant and drawing on pupils' own experiences, a Year 5 group in mathematics taken separately by the support assistant made rapid progress in addition and subtraction.
18. **Excellent teaching and learning of basic skills in numeracy in Years 2 and 6. Basic literacy skills are very well taught in Year 2 and are good in Year 6 and throughout the rest of the school.** The best teaching in English and mathematics is in Years 2 and 6, but there is plenty of good and very good practice throughout the school. Teachers have modified and improved the basic national learning strategies in order to provide pupils with challenging and interesting work. Rapid mental sessions begin each numeracy session. Pupils are expected to be able to explain the strategies they have used. There is good emphasis placed on practical problem-solving exercises throughout the school, but especially in Years 2 and 6. In literacy, the teaching and development of speaking and listening, supported well in other subjects, is a highlight of many lessons. In Year 4, very skilful questioning by the teacher enabled pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding of the structure and content of poetry very effectively. These high standards are not so apparent in writing, due in some part to teachers following a planning pattern which does not allow for enough development of creativity. Pupils who speak English as their additional language are also taught very well and their progress is as good as other pupils in the classes in both subjects. Their individual needs are known to staff who support them very well, especially when any linguistic problems arise.
19. **Staff are imaginative when teaching so pupils learn through a wide range of different experiences.** Throughout the school, resources are planned to be used effectively so that learning is improved. Year 2 pupils stirred bowls of cake mixture as they began to discover the nature and properties of different materials such as sugar and flour. They learnt that the stirring causes friction which generates heat and helps the margarine to melt. They learnt that the sugar did not disappear 'by magic' as one

pupil remarked, but by a scientific process which they all understood by the end of the lesson. In all music lessons, pupils gain rapidly through being able to compose, perform and evaluate what they are doing. In science in other classes, resources are used effectively during investigations. In Year 6, different types of wire of varying length added some complications to challenge thinking as pupils investigated the nature of electrical circuits. In Year 1 mathematics, the teacher helped the rate of learning to improve by using different ice-cream flavours as the basis for graph work, drawing effectively on pupils' interests and enthusiasms. The local environment is used well to enhance learning. For example, in a Year 3 geography lesson, environmental and safety concerns were illustrated well and learning enhanced very effectively when staff and pupils looked at parking problems near the school and the dangers incurred by cars being left on the zig-zag lines by the school gate.

20. **Learning is being improved due to better teaching of skills in ICT.** Teachers are secure in their understanding of the requirements for teaching ICT and prepare good quality lessons for smaller groups of pupils in the computer suite. Teaching has improved significantly in this subject since the previous inspection. Teachers set up very good opportunities for pupils to extend their learning. In Year 6, for example, pupils are learning rapidly how to use a commercial program to help them make presentations to the whole class. They learn the skills of importing text, laying out their work attractively, as well as how to alter and amend the type of font used and its style. In Year 3, pupils begin to acquire the skills of saving and retrieving their work as well as importing pictures into the text. In this lesson, pupils with learning difficulties made particularly good progress due to the quality of the additional support they received from the classroom assistant.
21. **Higher attaining pupils succeed well due to the high challenges provided in most lessons. This is especially true in mathematics and science.** Pupils are made to think in many lessons in these subjects and as a result, by Year 6, the proportion of pupils working at well above expected levels is almost double the national average, confirmed by the national test results last year. The quality of learning by these higher attaining pupils, which was causing some concern at the previous inspection, is now very good.
 - There is one area of concern.
22. In English, due to the lack of opportunities for writing for a range of different purposes and in different styles, pupils do not make the sufficiently broad gains in learning of which they are capable. This is true of the lessons in English as well as in other subjects where writing might be developed further and currently is not.

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

23. The school provides pupils with a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, similar to the findings of the previous inspection. The school has improved its provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development since the last inspection. There is a very positive and supportive ethos evident in all aspects of the school's life and work, and this underpins the good provision for this aspect of pupils' development.

- The main strengths are:
24. **The school fulfils all statutory requirements and responds to all areas of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education.** In the main most of the curriculum is delivered through the use and application of commercial schemes for planning. These provide pupils with relevant and good opportunities to extend and make progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding. The curriculum provided for pupils is well planned, organised and managed. Good opportunities are given for subject leaders to check on the delivery of the curriculum in English, mathematics and science. There are other regular opportunities in the rest of the curriculum. Pupils in the reception class receive an imaginative and challenging curriculum, which enables them to gain significantly in the learning of basic skills in personal and social development, literacy and numeracy.
 25. **All pupils have equality of access to the curriculum.** The school has responded effectively to the new legal requirements for pupils with special educational needs (SEN). The school provides all these pupils with an adapted curriculum which responds to their needs and enables them to make good progress towards their identified targets for improvement in their individual education plans. Gifted and talented pupils also have individual education plans. The school governors have suitable policies for sex education and drugs awareness with these two important areas of the curriculum being delivered in Year 6 by class teachers, the community policeman and the school nurse. This is supplemented by lessons in personal, social, health and citizenship education, which help to advance pupils' learning in these wider areas of knowledge.
 26. **The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities.** These include sporting and musical activities, along with a computer club and a popular environmental group. These, combined with a satisfactory range of visitors, educational visits, including residential visits, provide pupils with an extended and enriched curriculum. The school started a pre- and after-school care facility for pupils, which now runs independently but which makes a good contribution to enhancing the curriculum. The school has good links with local private nurseries and its feeder high schools. All pupils in Year 6 are given the opportunity to visit the high school of their choice, with the high school providing a number of taster days for individual subjects.
 27. **The school's assemblies are the key focus for spiritual development, which is very good.** Pupils are taught to respect and value each other. They listen carefully to the talk whether from the Bible, about those less fortunate or a dialogue between the local minister and his puppet about giving and receiving. The latter was the main emphasis in lessons throughout the school as the pupils prepared for Christmas, where the pupils were encouraged to think about how they felt when either giving or receiving a present.
 28. **The provision for moral development and social development is very good.** The school sets clear guidelines about what is right and wrong. The excellent behaviour of the pupils is evidence that they recognise the difference. The school rules, devised by the pupils, are very prominently displayed in the hall and each class sets its own rules. The weekly celebration assemblies reinforce the school's central aims. The professional attitude of the staff provides the pupils with excellent role models. Relationships throughout the school are very good. The pupils are kind and caring towards each other. Pupils take on the role of monitors in class and around the school very seriously. The Year 6 pupils' responsibility includes looking after the younger children at lunchtime and the welfare of the school's collection of animals. Pupils are

encouraged to think of others and to understand their role and place as citizens in society. For instance, they hold fund raising events for Children in Need and have recently collected Christmas shoe boxes for Romania. There are separate opportunities for pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 to promote teamwork and co-operation and to experience adventure and challenge during their residential visits.

29. **The provision for the pupils' cultural development is good.** The parents expressed their pleasure that their children were being given the opportunity to learn about other faiths and cultures. The school uses visits to local churches and to York Minster to enhance their cultural understanding effectively. There is also a wide range of other visits to support the curriculum including a local farm for the younger pupils, and the Whaling Museum and Photography Museum for the older pupils. These visits make a good contribution to learning beyond the classrooms.
- The area for development is:
30. **The school places over-reliance on a commercial planning scheme in English.** As a result, the curriculum offered, although good, does not always extend the learning of the higher attainers sufficiently or effectively. It also reduces the opportunities for developing writing in a creative and imaginative manner.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31. **The school provides very good care for the pupils.** There are very good procedures in place for child protection and for promoting the pupils' well-being, health and safety. This has improved since the last inspection.
- The main strengths are:
32. **The standard of care provided by the teaching and support staff is very good.** The school has a suitable policy for child protection and all the staff are aware of their responsibilities. There are good health and safety procedures in place and regular risk assessment inspections undertaken. Fire drills are carried out regularly. Teachers are conscientious in their supervision of pupils in class. There are satisfactory arrangements for administering first aid and dealing with accidents or sickness. There is an ethos of care, order and structure, which is emphasised in the school's expectations and the response in daily assemblies. The parents value this.
33. **Procedures to monitor attendance are good.** The registers are monitored regularly by the educational welfare officer and parents are contacted when a pupil's absence or punctuality shows cause for concern. The impact of the good procedures for attendance have not yet been fully felt in the school as some parents do not always respond positively to the school's initiatives.
34. **The school expects and receives excellent standards of behaviour.** The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. The pupils move around the buildings in an orderly manner, they are polite and courteous. Pupils, staff and parents know the rules and sanctions and parents are informed of all instances of their child's inappropriate behaviour. Pupils know that any incidents of bullying, racism or oppressive behaviour will be dealt with promptly. This expectation ensures that pupils' energies are concentrated on improving their learning and that time is not wasted dealing with misdemeanours.

35. **Pupils' personal development is well developed through the staff's knowledge of their pupils.** This encourages the very good relationships throughout a school where everyone is cared for and valued. This in its turn encourages the pupils' good learning.
36. **Assessment is very good and has helped to improve the pace of learning significantly since the school was previously inspected.** The school has devised a series of good overall ways of assessing its pupils throughout the school. In reception, these procedures are excellent. Early problems are very quickly identified and sorted out, with additional support in certain areas provided on a more regular basis by the teacher or learning assistant. The staff keep and up-date very intricate and accurate records of what children know, can do, understand and their potential for improvement. The staff set very challenging tasks based on this information, resulting in the very good learning, which is a strong feature of the reception class. In mathematics, procedures for assessing pupils are also outstanding.
37. **There is a full and thorough analysis of national and other tests to ensure that pupils are making the progress they should.** If not, then teaching is modified and work suitably adapted. As a result, attainment in mathematics is very high and progress is very good. There are very good procedures in science, which also impact favourably on the good progress throughout the school. In English, procedures are good, especially in analysing the national tests. Other areas are less formally looked at, and currently the main area of concern in writing is not being tackled effectively. In other subjects, assessment levels are good with teachers recording any concerns, and equally, any outstanding achievements. The corporate result is that learning and teaching have improved for all pupils in many areas of the curriculum. There is good assessment of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Any problems associated with pupils with statements of specific need, medical or academic, are carried out with diligence and care in the best interests of the pupil. Higher attaining pupils are also given regular assessments to check that their progress is as good as it should be. Realistic targets are set for them to achieve, which they do.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38. The excellent views of parents about the school are shown in the summary of the parents' questionnaires, and this reflects the position at the last inspection. Parental involvement in other aspects of the work of the school is satisfactory.
- The main strength is:
39. **The parents' views of the school as shown in their response to the questionnaires.** There was an excellent response with approximately half of the forms returned. These were analysed to show that ninety-nine per cent of the parents stated that they would feel comfortable to approach the school and ninety-eight per cent confirmed that their children liked school. These very high percentages continued with parents stating that they thought that the school was well led and managed and that the school expected their children to become mature and to work hard. The inspection evidence supports the parents' extremely positive views.

- There is one area to improve:
40. **The school has the potential to work more closely with parents.** There is an active parent-teachers' association, who through their fund raising events, have provided outside play equipment for the reception class children recently. A small number of parents regularly help in the classroom, escort pupils to swimming, on educational trips and on the residential visits. These latter features, albeit on a small scale, help raise the levels of learning in classrooms. For instance, in reception and Year 2 science, the class was divided into smaller groups with parents attached to one of them. This enabled the teacher and learning support assistant to give more specialised help to those pupils who needed greater challenge, or who needed additional help in difficult areas. However, there are still some parents who do not co-operate fully with the school over trying to improve attendance and punctuality. Learning by their children is sometimes adversely affected as they miss pieces of work, or enter half-way through mental arithmetic sessions in the morning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

41. Overall there is excellent leadership by the headteacher and other key staff. This has a significant impact on learning and consequently on the standards attained.
- The main strengths are:
42. **The headteacher and governors have a very clear educational direction for the work of the school and communicate this well to the school community.** The quality of such leadership led to recent re-affirmation of the school's Investors in People Award. The quality and effectiveness of leadership are significant improvements since the previous inspection.
43. **The school improvement plan is a highly effective document.** Its main aims are the improvement of teaching and learning in order to achieve and maintain high standards. Action plans for each subject which target areas for improvement are clearly prioritised and support the school's aims and values. A thorough consultation process involving the governing body and all staff ensures commitment to the processes and helps achieve the agreed outcomes. There are effective means for the development and observation of teaching and learning throughout the school, all focused on raising standards. Resources are used very effectively to promote better learning. The school is very good at looking at ways of obtaining best possible value for money.
44. **A very competent governing body fulfil their responsibilities to an excellent degree.** They hold the school to account and have high expectations of it, and whilst challenging everyone to do their best, provide the support needed to ensure this occurs. The chair of governors is new to the role and is very well supported by the outgoing chair who remains an active governor. She is very conversant with curriculum developments and other school initiatives through visits and regular curriculum subcommittee meetings. The designated governor for literacy visits the school frequently and meets with the literacy co-ordinator with whom she underwent training, sometimes for paired lesson observations. The designated numeracy governor is likewise heavily involved. The governors fulfil their statutory duties, and in their role as critical friends, are very well informed and have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and areas for improvement. They have admirable strategic plans for development and improvement, such as their commitment to new building work, aimed

at providing the community with an Autistic Resource Base and simultaneously providing the school with improved teaching and administrative accommodation.

45. **Excellent strategies for evaluating the performance of staff are firmly established.** There is an annual cycle of observing teachers and giving feedback to them. This is enhanced by other individual meetings between the headteacher and members of staff at strategic points during the year to relate teaching performance to learning outcomes as revealed by tests and evaluations. Thus there exists a unified approach to the school's priorities involving the quality of teaching, objective setting, school development planning, staff in-service training and governors' involvement. The interplay of these aspects is very powerful and has been central to the achievement and maintenance of the very high targets the school has set itself.
46. **There are strong systems to provide high quality feedback to all staff from the headteacher and other senior staff who observe teaching, planning and pupils' work.** These opportunities are focused on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning. There are very good induction processes for new staff. Literacy and numeracy subject leaders are regularly released to observe other staff and support them with advice and guidance. The contribution of subject leaders to the improvement of teaching and learning across the curriculum is very good. Despite the fact that two newly qualified staff and a temporary teacher have no subject responsibility and hence there is an increased burden on the remaining staff, they have each developed systematic approaches to evaluating teaching and pupils' work. Also, they are active in modifying their planning. In addition to following the new regulations for supporting pupils with special educational needs, the headteacher has extended his role by developing methods for the identification and support for gifted and talented pupils who have individual education plans.
47. **There is very effective deployment of staff, and use of accommodation and learning resources.** Very good use is made of skilled teaching assistants to support pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. This is part of the reason that these pupils make good progress. The office is efficiently run and new technology is used very effectively for school administration. The school uses ICT well to track pupils' progress. The ICT teaching assistant is used effectively to support the curriculum and allows maximum use to be made of the small ICT suite which can only accommodate a few pupils at a time. The teaching accommodation is now spacious through the addition of conservatories to extend most classrooms. These, together with corridor areas, are used effectively, the latter for withdrawal and other small group activities. The site manager and his staff ensure that the school is clean and at a temperature appropriate for pupils to be comfortable and to work efficiently.
48. **Finances are effectively managed and the school provides very good value for money.** Although the school has a large budget surplus, all of this money is earmarked for future development for the benefit of pupils. New extensions are planned, with some refurbishments and alterations to the building. Additional resources are also part of this spending. Very careful planning has already taken place between the governors and staff in order to identify priorities and match funds equally coming from other sources. Given the very good progress pupils make and the well above average standards attained by Year 6, the school provides very good value for money, a significant improvement since the previous inspection.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to raise standards further, the school should now:

1. Improve the quality of provision in English by:
 - Using the commercial planning documents adopted by the school in a more selective and flexible manner in order to provide pupils with more opportunities to write in a wider range of styles and for different purposes;
 - Increasing opportunities for pupils to develop and extend their literacy skills, particularly in writing, across other subjects of the curriculum; (paragraphs 7, 22, 30, 66, 67, 96, 117)
2. Seek ways of working more closely with parents to involve them more in the education process and to improve the rates of attendance and punctuality. (paragraphs 13 and 40)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	52
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	13	20	14	0	0	0
Percentage	10	25	38	27	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	178
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	27

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	14

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.9
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
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	12	13	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	12
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	23	23	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (100)	92 (100)	92 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	12
	Girls	10	10	11
	Total	22	22	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (100)	88 (100)	92 (100)
	National	85 (85)	85 (85)	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	12	9	21

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	12	12
	Girls	7	8	8
	Total	18	20	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (100)	95 (100)	95 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	11	10
	Girls	6	7	7
	Total	14	18	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	66 (90)	86 (100)	81 (100)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	162	1	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	11	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.5:1
Average class size	25.4

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	189

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	372,574
Total expenditure	355,344
Expenditure per pupil	2,141
Balance brought forward from previous year	50,010
Balance carried forward to next year	67,249

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
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	178
Number of questionnaires returned	87

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	28	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	61	34	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	46	1	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	43	10	1	2
The teaching is good.	69	26	1	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	46	9	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	76	23	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	26	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	45	45	9	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	72	25	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	38	2	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	41	5	0	13

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

49. The provision for children in the reception class is very good and a strength of the school. This is an overall improvement since the previous inspection. The school has plans to open a Nursery in the near future. There are two part-time teachers who share the class on a morning and afternoon basis. They are very well supported by a full-time nursery nurse who adds continuity to the learning and makes a valuable contribution to the teaching. Children join the class on a pre-five basis, in the term after their fourth birthdays. This means that children come in to the school at three points during the year. Because of their age, some children have five terms in the class, while others have three terms. Teachers plan for this very effectively, so that all children are given equal opportunities and access to all aspects of learning throughout their stay in the class. Assessments made when children come into the class show them to be broadly average, but with a wide range of ability.
- Strengths in the reception provision include:
50. **Very good teaching and learning of basic skills.** The very good teaching overall enables children to make very good progress. As a result, the majority of the children are likely to reach the expected levels by the time they leave the reception class in all areas of learning. About a quarter of the children are likely to reach these levels at an earlier date. A slightly smaller proportion is unlikely to reach this level.
51. **There is a well thought-out and balanced curriculum.** Staff provide a curriculum that is carefully structured so as to develop children's knowledge and skills systematically. A wide range of learning opportunities extends and enhances children's learning enabling them to achieve very well. The curriculum fully meets the government's requirements for younger children. There are some very good examples of links made between areas of learning, so that children are having a good, broad range of learning opportunities. For example, learning in physical skills is closely linked to language development, and learning in numeracy is closely linked to gaining a better understanding of the world.
52. **Very effective leadership and management are strong features of the reception class.** Two staff share the teaching and learning responsibilities, with one of these teachers having overall leadership of the class. This works very well with a strong and effective focus on teamwork. The nursery nurse plays a full and very active part in planning, teaching and learning and greatly enhances the quality of provision in the class. There is a shared commitment to very high standards. All members of staff in this age range work as a very professional team.
53. **There are good links and relationships with parents and pupils.** Effective links are established with parents before children enter the school each term. Children benefit from the few parents who come in regularly to help and support their learning. All parents benefit from a good quality welcome pack which gives them clear guidance on routines in the class as well as how they can support learning at home.
54. **Staff assess children's work very rigorously.** Assessment information is used very effectively enabling teachers to plan very well to meet the wide range of children's needs and improve individual children's progress. The children are very well managed and they are encouraged to become independent and active learners. The very small

proportion of children with English as an additional language is enabled to make very good progress with continual support and individual guidance. Detailed and accurate records of children's progress towards the various stages of learning are kept up-to-date and amended frequently. This allows staff to check whether progress is good enough, and whether to take any necessary action.

Personal and social skills

55. These skills are developed very well. The atmosphere in the classroom is harmonious and busy. All children are very well behaved and respond very well to the teachers and all other adults, who have high expectations of them. Children grow in confidence in speaking and listening and learn to take turns, for example, when sharing resources such as counters or plastic models. All children play and work happily together in small groups. They ask questions politely and take on responsibilities for tidying away and ensuring an orderly line when entering and leaving the classroom. All children show a very good attitude towards play and learning. They are very well behaved when they come into assembly where they sit quietly and show very good listening skills. Teaching and learning are very good. Staff encourage co-operation and sharing throughout sessions in all other areas of learning so that the skills of personal and social development are being built up continuously and very well. The degree of confidence with which many children approach visitors is testimony to the successes achieved in their development. Most children are likely to reach expected levels by the time they leave the reception class, even the shy ones.

Communication, language and literacy

56. Achievement is very good in this area due to the very good teaching. Staff tell stories in an exciting way and the children listen carefully and join in enthusiastically. In an excellent session linked to physical development, children listened in great rapture as the support assistant told a story using a large book and model dinosaurs. This generated great enthusiasm for the subsequent activity, but at the same time greatly enhanced learning in literacy through listening, speaking and reading. Writing is encouraged in many ways. Children watch as the teacher shows how to form letters such as 'c', 'p', and 'b', singing a rhyme to help them learn the sound. Some very confident children were very happy to come out and try to form these letters on the board and they did this very well. Most older pupils hold a pencil correctly, form their letters accurately and know the names and sounds of the most commonly used words. Younger children's work shows that they are beginning to identify and draw shapes with some good examples of accurate representation, such as buses and houses. Many children have started to read simple texts and a few are already fairly competent. Parents help with this, hearing the children read at home and taking care that the books are returned regularly. Most pupils are likely to reach expected levels when they finish the reception class. However, some are likely to exceed this, in the region of twenty per cent, which is balanced by a similar proportion who are unlikely to reach the expected level.

Mathematical development

57. Learning to count, add up and do simple 'take-away' tasks is very good due to the skilled teaching. The class is very well organised so that there are many opportunities for children to learn their numbers independently. Children listen well to the teacher at the start of lessons and are given clear instructions about subsequent tasks. All children are provided with a good range of practical activities, which have been most carefully planned to enable them to make progress systematically as they develop their

mathematical awareness. Children learn to add up by rolling dice or by counting out plastic animals, which they then sort into groups. Learning is made interesting and fun. Children respond very well and concentrate well. Older children can count in tens up to 1000. Younger children are able to identify numbers up to ten without hesitation. Achievement is very good and most children are likely to reach expected levels when they enter Year 1.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

58. The consistently good teaching ensures there are very strong links with many other areas of the curriculum. Children are provided with a variety of tasks in which to explore the properties of different shapes, and learning is good. Having watched the teacher demonstrate, children began to distinguish between 'slide' and 'roll' as they experiment with shapes such as cubes, spheres and cylinders on a slide. By adding a coloured spot to each object, children soon learnt which objects would slide and which would roll. They learnt the names of the objects effectively, and this level of language is above what is expected of children of this age showing good achievement. Other activities in the classroom, such as estimating, enable children to develop their scientific skills well. Most children are likely to reach expected levels when they leave the reception class.

Physical development

59. The very good planning and management of children ensures they have an abundance of opportunities to develop appropriate manipulative skills as they handle pencils, scissors paint brushes and construction equipment. The good quality outdoor area provides children with a safe and secure environment in which to engage in vigorous and imaginative play. Older children use wheeled toys skilfully as they take turns to negotiate an obstacle course. They show determination and purpose when 'driving' their wheeled toys. All children display growing control over balance and self-control in the hall as they learn to run, jump and skip. All staff take care that the children play safely and children understand the need for rules to ensure safety. Progress is very good. All children follow instructions and listen well, a reflection of the very good work done elsewhere in the classroom. Excellent links are made to other areas of learning in sessions, so that children learn the skills of moving in their own space, controlling body movement and level of voice, new language and to be creative when expressing themselves. All children are likely to reach expected levels when they leave the reception class.

Creative development

60. Teaching and learning in this area are very good. Children are provided with many opportunities to be creative. Work shows them experimenting with mixing different coloured paints. They estimate weight by playing creatively in sand. They are provided with many opportunities to sing enthusiastically in assemblies, in music sessions or when learning literacy or numeracy. Children show increasing confidence as they grow older in experimenting with designs when painting. Hand control improves and drawings become more realistic. Assessment records show significant improvement in their drawing skills since they first entered the school. All children are likely to reach the levels expected of them when they finish in the reception class.

ENGLISH

61. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are above the national average. Pupils achieve well in relation to their prior learning throughout the school. Although there was a slight decline in standards between 2002 and 2001, overall standards in the subject have improved since the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is a second language make the same progress as all other pupils.
- Major strengths are:
62. **Pupils have good speaking and listening skills by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, with a significant number of pupils being articulate and confident speakers.** Pupils throughout the school listen with interest to their teachers and are keen to respond to their challenging questions. Good learning takes place in pupils' oral skills as teachers challenge pupils' initial responses. This results in pupils speaking in more detail and at length. Teachers ensure that some of the quieter and lower attaining members of the class make a full and active contribution to oral activities through direct questions. This enables all pupils to make progress in their oral skills and ensures inclusion for all. Guided reading activities are also used in an effective manner, with regular opportunities for pupils to talk about the books they read.
63. **Pupils have good reading skills, with a number of pupils having very good reading habits.** The teaching of reading is very good with accelerated learning taking place in Years 1 and 2 as pupils develop good phonic and word-building skills. The school's use of a well-selected, structured reading scheme enables good learning to be extended and consolidated with the majority of pupils becoming free readers as they move into Year 4. Those pupils with identified reading problems receive very good additional support from teachers and classroom assistants. Many pupils regularly borrow books from local lending libraries and read widely at home. All pupils take part in daily silent reading activities. Teachers provide good guided reading activities to promote good learning by encouraging pupils to read for understanding. Pupils read a satisfactory range of books in Years 2 to 6, though in the main this is limited to the reading of extracts from novels, rather than the whole class reading imaginative and interesting reading books.
64. **Within the range of writing opportunities offered to pupils, the overall quality of teaching is good.** The overall quality of pupils' written work is good. Pupils' work indicates that they write a good range of poetry and some good instructional and creative essays. Some very good and excellent teaching was observed during the period of the inspection. Teachers have responded well to the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy, with the literacy hour being used in an effective manner. The aims of the lesson are shared with pupils and reviewed at the end of the lesson. This ensures that pupils have a clear understanding of their own learning and the skills to be developed. Where timed targets are given, this ensures that lessons move along at a brisk pace and that good learning takes place. Good working relationships between teachers and pupils, and the valuable contribution by classroom assistants, make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning in all aspects of English. Pupils regularly draft and re-draft their work in order to improve it. This makes a positive approach to learning, with pupils' work improving over time. Where teaching is very good and excellent, teachers display personal enthusiasm for the work in hand, use the scheme of work in a flexible manner, and provide pupils with the opportunity to extend their learning in oral, reading and writing skills within a single lesson. This provides an animated and rigorous working environment where very good and excellent learning

can take place and where pupils work willingly and hard to achieve the aims of the lesson.

65. **Leadership and management in the subject are good, with all teachers having a strong commitment to the raising of standards.** The subject co-ordinator has put into place a good range of documentation to support teachers in their classroom practice. These include regular observation of colleagues' teaching, making a close scrutiny of planning and taking in samples of pupils' work regularly.
- Areas for improvement include:
66. **Writing activities across the curriculum are often somewhat brief, with too few opportunities for pupils to write in an extended manner.** Although teachers provide pupils with a satisfactory number of writing activities, the range is somewhat limited by the demands of the commercial scheme of work adopted by the school and used in all classes. Pupils develop a good knowledge of basic English skills, though these are sometimes explored in isolation in repetitious exercises, rather than pupils learning how to use them within meaningful activities. Although pupils occasionally consider and respond to poems and stories from other cultures and traditions, and literature from the past, including the works of Shakespeare, these are rare and overall insufficient. There are too few opportunities for pupils to consider and learn how language can be used to convey information in different styles and for different purposes, such as reports, informal and formal letter writing, the language of the media, including advertisements and newspapers and pamphlets and brochures.
67. **Occasionally, work set is not matched closely enough to meet pupils' needs.** Although teachers try to ensure that work is matched to the abilities of groups of pupils, occasions were observed where activities lacked challenge, in particular for the more able, and that learning in the subject was not as good as it might be.

MATHEMATICS

68. Standards are in the top five per cent of schools nationally and very high. Achievement is excellent. Provision in mathematics has improved considerably since the previous inspection.
- The main strengths are:
69. **Standards in mathematics are well above the national average by Year 6.** This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The Year 2002 national test results confirm this. Over the past three years, such results have consistently shown the school to be in the top five per cent nationally and in comparison with pupils from similar backgrounds. Progress over time is excellent, since pupils enter the school with around average abilities. Results show that nearly two thirds of the pupils leave the school with knowledge, understanding and skills in mathematics at least two years above that expected nationally. This also is an improvement since the 2000 inspection especially in the numbers of higher attaining pupils now doing better.
70. **Standards attained by pupils in Year 2 are well above average.** The rate of improvement in attainment over the past four years has been greater than that found nationally. More than half the pupils show, through these tests, that they are performing two years above what is expected nationally. Teachers are laying excellent foundations for pupils to excel higher up the school.

71. **Higher attaining pupils make very good progress.** This is particularly the case in the classes for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. Test results demonstrate that there is a very large increase in the proportion of pupils attaining the higher grades in these classes than in others. Inspectors found that part of this was due to the pupils being given higher challenges, which incorporate greater degrees of thinking and creativity. Teachers also have very high expectations that pupils will demonstrate their abilities in the national tests and ensure, through practice, that they do. At this time the oldest pupils have special lessons with additional staff and extended work to do with parents at home.
72. **The quality of teaching and learning overall is very good across the school.** This is a considerable improvement since the inspection in 2000. This lays a firm foundation for the acquisition of number skills, and enthusiasm for the subject through common approaches and progressive planning. Teachers in nearly all classes plan individual lessons very well to ensure that pupils in all ability groups make very good progress. They make sure that pupils have plenty of opportunities to learn new concepts, such as ways to collect and present data in Year 3; reading and writing the time with both analogue and digital clocks in Year 4; and finding and using square, cube and triangular numbers in Year 6. Observations by inspectors and scrutiny of pupils' work in their books showed that such learning is secure and is later built upon to aid further work. Mathematical words are purposefully introduced and consolidated in each lesson and pupils' vocabulary is increased by this consistent approach. Pupils discuss new strategies for solving problems, sharing their own methods with some enthusiasm especially in the opening sessions which are designed to develop mental agility. Teachers devote the right amount of time to this, and most challenge their pupils very well. The good use of the mental arithmetic sessions is a strength within the teaching. In Year 6 for example, the pupils played a quick-fire game which involved all the class calculating the answers to questions simultaneously and then setting each other more questions against the clock. This was very inclusive and learning for all groups was excellent. The teacher motivated the pupils very well, and was also flexible in his approach to the National Numeracy Strategy format. Thus when the class challenged itself to beat its previous best time he deviated from his plan and seized this opportunity to consolidate pupils' learning. Pupils' abilities at mental recall and mental calculation are very strong throughout the school. Some teachers and some pupils get frustrated at occasional lapses in pupils' recollection of times-tables facts, but they are very good in comparison with their peers in other schools.
73. **Good use is made by teachers of the assessments of pupils' performance.** This helps them to divide pupils into groups, and very good use of additional staff along with highly appropriate tasks ensures that all groups are able to tackle work which challenges them to do their best. These arrangements work well, especially for lower and middle attainers, including those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs. These latter pupils benefit from additional attention and smaller group sizes whilst at the same time being well integrated into the work of the class and given an equal opportunity to succeed. This allows their needs to be met more fully and they make very good progress as a result.
74. **Behaviour in lessons is excellent.** Pupils are very enthusiastic about learning in the subject. All groups of pupils work hard with sustained concentration in order to arrive at solutions to the questions and problems set by their teachers. Some teachers have developed very good questioning skills which make pupils think and respond without making the questions so hard that it becomes discouraging and this is effective in motivating pupils and leads to very good learning.

75. **Planning has been developed well, incorporating the National Numeracy Strategy and staff are appropriately guided in their teaching by it.** Planning provides a very good range of learning opportunities and as a result, skills in areas such as mental arithmetic and problem-solving are developed well. There are good opportunities for the creation of charts and graphs in data handling, including the use of ICT, and in all aspects of measurement. This is appropriately reinforced across the curriculum in other subjects such as geography, design and technology and science. There is less practice, however, at the interpretation of charts and graphs. The sensitive use of resources including those from more than one commercial scheme ensures that there is good scope for real-life problem solving and investigation.
76. **The subject is very well led and managed.** The co-ordinator's and headteacher's observation of work in classrooms has contributed to the high quality of the teaching and continuity in approach which results in the very good rate of pupils' learning. Results of end-of-year assessments are used to find elements of the subject in need of improvement and appropriate action is then taken. A portfolio of work is made available to staff so that they can see the expected standards to be reached in each class. The co-ordinator has ensured that pupils' class-work is examined periodically and this ensures that standards remain high.

SCIENCE

77. Standards in science are well above average in Years 2 and 6 and are similar to the standards recorded in the most recent national tests in 2002. These standards are much better than at the time of the previous inspection. In particular, the proportion of pupils doing better than expected in Year 6 is over double the national average. This represents very good achievement over time.
- The main strengths in science are:
78. **Very good teaching leads to high quality learning in classrooms and very good progress over time.** Pupils start Year 1 with average levels of knowledge and understanding in science. Year 1 science teaching builds very well on the work done in reception. Pupils soon become aware of how to undertake investigations and recognise the importance of health and safety issues. They learn that light travels and that a good investigation requires a series of simple principles to make it fair. Knowledge, understanding and skills are built on further by the excellent teaching in Year 2. Investigations and experiments enthral the pupils who tackle their work with enthusiasm and diligence. Learning about changes when making cakes is at a high level. These skills and wider knowledge are taught progressively well as pupils grow older. In Year 4, for example, pupils learn through good solid investigation how to measure the conductivity of different materials. By Year 6, they have progressed well beyond expected levels as they experiment with wire to investigate how length and thickness might affect the brightness of a light in an electrical circuit. This very good emphasis on practical and investigative work is very much responsible for captivating pupils' attention, focusing their thinking and enabling them to make such good progress.

79. **Pupils learn to record their work effectively.** Over the years, pupils learn the skills of recording their work to show what they are doing and what they are discovering. The quality of this written work improves very well. In Year 1, the work is largely recorded on prepared sheets or in note form. By Year 2, pupils are beginning to present information in tables. These skills progress well in subsequent years, and the quality and level of information recorded becomes much better than expected by Years 5 and 6. Books are a pleasure to read with clearly labelled diagrams and work which is effectively laid out to show clearly all the stages in the process. Drawing effectively on their literacy skills, pupils explain clearly how they have undertaken their work, what conclusions they have reached and how they might improve it. Independent work of this nature is instrumental in raising standards. All pupils make equally good progress in this respect. Teachers ensure that work is matched effectively to the different learning needs in each grouping arrangement in classrooms. Help and guidance are given when necessary. Good quality extension work, which challenges thinking, is available for the higher attainers.
80. **The subject is very well led and managed.** The focus of the work of the subject leader has been to drive up standards, and significant success has been achieved in this direction. Picking up issues from the previous inspection, higher attaining pupils have been extensively challenged to do better, which they now do. Lessons of colleagues are observed and feedback on improvement is given. All planning is looked at so that improvements may be made. Any areas for development that are identified then feed into the whole school improvement plan, and are effectively dealt with. For example, the recent focus on improving investigative work through better teaching methods has resulted in far higher standards and much better use of literacy skills to enhance learning. The way in which teachers use assessment knowledge of pupils when planning is very good and comes directly from a full and thorough analysis of test and other assessments. As a result, this is a high performing subject which continues to go from strength to strength.

ART AND DESIGN

81. Standards for pupils in Years 2 and 6 are broadly in line with national averages. This represents satisfactory achievement for all pupils and is a similar position to that reported when the school was previously inspected.
- The main strengths are:
82. **Pupils are given the opportunity to explore and refine a range of art and design skills, and to use them in an imaginative range of art activities.** Pupils in Year 2 could be seen to explore a range of art and design skills based on the class theme of 'Autumn'. They produce some interesting natural collages using twigs and leaves, before using them as a stimulus for some good observational drawing. Good learning could be seen as pupils used skills in more demanding situations as they produced some colourful collages, again based on the theme of Autumn, using different coloured and textured materials. Pupils in Year 2 also make some imaginative responses to the work of Jackson Pollack as they draw their own patterns and produce computerised artwork. This activity made a positive contribution to pupils' learning in computer skills. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 display satisfactory printing skills, as they create rotating and symmetrical patterns. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 enjoy working clay, with pupils creating some interesting pots and clay figures in action. Good learning could be seen in pupils' creation of good quality embossed tiles, with pictures of animals, insects and birds, made for the local Millennium celebrations. Pupils throughout the school have good observational skills as they draw a range of plants, birds and still-life items in pencil,

paint and pastels. Good learning can be seen as pupils develop their skills with increased use of shading and texture.

83. **The overall quality of teaching is good, in particular the teaching of observational skills.** Very little direct teaching was seen during the inspection. However, planning, work and displays show good overall teaching. The single lesson observed was well planned, organised and resourced. Pupils received good instruction in the skills to be developed, with good individual support being given to pupils by teachers and classroom assistants. Teachers spend an appropriate amount of time developing specific art skills as well as promoting the use of art and design across the curriculum. With opportunities for pupils to consider the work of a number of artists, the subject makes a useful contribution to pupils' cultural development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

84. Overall, standards are above average throughout the school and progress is good. These are good improvements since the last inspection.

- The strengths of the subject are:

85. **Standards by the end of Year 2 are above average.** This judgement has been derived from a scrutiny of pupils' work and discussion with pupils. Several designs seen in Year 1 included pupils' annotation which detailed the materials they wished to use. Other good work, this time in Year 2, was seen when pupils had designed and made a 'Coat of Many Colours' from leaves, as a link to their studies of the Bible. In another piece of work on making moving models from paper the lowest attainers were able to show what they had done with help while the highest attainers spoke more lucidly about their work. Such pupils could state the way in which they had constructed a model car using terms such as 'wheels' and 'axle'. Pupils from all ability groups were aware of different ways to fix elements of their models such as nails for wood and paper clips, blu-tac, glue and staples for paper and all had made good progress.
86. **Standards by the end of Year 6 are also above average.** Pupils' models on display include several working musical instruments linked to work in that subject and pupils in the Environmental Club were making bird nesting boxes being careful to get the right dimensions for the birds they wished to encourage. These pupils could describe many alternatives to the artefacts they had constructed and in discussion tentatively suggested that any changes might not be improvements but merely differences. They would only be able to tell if any changes were indeed improvements by testing them, showing a clear understanding of the developmental process.
87. **Based on the outcomes of pupils' learning, teaching is at least satisfactory.** However, only two lessons were observed during the inspection. Planning is detailed and contains ideas on how to match the work to the needs of different groups of pupils within the lesson. In this way the needs of all pupils of both genders, all ethnic groups and regardless of their special educational need, were able to achieve at the levels described above. Planning also shows that the full range of activities is in place and takes account of links to other areas of the curriculum as well as setting out to teach the skills necessary to design and create. The range of tools and materials available to pupils is adequate but could be extended in order to allow the higher attaining pupils to exercise more choice. Pupils observed in lessons were very well engaged by the practical activities and persevere well. In discussion pupils were clearly enthusiastic about their work.

88. **The subject is very well led.** There is a strong emphasis on improving standards and the subject leader has a clear understanding of the way learning in design technology can contribute to the overall curriculum and to pupils' education as a whole. He is aware of the strengths and areas for development in the subject and these take an appropriate place in the school improvement plan.

GEOGRAPHY

89. Overall, standards at the end of Year 2 are above average and well above average by the end of Year 6. The progress made by pupils up to Year 2 is good and in Years 3 to 6 is very good. Very good improvement has occurred since the last inspection.

- The strengths of the subject are:

90. **Pupils have good knowledge and understanding.** Pupils have confidence in using their geographical knowledge to inform their enquiries and are able to relate this to other pupils. For example, in Year 2 they are able to use books to research and refer to facts such as it being cold at the North Pole, and deduce the clothes a person would therefore need to wear and then compare this to other work on Egypt. As they pass through the school pupils are able to use maps, models and aerial photographs to investigate the effects humans have on the environment such as the work by Year 3 pupils on their school surroundings. They showed during this lesson that they appreciated the dangerous effect of careless parking. Pupils in Year 5 have extended their vocabulary and most can use terms such as 'forecast' and 'weather front' with understanding. By the end of Year 6, pupils are very knowledgeable about the route of the River Calder, can speak confidently using compass references to the direction and distance from Wakefield of major UK towns and cities. They can combine physical geographical knowledge with political events such as why Russia is getting smaller (states keep breaking away) and why Zimbabwe, Malawi and parts of South Africa are short of food.
91. **Overall teaching in geography is very good for pupils to reach these standards.** In a very good lesson for Year 2 pupils they were reminded of the travels of Barnaby Bear taken by pupils and teachers to holiday destinations, and the opportunity seized upon to think about teaching points such as climate, and means of transport. Vocabulary was carefully introduced to elaborate on observations made by pupils. Teachers in all lessons showed that staff had a secure subject knowledge displayed through some excellent lesson planning. This ensured a good level of challenge and pupils' rate of progress is very good as a consequence. Several instances of good use of ICT were seen. Those with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language were well provided for and as a consequence made good progress.
92. **Pupils have a very positive attitude in lessons and in discussions and standards of behaviour are very high.** This contributes to very good learning. Pupils were seen to work well together in pairs sharing books and making suggestions in one class and discussing maps and weather symbols in another. In these lessons the teachers presented the tasks enthusiastically and a real-life context was provided to underpin the study which thoroughly engaged pupils in their learning. In discussions with a visitor, pupils showed obvious enjoyment in expounding their knowledge about both the local environment and key features of places far away. Whenever one pupil stumbled over the answer to a question another was quick to help him or her with prompts and suggestions.

93. **There is very good subject leadership.** The subject is clearly identified as an enquiry subject and teachers are encouraged to see it as such. The curriculum is enriched by many trips and visits, such as to the Mere at Hornsea; the water treatment plant at Leeds; and geology is incorporated through expeditions to the limestone features at Ingleborough. To develop their understanding of human geography, younger pupils visit a farm and older pupils study the coastal settlement at Cober Hill. Such visits enliven the studies and help pupils to appreciate the links between what they master at school and their understanding of the world around them. There are very clear and appropriate associations with biological science and history, and both numeracy and literacy skills are practised and developed through study and some extensive writing. Assessment is used effectively to gain and record knowledge of pupils' achievement in the subject and provides a good grounding for improving standards. There are opportunities for pupils to extend their enjoyment of the subject through an environmental club which meets regularly.

HISTORY

94. Standards are broadly average by Years 2 and 6, representing satisfactory achievement. Standards in the subject have been broadly maintained since the last inspection.

- Strengths are:

95. **The overall quality of teaching is at least satisfactory, with some good teaching being observed in lessons.** Lessons are generally well planned, organised and resourced, with good individual support being given by teachers and classroom assistants. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge, with their introductions at the beginning of lessons developing and holding the interests of pupils. Teachers use good questioning skills to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. Occasional opportunities are given for pupils to visit places of historical interest to support their learning in the subject, though these are generally insufficient. Pupils make adequate progress in their understanding of chronology, recognising that things and people change over time and being able to make comparisons with life today. Pupils in Year 1 develop an understanding of how things can change over time as they explored a number of old household artefacts. Pupils in Year 2 came to appreciate the impact of certain people's lives on British social history as they explored the life of Florence Nightingale. Through the teacher's good use of resource materials pupils in Year 5 were able to appreciate the problems of post-war Britain and the ensuing new Elizabethan age. In response to the teacher's good questioning skills pupils displayed the ability to make some mature and perceptive comments about Britain in the 1950s and life in the new twenty-first century in terms of transport, leisure, transport, clothing and food.

- Areas for improvement are:

96. **Insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their literacy skills effectively or work as independently as they might.** Although the scrutiny of work reveals that pupils cover all the required areas of the scheme of work used by the school, there is evidence that some of the topics lack depth, with teachers relying too much on the use of photocopied materials. Some of these materials lack challenge for pupils, in particular the more able. There is no real evidence that pupils regularly write in historical character or at length. Although occasions are given for pupils to explore a range of evidence in lessons and to access the Internet, there are too few opportunities for pupils to engage in personal research and to become independent learners.

97. **Pupils are sometimes given undemanding activities to pursue in lessons.** For example, pupils in Year 6 show a simple understanding of life in Ancient Greece, and the conflict between nation states and other countries surrounding it. Although pupils made some progress in their knowledge about the conflict between Ancient Greece and Persia, their learning was limited by some of the undemanding activities carried out in this lesson.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

98. Overall, standards at the end of Year 2 are average and above average by the end of Year 6. Improvement since the last inspection in both developing the provision and raising the standards achieved by pupils is very good. The progress made by pupils up to Year 2 is satisfactory and in Years 3 to 6 is good.
- The strengths of the subject are:
99. **Pupils have good skills, knowledge and understanding.** Pupils have confidence in using computers and learn well. For example, the youngest pupils can create and print Rangoli patterns and by the end of Year 2 they are able to use appropriate language and refer to terms such as 'keyboard', 'space bar', 'erase' and 'shift' with understanding. By this age they have developed good mouse control, for example, in art they are able to draw lines and use the 'floodfill' feature in order to create a painting in the style of Mondrian. As they mature pupils are able to organise, refine and present ideas in different forms and to retrieve and edit work saved in their own files. Links with literacy, mathematics, science and geography are strong which helps pupils to develop good foundations in word processing and data handling. They use the Internet to extend their learning through rapid access to ideas and experiences from a wide range of people, communities and cultures. By the end of Year 6, pupils can select, capture and edit information and organise it for multi-media displays, for example, research into their favourite football team or children from other countries. Such presentations take account of different readerships in their style and the language used.
100. **There is good and some very good teaching throughout the school.** The quality of teaching in ICT is at least good in all classes. It is based on secure subject knowledge, which is an improvement since the last inspection and underpins good lesson planning. All members of staff have completed in-service training and bring their new understanding to bear on the lessons they create. Teachers' expectations are high and staff use effective methods to achieve their objectives. The use of the ICT suite and the deployment of an ICT classroom assistant are high-quality aspects of the teaching and pupils' rate of progress is very good as a consequence. The policy and planning provide a very good base upon which pupils are able to build skills, knowledge and understanding progressively. During the inspection the teaching was seen to be appropriate and challenging for all the pupils. Those pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are well provided for and as a consequence made good progress.
101. **Pupils' excellent behaviour and very good attitudes also leads to very good learning.** Pupils have a very positive attitude in lessons and the standards of behaviour are very high. They work well together in small groups and sometimes in pairs sharing ideas and taking turns to operate the computers. The teachers ensure that they enjoy the tasks and use their knowledge well to engage pupils in their learning. Pupils in Year 3 were seen to enjoy experimenting with a new skill they had been taught, sharing the excitement with each other when using pictures to make a backdrop to the titles they

were creating with letter outlines. Pupils persevere to complete tasks set, and are prepared to listen to others' views about their own work and appreciate the efforts of others during well-structured plenary sessions.

102. **Very good subject leadership gives clear direction to improving standards.** The subject is very well led and managed. The subject leader has enthusiastically encouraged and supported colleagues in extending their knowledge and understanding. As a result teachers are more confident in identifying needs, and teaching the appropriate skills to pupils. Monitoring of teaching and pupils' work is very effective. A portfolio of pupils' work provides guidance on the standards expected for different levels of ability. Assessment is detailed and accurately provides a good grounding for improving standards.

- An area for improvement is:

103. **Learning resources are used very well but limited accommodation and a small number of computers in the laboratory mean that lessons have to be split between the classroom and computer suite.** Thus for some pupils it is a considerable time between being shown what to do and having a chance to practise the skill. The effect of this is lessened by the very good contribution of the ICT teaching assistant.

MUSIC

104. Standards in music are above average throughout the school and significantly better than when the school was previously inspected. Music is a strength of the school with pupils making good progress overall.

- The main strengths are:

105. **Very good teaching and learning takes place in most lessons.** Teachers are well prepared. They plan very well. They ensure that all pupils have very good opportunities to play and to perform. Teachers rehearse their pupils well allowing them lots of good opportunities to experiment with sound and to be creative. In a Year 6 lesson, with very good links to literacy, pupils performed rhythmically to a set of Christmas verses written by some of their group. They were able to experiment with a wide range of instruments and sounds to achieve a high standard of performance by the end of the lesson. In other lessons, there is very good emphasis on technical language so that pupils know and understand musical notation, correct terms and how and when to use them. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils learnt first how to clap in rhythm and vary the tempo. Then the class moved on to building very effectively on these skills by learning how to vary the pattern using a range of instruments. Very good learning experiences allowed very good progress to take place. In both lessons, the enthusiasm and eagerness of pupils was used very well to move learning on at a very good pace with no time wasted.

106. **Organisation of classes is very good with full and effective use being made of the considerable talents of learning support assistants.** In a Year 1 lesson, for example, by dividing the whole class into three groups, the teacher ensured that all pupils were adequately supervised by the adults present. At the same time, each pupil was given several opportunities to play and to evaluate the quality of the playing. This then developed very well into whole group performances. New skills learnt included playing together in tandem, keeping strictly to the beat and varying the loudness and softness appropriately. Using the wider spaces in the hall also allowed pupils to experiment more as the sounds were not drowning out other groups as they might in a

more enclosed space. In other lessons, learning support assistants play a vital role in raising learning. The very good strategies used in lessons and detailed planning enable the additional staff to take charge of small groups and so all staff work more effectively with smaller groups who achieve better as a result.

107. **There is very good leadership and management in the subject.** The focus here is on raising standards. The subject leader observes colleagues teach and helps them improve their practice. As a subject specialist herself, she also takes some lessons for her colleagues and uses her considerable expertise to enhance the quality of learning. Areas of relative weakness have been addressed so that there is now much more emphasis on composition and performance. The improving standards are evident when pupils play instruments, but also when singing. By Year 2, pupils sing clearly and effectively in two parts, a skill usually learnt at a later stage. They also come in on time and vary their singing very effectively to reflect the words. The subject leader has also ensured that the classroom performance is extended effectively to public displays of talent. There are musical performances for the Nativity, at Easter and other appropriate occasions. Many pupils in the school also enhance their learning through having specific instrumental lessons for the guitar, violin, percussion and woodwind. New technology is effectively embraced with the use of the electronic keyboard, improving the quality of teaching and learning in many classrooms.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

108. Standards are broadly average by Years 2 and 6 showing satisfactory achievement overall. Pupils with special educational needs, in particular those with disability problems, receive very good support from classroom assistants and make the same progress as all other members of the class. Standards in the subject have been maintained since the last inspection.

- Strengths include:

109. **Pupils are given the opportunity to achieve satisfactory standards in all areas of the physical education curriculum.** Pupils in Years 2 and 6 display satisfactory gymnastic skills appropriate to their age. Pupils display good self-discipline. This makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning as they focus on and give their full attention to the skills to be developed. Pupils in Years 3 and 6 show real interest in their PE activities as they engage in the development of those ball control skills associated with football. The learning and progress in these lessons was enhanced by the provision for pupils to use previously learned skills within more demanding situations. Pupils in Year 4 likewise display good ball control skills associated with netball. They learn a number of passing skills, before putting them into practice within small group activities. The good learning and success of this lesson owed much to pupils' ability to work in an unselfish manner and their knowledge that they had to work together as a team in order to achieve success. Pupils in Year 4 display good dance skills relative to their age as they put together a simple dance for the cartoon characters Tom and Jerry. Pupils worked with interest. Good learning took place as pupils worked in a collaborative manner, exploring, refining and improving their work over time. Good self-discipline was seen once more as pupils attended the swimming baths to develop their swimming skills. Pupils listened with interest to teachers' and instructors' coaching points and carried them out in an enthusiastic manner.
110. **The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory.** This is supplemented by a significant amount of good teaching being observed during the inspection. Lessons are well planned, organised, managed and resourced. Teachers focus on health and safety issues and the need to be aware of others. Teachers provide good warm-up activities.

They provide good demonstrations of the skills to be developed and give pupils the opportunity to demonstrate good practice. This makes a significant contribution to the satisfactory and often good learning taking place in lessons. Opportunities are given for pupils to improve skills through repetition and to make progress in their physical education skills by using them within more complex and demanding activities.

111. **There are good opportunities for pupils to go on residential visits.** In the main, these focus on hiking and caving as well as supporting other areas of the curriculum. With its emphasis on inter-active and team building skills the subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' social development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

112. Standards in religious education are broadly similar to what is required by the locally agreed syllabus by Years 2 and 6. Pupils make satisfactory progress and standards have been sustained since the previous inspection.

- Relative strengths include:

113. **There is a good focus on a broad and relevant curriculum that helps pupils make the progress they should.** All six major religions in the country are taught effectively throughout the school. Teachers help pupils learn the faiths and traditions of these religions as they explore the different festivals taking place throughout the year. As a result, pupils are aware of similarities and differences and have a greater understanding of why people choose to worship in particular ways. This starts early on in Years 1 and 2 as festivals such as Eid and Diwali are examined in addition to major Christian festivals. Pupils learn technical terms and develop the skills to recognise that religions other than their own have holy books or specific places of worship. Pupils' work shows that they develop a good understanding of many of the virtues involved with religion, such as the giving as well as the receiving that is central to the Christian celebration of Christmas.

114. **Teaching is sometimes good, with a strong emphasis on developing pupils' natural curiosity well.** In a successful Year 5 lesson examining Ramadan and Eid, for example, a Muslim pupil was invited to share his experiences with the class. The teacher ensured that all pupils had opportunities to ask relevant questions, thereby helping to raise awareness of those festivals and the significance of them. 'Do prayer mats have an arrow on them and why do you point to Mecca when praying?' asked one pupil. The response was informative and interesting, explaining the reasons for this, with the teacher emphasising the more important points. Similar points are made in assemblies so that all pupils share in each others' experiences appropriately. These good strategies focus well on developing pupils' natural curiosity while at the same time improve learning through direct debate.

115. **The school makes effective use of local resources.** Staff have been briefed effectively by visits to mosques, temples and churches in the local area and further afield. This enhanced subject knowledge and understanding is used well to improve the quality of learning in classrooms. Pupils are eager to ask and enquire about various aspects of belief. The very good use of one of the local clergy in Year 2 enabled pupils to develop a clear understanding of the Christmas story and the sequence of events that took place over 2000 years ago. The good management of the subject has ensured that standards have been sustained and that all staff are effectively supported.

- There are two minor areas to consider for further development in the subject:

116. **Little use is made of ICT to enhance learning.** Pupils' work revealed little evidence of research or other work being done using the computer. Staff have not yet sought effective ways of incorporating this into their planned learning opportunities.
117. **There is very little evidence of pupils enhancing their literacy skills through writing, especially in Years 3 to 6.** Occasionally, some pieces of work allow pupils to write at length, but there is currently insufficient of this. It is better developed in Years 1 and 2 than later in the school.