

INSPECTION REPORT

THORPE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Idle, Bradford

LEA area: Bradford

Unique reference number: 132180

Headteacher: Mrs Margaret Johnson

Reporting inspector: Fran Gillam
21498

Dates of inspection: 24th – 26th February 2003

Inspection number: 248922

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

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 – 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Albion Road
Idle
Bradford

Postcode: BD10 9PY

Telephone number: 01274 414 126

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Joan Holliday

Date of previous inspection: None

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Fran Gillam 21498	Registered inspector	Foundation Education inclusion English as an additional language English Information and communication technology Design and technology Music Religious education	What sort of school is it? School results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
Robert Folks 19692	Lay inspector		Pupil's attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils or students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Derek Pattinson 19120	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Science Art and design Geography History Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered? How well is the school led and managed?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Thorpe Primary opened in September 2001. At present, it does not have its full complement of pupils and is much smaller than other primary schools. Just over half of the 58 pupils on roll are boys. There are three classes. The 21 youngest children in the Foundation Stage¹ are all together in the Reception class. The remaining two classes have mixed ages, one of Years 1 and 2 and the other of Years 3 and 4. Almost all of the pupils are from a white British background. A small number are of African, Indian and Pakistani heritage; all of these pupils are fluent in speaking English. The children's starting point, when first coming to school, is below that expected for their age. Just fewer than ten per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational need; these pupils require extra support, mainly with reading, writing and numeracy. Thirty-eight per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals and this is above average. Pupils come from families living in both private and rented accommodation. Over half of the pupils live within a local regeneration area funded by the government. Within three months of opening, the school was threatened with closure because of surplus pupil places within Bradford. It was not until November 2002 that the school was informed that it would remain open. In September 2002 the number of classes increased from two to three. Since this time the deputy headteacher has been absent and a supply teacher has taught the class of Year 3 and 4 pupils. A newly qualified teacher teaches the new class made up of Year 1 and 2 pupils. The acting deputy headteacher teaches the youngest class of children and with the headteacher, she makes up the senior management team in the school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school has faced many challenges in the short time that it has been open. The headteacher has given a very good lead during this time. She has ensured that good arrangements and procedures are in place to support teachers' work and pupils' learning. With the governors and senior managers she has dealt competently with the difficulties in staffing so that the pupils in Years 1 to 4 have received a sound level of teaching and learning within the last term and a half. Children do well in the Foundation Stage, making good progress with their learning and reaching the levels expected for their age in all the areas of learning². Within Years 1 to 4, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and by the time they are in Year 4 standards are in line with those expected for pupils of this age in English, mathematics and science. The senior managers and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and where further development is required. The school is doing as well as can be expected under difficult circumstances and provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Children get off to a flying start in the Reception class.
- The support for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The school provides good guidance to pupils about how to behave and get on with each other; this shows in the way pupils enjoy coming to school and the relationships they develop with other pupils and adults.
- The headteacher, senior manager and governors work well together to bring about development and to help the school move forward under challenging circumstances.
- There are good arrangements and procedures in place to guide and support pupils.
- The school works very well with parents; parents have a high level of confidence in the school.

What could be improved

- Standards by Year 4 in mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT), religious education, music and geography.
- The challenge given to pupils, more often higher attaining pupils, in Years 1 to 4 when working independently and the way that pupils' work is checked to ensure this challenge is high enough.

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

¹ The stage of learning for children aged from three years up to the age of six years when they move into Year 1 and start the National Curriculum.

² The areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage are: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; creative development; knowledge and understanding of the world; and physical development.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

This is a new school and this section is not relevant to the inspection.

STANDARDS

At present, the number of pupils taking the tests at age seven is below ten. This makes the comparison of data unreliable and, in line with the governors' reporting to parents, the test data is omitted from the report.

Children start school with attainment below that expected for their age. They achieve well during their first year in the school making particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and in gaining the basic skills of reading, writing and number. This good start ensures that by the time the children are ready to move into Year 1 their attainment is in line with that expected for their age.

Standards in Year 2 and Year 4 are average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 to 4. Standards in how pupils use their mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding to solve problems are lower than they should be. In English, the pupils' skills in speaking and listening are weaker than in reading. However, there are some good opportunities for pupils to develop their talking by working in pairs and small groups which is extending their language further. Reading skills are particularly well promoted for pupils with special educational needs through the Reading Recovery and the Better Reading programmes. By Year 4, the pupils are beginning to gain a secure understanding of how to use non-fiction books to gather information. Whilst most of the pupils read accurately, they do not always gain a thorough understanding of what they read. In writing, pupils gradually use a wider range of words to add interest to their work so that by the time they are in Year 4, for example, they write interesting accounts of historical events. The standards of pupils' handwriting and presentation should be higher; over the last term and a half some of the gains made in earlier terms have not been sustained. In science in Years 1 and 2, pupils use their scientific skills well to carry out investigations. By Year 4, investigative skills are not as secure as pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding. Standards in art and design, design and technology, history and physical education are in line with expectations for pupils in Year 2 and 4 and their achievement is satisfactory. The majority of children in the Reception Year and pupils in Year 1 have been taught at Thorpe since they first started school. Pupils in other year groups have come from a number of different schools in the locality. A number of these pupils have difficulty drawing upon their previous skills, knowledge and understanding to support their learning in subjects such as ICT, religious education, geography and music. As a result, standards are below average in these subjects but during their time at Thorpe pupils' progress has been satisfactory. In ICT, skills are more secure than pupils' understanding of how ICT can support their work and its use in the wider world. In music, pupils do not have a secure enough knowledge of, for example, different instruments and how they can be used to develop musical ideas. In geography, whilst pupils are gaining a secure understanding of their own locality and further afield, by comparison their skills in drawing maps and plans are weaker. In religious education, pupils have a secure understanding of Christianity but their knowledge of other faiths and how religion contributes to the way people shape their lives is weaker.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good – pupils enjoy coming to school; they are interested in their lessons and work hard as result.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good – in lessons, on the playground and at lunchtimes pupils work and play together effectively. They have a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong.
Personal development and relationships	Good – children in the Reception class very quickly learn how to organise themselves and follow instructions. Throughout the school pupils build good relationships with the staff and their classmates.
Attendance	Satisfactory – the rate of attendance has improved over the past one and half terms and is now close to the national average.

A number of pupils express how happy they are since moving to Thorpe because they feel that they are well cared for and treated fairly and that other pupils are friendly and kind. At lunchtimes the pupils conduct

themselves very well, looking after each other and behaving very sensibly. Whilst almost all pupils know how to wait their turn there is a small number of pupils in Years 1 to 4 who shout out in lessons and this reduces the chance for others to take a full part.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

The teaching of English and mathematics is satisfactory in Years 1 to 4; the basic skills of reading, writing and number are taught effectively in the Foundation Stage and systematically in the rest of the school. In the Foundation Stage the planning is very good because it ensures that activities are relevant to the ages and interests of the children. This captures their interest and children often concentrate for long periods, so developing their personal skills effectively. Often meaningful links are made between the different areas of learning and children transfer their knowledge of words, for example, to follow instructions when working on large apparatus in the hall. In the more successful lessons in other year groups this was often a feature which gave purpose to activities and allowed pupils to use what they already knew to develop their understanding further, for example, when investigating the use of databases in Years 3 and 4. Often teachers share information clearly with pupils and this leads to some good learning in whole-class sessions as pupils take on new learning. Although clear targets for improvement are set for pupils, these are not always reflected in the planning. For example, when pupils work independently or in small groups some of the tasks are not always challenging enough, especially for the higher attaining, and this leads to a slower pace of learning at these times. The methods teachers use provide suitable chances for pupils to receive focused support and direct teaching. However, in one or two lessons, pupils were left for more extended periods whilst the teachers worked with a small group. This lack of interaction led to time being wasted and sometimes errors persisting such as wrongly formed letters, which contributes to the lower than expected standards of presentation seen in pupils' books. Pupils with special educational needs learn well both in lessons and when taken out to work individually. This is because they develop their understanding at a pace suitable to their needs; this builds their self-esteem and gives them the confidence to tackle their work more independently. Homework provides a useful extension to pupils' learning. Parental support with reading and the advice and support they receive from the school allow them to take an active part in their children's learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory – the curriculum provides coverage of the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. At present, the range of activities outside normal lessons is narrow and does not help to extend aspects of the curriculum further. The school is taking steps to increase this provision.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good – the support and help given to pupils with special educational needs is well focused; it provides small steps of success for pupils and they do well as a result.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good – the school promotes social and moral development effectively in assemblies and lessons, for example, by encouraging pupils to work together in pairs or groups. The provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is not as strong; for example, pupils' knowledge of other faiths and cultures is not yet secure, although they have a satisfactory understanding of cultures, such as the Romans and Vikings, that have contributed to our way of life today.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good – the school has an extensive range of procedures in place, for example to check and encourage good behaviour and regular attendance. There are also good procedures in place in to check how well pupils are doing and to set targets for improvement. Sometimes in Years 1 to 4 this information is not used carefully enough to ensure planning fully meets

	the needs of the higher attaining pupils.
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The measures taken to improve the attendance of a small number of pupils have proved very successful, supporting pupils and improving their attainment and progress. Staff encourage pupils to treat one another kindly; the adults set good examples for the pupils to follow and there is a high level of harmony throughout the school. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is very good because activities are planned carefully so that the children's learning has clear purpose and meaning. There is a very good partnership with parents because of the successful efforts the school has made to involve parents in the life of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good – during the unsettled period when the school was facing closure the headteacher has maintained a very clear view of what needs to be done to keep the school moving forward. The difficulties with staff illness means that the curriculum is presently co-ordinated by the two senior managers which means that some subjects have lower levels of monitoring and evaluation compared with others.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good – the chair and vice chairperson of governors support the newer members of the governing body effectively. Together they support the work of staff well and fulfil their statutory responsibilities fully.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good – procedures in place to analyse test results are good and there are good arrangements to observe and evaluate the quality of teaching in lessons; at present, more should be done to check how well pupils are doing through analysing pupils' completed work and talking with them to check their knowledge and understanding.
The strategic use of resources	Good – the school uses funding wisely to support developments, identified within the good quality school improvement plan, and focused upon guiding teaching and learning and raising standards.

The accommodation is of a high quality, clean and well maintained and provides ample space to teach all subjects. Learning resources are of good quality and sufficient in number to support teaching and learning. The headteacher and governors use the principles of best value well to compare standards at Thorpe with the standards in other schools. They challenge whether the standards are high enough and seek ways to improve. They consult both parents and pupils for their views when making decisions about developments in, for example, the management of behaviour and home/school agreements.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The progress their children make and the good teaching. • How much their children enjoy coming to school and the children's behaviour. • The way the school deals with their concerns and enquiries. • The way the school is led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of work their children get to do at home. • The range of activities outside lessons.

The team agrees with all of the positive views of parents except that teaching is good in the Reception class and children make good progress but in Years 1 to 4 the teaching is sound and the pupils make satisfactory progress. The team agrees that there is a narrow range of activities outside normal lessons but it is understandable that other priorities have taken precedence in the last 18 months. However, the amount and quality of work the pupils have to do at home support learning and contribute well, for example, to developing reading.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In the four and half terms since the school has opened, children in the Foundation Stage have made good progress. Children in the Reception class are likely to attain the goals set for their age in all the areas of learning, making good progress from their lower than expected level of attainment when starting school. This is because of the well-planned activities that provide relevance to children's learning, make purposeful links between one area of learning and another and meet the needs of all children effectively. Children's personal and emotional skills and their skills in early reading, writing and number develop particularly well because of the systematic and careful way that teaching builds in small steps of success. Children have very good chances to practise and consolidate their knowledge and understanding to provide a firm basis for future learning.
2. The good progress made in the first three terms by pupils presently in Years 1 to 4 has not been maintained at the same rate over the past one and half terms. This is because there is variation in the progress pupils make within year groups and between pupils of different abilities. This variation relates to differences in teaching and learning during this time, especially in relation to how the needs of the higher attaining pupils are being met. For example, the school tracks pupils' attainment and sets targets for the end of each year. These provide useful and realistic goals for teachers to aim for but the way teachers use this information is not always precise enough to ensure the challenge is high enough in lessons.
3. A small number of pupils took the test for seven year olds for the first time in 2002 and there is no trend upon which to base judgements of how well pupils have done over time. The analysis of pupils' work shows that pupils, both boys and girls, in Years 1 to 4 are making satisfactory progress in English, mathematics and science; standards are average by Year 2 and Year 4.
4. Within English, standards in pupils' speaking and listening skills are lower than in reading and writing because often pupils find it difficult to talk about what they have learned and about what they are doing. The school is aware of this weakness and staff are undertaking training to help them develop pupils' skills further. The school provides a firm foundation for developing reading; those with special educational needs make good progress because of the good support and help they receive. Pupils' reading and writing skills support work in other subjects because pupils have the chance to gather information, for example, in geography and to write accounts in history, making satisfactory use of the skills learned and practised in literacy lessons. Sometimes the rate of progress of pupils, especially the higher attaining, is limited by the tasks that do not challenge them to use what they know. These pupils often begin with work that is too easy before tackling work that is more demanding. Standards of presentation and handwriting show deterioration over the past one and half terms and are below those expected for pupils in Year 2 and Year 4. This is because there is not enough emphasis upon pupils developing letters correctly to prepare them for joined writing and teachers do not set high enough expectations for neatness and accuracy.
5. In mathematics, pupils build up their understanding of number, shapes and measures satisfactorily and carry out calculations accurately. They have fewer chances to use this knowledge and their skills of adding, subtracting, dividing and multiplying to solve problems, which would help to consolidate understanding. In addition, opportunities are missed to provide greater challenge for the higher attaining pupils and so raise standards further. Pupils use numeracy skills satisfactorily in a few subjects such as ICT when bringing what they know about graphs to support their work on databases.

6. In science, pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding are sound by Year 4. Skills of experimentation and investigation are not as firmly embedded in some of the tasks they undertake compared with the good opportunities in Year 2. Pupils' skills in observation and recording develop well because of the more frequent opportunities for the younger pupils to undertake scientific investigations.
7. In art and design, design and technology, history and physical education standards are in line with those expected for pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 and their progress is satisfactory. In ICT, geography and music standards are below those expected for pupils in Year 2 and Year 4. In these subjects, the gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding are more pronounced. For example, in ICT, whilst the development of skills is satisfactory, pupils have a limited understanding of the range of ICT, its relevance to them and its use in the wider world. In geography, the pupils' level of understanding of maps and plans is weak because teaching does not provide activities that suit pupils' needs. In music, pupils' recall of music they have covered and musical instruments they have used is weak by Year 4. In religious education, the relatively late introduction of the local guidance for teaching the subject, which was beyond the school's control, means that teaching and learning got off to a slower than expected start. As in music and geography, pupils' recall of knowledge is weak and they do not have a secure understanding of faiths other than Christianity; pupils are only just beginning to realise the importance of religion in their own lives and that of others.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils have positive attitudes to the school and they behave well. Personal development is good and relationships within the school are harmonious. The parents are happy with the standard of behaviour in the school and with the attitudes and values that the school promotes.
9. The pupils enjoy going to school, they like learning and feel that they are cared for and are treated fairly. They move around the school in an orderly manner and are well behaved at playtimes and lunchtimes. This is particularly evident in the small, separate dining room where the pupils socialise very well and there is a very friendly atmosphere; this is achieved with minimal supervision. Outside in the playground, there are plenty of supervisors, and a wide range of different activities is available to encourage pupils to interact, share equipment sensibly and learn to get on with one another. There was no evidence of oppressive behaviour whatsoever. The very few instances of upsetting behaviour are dealt with very well. There were no exclusions last year.
10. In lessons, behaviour is good overall. This is because pupils understand what is expected of them and adults set good examples for them to follow. Pupils concentrate for quite long periods of time but it is usually the confident and higher attaining that make the most contributions in lessons. Occasionally, some pupils call out and this disrupts the pace of the lesson at these times. This happens in Years 1 to 4 when the pupils become excitable and some try to dominate the discussion. Teachers ensure they build in opportunities for pupils to exchange views and support one another. For example, this worked well in a music lesson in Year 1 and 2. Pupils listened to each other, respected their partner's ideas and took turns in experimenting with the musical instruments. This contributed well to the pace of learning and in developing pupils' understanding of the different techniques that could be used to produce sounds. This emphasis upon helping pupils to develop and improve their personal skills is encouraging constructive working relationships throughout the school. The younger children in the Foundation Stage take responsibility very well for what they are doing. They concentrate for long periods and act sensibly, sharing equipment and acting in a friendly way towards each other.
11. The pupils show respect for other people's views and feelings and this is reinforced during assemblies and in lessons. They are proud of their school and show respect for the school property and to all staff, both teaching and non-teaching.

12. Relationships within the school are good. A family atmosphere has been developed, which, together with the learning environment, contributes successfully to the progress the pupils make.
13. Attendance last year was well below the national average. The school recognised this problem and introduced an action plan to address it. This has been very successful and attendance so far this year is roughly in line with the national average at 94.3 per cent. Unauthorised absences are better than the national average.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall; there is good teaching in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory teaching in all subjects in Years 1 to 4.
15. Children in the Foundation Stage take on new knowledge, understanding and skills quickly because planning is well conceived and meets the needs of the different groups of children in the class very well. The planning ensures that the areas for learning link effectively to one another so that the best possible use is made of the time for learning. This ensures children consolidate their understanding, extend their knowledge and practise and refine their skills in a variety of ways such as singing, working in the sand and joining in when the teacher reads them a story. The children are confident to ask questions because they know the staff will listen and respond to them. These questions are relevant to what they are learning. For example, at the end of the story about a Bear Hunt one child asked, "Why are there big letters at the end?" This child's attention was focused well on the text and the teacher was able to explain that it was because the characters really did mean they would not go on a bear hunt again! These types of activities and interaction with adults have a strong influence upon how well children develop, for example, the early skills of reading and writing.
16. Children have a good understanding of the daily routine in the Reception class and co-operate well with each other and adults. This is due to the way the staff encourage children to be independent, talk with them about what is expected and appreciate their efforts. This leads children to take part willingly in activities, to share with others and to concentrate for extended periods. The resources provided for children are of very good quality and engage their interest and support their learning. This was evident in a singing lesson when staff made good use of picture, word and number cards to prompt children's memories and allow them to join in fully, promoting children's reading and number skills successfully. Learning support staff help children effectively; they make accurate assessments of how well children are doing and this provides an effective steer for future planning. Children's reading is further supported by the good use of parents in helping their children with work at home; comments by staff provide good information for parents about how to work with their children and this work at home contributes successfully to children's learning.
17. In Years 1 to 4, pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy is extended satisfactorily because teachers share information clearly and ensure that they use the correct terms to develop, for example, the pupils' vocabulary further. Where teachers have enthusiasm for a subject, and their knowledge is shared with pupils successfully, the rate of learning is often good. This was because teachers' explanations and the discussions captured pupils' interest and they were inspired and challenged to learn. This was apparent in a design and technology lesson in Years 3 and 4 when pupils were excited at the prospect of making money containers, having first carefully investigated a range of different wallets and purses. It was also evident in a music lesson in Years 1 and 2 when pupils investigated the sounds made and the techniques they would use to play a range of musical instruments.
18. Often in Years 1 to 4, the first part of the lesson for the whole class and the summary at the end are more successful in promoting learning and checking how well pupils are doing than the independent or group work that takes place in between. This was evident in some literacy and numeracy lessons and also when up to three subjects were being taught in a session. At

these times, weaknesses in planning challenging tasks led to pupils being kept busy rather than involved in tasks to develop their thinking, extend their learning and place a satisfactory level of demand upon them. This was apparent when pupils were required to cut out sentences and place them in the correct order. This reading activity became primarily an exercise in cutting and sticking and was not the best use of time for learning. Sometimes a lack of interaction with the pupils working independently means that teachers do not have a clear view of how well pupils are progressing and whether they need extra support with their work. For example, pupils practising handwriting skills completed the work in the time but it was evident that letters were being formed incorrectly and no help was at hand to deter them from developing errors. At present, expectations of how well pupils present their work and of the quality of handwriting are too low; not enough is done to encourage pupils to take a greater pride in their work.

19. In most lessons, pupils listen well and take part willingly in the activities prepared for them. Pupils feel valued and this makes them try hard to do better and to behave sensibly. When teachers remind pupils of what is expected from them they respond well although at times their excitement bubbles over and a small number forget and call out; this sometimes influences the pace of the lesson and slows the learning of other pupils in the class. The resources used in lessons are often of good quality and suitable to the tasks the pupils are engaged in. Pupils have some good opportunities to work together and discuss aspects of their work; teachers place a strong emphasis upon helping pupils to develop their thinking and extend their speaking skills at these times. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 gained a great deal when talking together about the patterns in a rhyme and came up with some good examples such as, "It is set out with the same word on one line followed by a statement" and "Every other line has a question mark at the end." The pupils were able to go onto explain who they thought might be saying the words in the poem and it provided them with some good ideas for future work
20. Teachers and learning support assistants help children in the Foundation Stage and pupils with special educational needs throughout the school to be fully involved in lessons. This supports their learning effectively and gives them the self-confidence to tackle tasks themselves. Individual work and programmes, such as Reading Recovery and Better Reading, provide pupils with the chance to build their skills in small steps. The high level of praise and guidance speeds pupils' learning and contributes successfully to raising standards. The work pupils are expected to do at home supports their learning in lessons. The particularly strong link with and support of parents with reading contributes well; the home/school reading diaries provide useful guidance for parents.

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

21. This newly formed school provides a satisfactory curriculum for its pupils in which all subjects required by the National Curriculum are represented. The curriculum places satisfactory emphasis on the development of speaking, listening, reading and writing skills within English, and number skills within mathematics. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy are becoming embedded in the school's work and are helping to ensure consistency of approach.
22. At present, there are too few opportunities for pupils to use and develop ICT skills through other subjects, which lowers standards by Year 4. The computer suite provides good chances for pupils to practise their skills and for teaching to guide and support the class. However, there are no computers sited in classrooms to allow pupils to use them in a more integrated way. The school has a programme for development in this area, which is just coming on stream. Although, the school correctly identified an under-emphasis upon providing pupils with chances to use their mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding in other subjects and to solve problems; this is still a relative weakness within mathematics. At times, worksheets are overused, which sometimes reduces pupils' opportunities to develop different ways of recording their work. The development of mapping skills in geography is unsatisfactory

because skills are not taught in logical sequence. Singing in music, investigational work in science in Years 3 and 4, and knowledge and understanding of the works of famous artists in art require greater emphasis to secure pupils' learning.

23. The quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils in the Reception class are very good because there are some effective links between the different areas of learning that bring purpose and meaning to children's learning. Children take part in a wide range of well-planned and carefully structured activities and experiences, which give them a good start to their education.
24. The curriculum is well organised to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs, enabling them to make mostly good gains in learning over time. Work is usually matched to their needs in English and mathematics, which enable them to steadily develop their literacy and number skills. However, work is not always as well matched in other subjects, although pupils are always well supported.
25. The range and number of after-school activities is currently small. This is because the school has had other more important priorities since it opened. However, there are plans for their further development in the near future. Visits into the locality and to the nearby library extend pupils' cultural knowledge and reading. Visitors, such as theatre groups, also enrich the pupils' learning experiences.
26. Teachers ensure that the contributions of all pupils are valued and celebrated. Pupils with special educational needs take a full part in the life of the school. All pupils are learning to respect one another and support each other's learning, although at times a small number are allowed to call out, which interrupts the pace of learning. The school successfully provides learning opportunities for all pupils, whatever their age, ability, background or ethnicity, to help them make mostly satisfactory progress as they move through the school.
27. Teachers give good emphasis to pupils' personal, social and health education. Pupils' social and moral development is promoted successfully. All who work in school are good models of social behaviour because they show respect for and relate well to others. The school's motto of "We Care" successfully underpins all aspects of its work. Pupils become good citizens by supporting local and national charities. They learn to respect each other's points of view through occasional discussions about issues which concern them. They develop a good awareness of the need for rules based on safety, protection and fairness. Teachers regularly give praise to enhance pupils' self esteem and encourage them to do their best. Older pupils have some special duties, which help to increase levels of initiative and responsibility. Sex education is included in the school's health education programme, in line with agreed policy. Pupils do not yet learn about the use and misuse of drugs, although this is planned. The health education programme makes pupils aware of a healthy diet, hygiene and exercise for maintaining a healthy life style.
28. The community makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning. For example, pupils benefit from links with a local football club. However, there is scope for further development in establishing links, for example, with local businesses. There are developing links with the school to which most pupils will transfer at eleven, and links with local primary schools are established.
29. The spiritual development of pupils is satisfactory. Assemblies are good, and help develop spiritual awareness through stories and prayers. Music is used appropriately to establish calmness as pupils enter and leave assemblies, and older pupils have some opportunities to experience the different moods of music. Pupils begin to appreciate and respond to the beauty of the natural world. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to experience the joy and excitement of learning in lessons, except in the Reception class.

30. The cultural development of pupils is satisfactory. Pupils are given insight into previous cultures, such as the Vikings and Romans. In geography, they learn about other cultures, for example, about Indian peoples' lives, their values and beliefs. There is a satisfactory range of reading material to help make pupils aware of the richness and diversity of other cultures. Religious education and music make a sound contribution to the cultural development of pupils. For example, they learn about the impact and music of the Beatles in assemblies. However, art makes too little a contribution because there is little work about famous artists from around the world. There are too few opportunities at present for pupils to celebrate the culture of the area.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31. The school has effective procedures for child protection and for the welfare of its pupils. Health and safety procedures are good. The procedures for promoting and monitoring behaviour are successful and those for eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. There are good arrangements for assessing and monitoring the pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics. In other subjects these are developing soundly.
32. There is a designated person with appropriate training to co-ordinate child protection procedures; the procedures are sensibly and responsibly applied. The governors are fully involved with ensuring health and safety and procedures are carried out conscientiously. For example, regular checks are undertaken of portable electrical and fire equipment; all statutory requirements are met.
33. There are very good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance. For example, first day monitoring is undertaken to ensure that possible problems are identified early and the school uses the Parental Involvement Officer for home visits if necessary. There is a computerised system, which is very useful for analysing reasons for absence and identifying pupils who have poor rates of attendance. The very small amount of time allocated to the school for use of the Educational Welfare Officer is used very well to focus upon those families requiring the greatest level of support. The action plan to raise the attendance rate has been very effective because figures have improved upon last year's rate, and is now close to the national average.
34. The staff know the pupils well and provide good support and care for them during the school day. The school takes full advantage of outside specialist support and agencies to improve their procedures and guide the pupils. These include the educational psychologist, local community police liaison officer, St John's Ambulance Brigade and speech and language therapists. There is very good support from and close liaison with the school nurse, which enables the staff to be fully aware of pupils with any special requirements.
35. There are well-established procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and the school uses positive behaviour management consistently throughout the school. The procedures for dealing with bullying are well known by all of the pupils and are particularly successful; many pupils express how they feel safe at Thorpe and how much happier they are now than in their previous schools.
36. There are good procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress, which follow the national guidelines. These are applied formally in English, mathematics and science and more informally in other subjects. These procedures have been fairly recently introduced because of the new nature of the school. The impact of them upon raising standards and influencing teaching and learning is not fully realised. The record keeping is good and target setting helps teachers to identify where pupils should be by the end of the year. The use of these targets is not always as well focused as it should be to identify in planning what different groups should be learning. This situation leads to a lack of support for learning, especially planning work to build on what the pupils already know. In the Foundation

Stage the assessment information is used much more effectively and contributes to the better learning there.

37. The pupils' records are efficiently kept, and contain useful documents about their achievements and personal progress to inform others working with them. These celebrate the pupils' achievements as well as providing further guidance for what the pupils need to learn next. The pupils' annual reports are very good and identify targets for improvement. Parents are very happy with the support and guidance that the school provides for their children.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38. The parents have very good views of the school and the work that it does. It has worked hard and successfully to improve the effectiveness of its links with parents. Very good information is given to parents about events in the school and to advise them of their children's progress. Parents make a very good contribution to their children's learning.
39. The parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting were very positive about the school and made no negative comments. This was confirmed by the high level of supportive comments of the parents who responded to the parental questionnaire. Minor concerns were expressed about the range of activities outside lessons, the amount of homework given and information about their children's progress.
40. It is true that there is a limited range of activities outside normal lessons and the school recognises this and has plans to address it. In light of the problems experienced in the last 18 months the headteacher and governors have concentrated upon maintaining a satisfactory standard of education for the pupils in their care. Homework is given consistently across the school and supports pupils' learning in lessons; it is particularly successful in developing pupils' reading skills. Information about pupils' progress is well recorded in the annual pupil reports for parents, which are very good. The reports set out clearly how well the pupils have done and what they need to do to improve further.
41. Parents appreciate the involvement of the Parental Involvement Officer, the coffee mornings and the training organised by the school for them. These include the Better Reading and computer courses. Parents feel well equipped to support their children's learning and it has given some of them the confidence to extend their training further. Parents feel that they are very much involved in the life of the school and like the way there is always time for them to talk with staff. They are confident to raise any concerns they may have safe in the knowledge that they are listened to and treated fairly.
42. There is a very well presented prospectus and an informative governors' annual report which provide very good information for parents. Regular and colourful newsletters to keep the parents' in touch with events in the school supplement this information.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

43. The headteacher provides a very good lead because she has maintained a clear vision and direction for the school over the past 18 months against a background of uncertainty. She has introduced systems, arrangements, policies and procedures to support the work of teachers and governors. Her achievements are considerable when set against the difficulties, which have included staff changes and the threat of the school closing three months after opening; this was only finally resolved in November last year. Her clear mission is to ensure that the school is at the heart of the local community by providing high quality education as well as care, support and nurture for pupils, their families and the community at large. She has the drive and ability to achieve this. She inspires a sense of commitment and shared purpose amongst staff and governors because of her determination to make her vision a reality.

44. The acting deputy headteacher, who provides children in the Reception class with a good start to their schooling, ably supports the headteacher. Together they form an effective team, actively seeking to improve standards. For example, the headteacher has recently introduced the detailed analysis of test and assessment data as a means of tracking pupils' progress to help her to establish rigorous targets for improvement. It is too early to assess the impact of these measures in helping to raise standards but it provides a good starting point for future planning.
45. The school's improvement plan is good because it gives clear points to the future developments in the long and short term. There is a focus on raising standards, especially in literacy, numeracy and ICT. It provides a framework for staff and governors because it sets clear targets, establishes who will oversee each task and identifies completion dates and the resources to get the job done. There are good links to the budget and to the systems for monitoring spending. All staff and governors take part in the improvement planning process to enable the plan to provide an effective steer for the school.
46. The school's procedures for monitoring the quality of education are rigorous in most areas. The headteacher has initiated a thorough and analytical programme of monitoring of teaching and learning in lessons, which enables her to identify some of the strengths and weaknesses in her small teaching team. However, she does not yet monitor pupils' work for consistency and quality. As a result, weaknesses in handwriting and presentation, and levels of challenge in work given to pupils, have not been identified and are yet to be addressed.
47. The governing body is fully involved in helping to shape the future direction of the school. This is largely due to the experienced chair and vice-chair. They ensure that all responsibilities are carried out and set a very good example to the committed and enthusiastic new group of governors. Relevant committees are recently established and have clear terms of reference. Governors carry out their responsibilities efficiently because outcomes of meetings are recorded and fed back to meetings of the full governing body, which are held each term. The governing body, under the effective and involved leadership of the chair, who has a very good working relationship with the headteacher, holds the school accountable for what it achieves. Governors are increasingly involved in monitoring the teaching, the standards pupils achieve and the school's overall performance. They are fully involved in monitoring the progress towards the achievement of targets in the school improvement plan. They know what the strengths of the school are and what further developments are needed.
48. The school has a good performance management programme. The headteacher gives high priority to providing professional support for all staff, teaching and non-teaching, both by support in school and by giving them access to appropriate in-service training courses. The school has good procedures for the induction of all new staff. The mentor of the newly qualified teacher gives good support to her and this is enabling her to settle into her new post, develop her teaching skills and play an active part in the life of the school.
49. Issues relating to special educational needs are managed well. The special educational needs co-ordinator conscientiously maintains and updates the special educational needs register, and consults with class teachers regularly to update them on new requirements relating to special educational needs. Support staff have clear roles and responsibilities, work well and are valued. They provide good support for pupils with special educational needs.
50. Financial planning and monitoring are good. Financial planning is thorough. It ensures that the school's budget is used in the best interests of pupils and that additional grants are used for their intended purposes. The governing body uses the principles of best value well to ensure competition in tendering, for example for the new fencing. It challenges the school and questions the level of spending, planned improvements and how well pupils are doing. There is a higher than recommended carry forward, which is related to the way new schools are funded to allow development to be suitably supported. This carry forward reduces each year as new year groups and aspects of the curriculum come on stream.

51. Daily routines are well established and the school runs smoothly. The headteacher and administrator have established working practices that minimise overlap of responsibility and result in the school's administration and organisation being efficient. A bursar undertakes regular budget monitoring and completes good financial reports for the full governing body and its financial committee. Pupils' records, attendance data, performance data, progress reports, school policies and other documents are all produced, stored and analysed electronically in order to make aspects of management and administration more efficient.
52. The match of teachers to the demands of the curriculum is placing a strain upon subject leadership. This is because subject leadership is managed solely by the head and acting deputy headteacher. One of the teachers is at the beginning of her teaching career and requires support to help implement the requirements of the curriculum. The other teacher is on a supply teaching contract. They are not currently able to support or provide help with subject leadership because of their relative inexperience. The enormous subject responsibilities, which therefore fall on the headteacher's shoulders, make workloads in some subjects unmanageable, for example, talking with pupils to gauge their levels of knowledge and understanding and analysing pupils' work to ensure that planning is implemented successfully and is meeting the needs of the different groups within the classes. Classroom assistants are qualified and experienced. They work closely with teachers and support pupils well with their learning.
53. The accommodation, a former middle school, which has been completely refurbished, is clean and bright and has ample space to support the teaching of the National Curriculum. Small and large halls provide ideal spaces for assemblies and physical education. Learning resources are good and teachers make good use of available equipment. The computer suite is a good resource, but, because of the stage of development of ICT, is not yet fully used to support learning in all subjects of the curriculum. Book stock in the library is satisfactory and is mostly attractively displayed to develop in pupils a love of literature.
54. Pupils enter the school with attainment levels which are below average. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The number of pupils identified with special educational needs is below average; these pupils make good progress. Problems resulting from the numbers of pupils who have joined the school each term since it opened are soundly managed by the staff, despite the difficulties which this brings. These detrimental factors along with small cohort numbers contribute to fluctuating standards from year to year. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with some good features. Behaviour, relationships and personal development are good. Leadership and management are effective and the school runs smoothly. Taking all of these factors into account as well as the overall standards that the school attains, the school gives satisfactory value for money. There is a clear potential for improvement once the systems, procedures and policies are fully embedded in the work of this new school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

55. The headteacher, governors and key staff should

1) Raise standards by Year 4 in:

a) Mathematics by:

- improving the opportunities that pupils have to use and apply their mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding in solving 'real-life' problems in mathematical activities and in other subjects of the curriculum.

Paragraphs: 5, 22 and 76

b) ICT by:

- ensuring that pupils have the chance to use more regularly their ICT skills to support their work in other subjects; and
- improving pupils' knowledge and understanding of how ICT supports and helps them with their own work and of its use in the wider world.

Paragraphs: 7, 22, 74, 78, 86, 89, 92, 94-96, 102 and 105.

c) Religious education by:

- ensuring that learning opportunities build upon pupils' previous knowledge more effectively to give them a better knowledge and understanding of faiths other than Christianity; and
- ensuring that pupils learn *from* religion as well as *about* religion.

Paragraphs: 7, 106 and 107.

d) Music by:

- ensuring that learning opportunities build upon a secure knowledge of what the pupils' already know and understand; and
- ensuring that enough emphasis is placed upon the process of developing musical skills, knowledge and understanding to practise and refine a performance or composition.

Paragraphs: 7, 97, 100 and 101.

e) Geography by:

- ensuring that pupils are taught mapping skills systematically and that work planned for them in this area meets the needs of the pupils more effectively.

Paragraphs: 7, 22, 87 and 89.

2) Improve the quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 to 4 by:

- making better use of the targets identified for groups of pupils to inform planning more effectively;
- ensuring that the tasks, especially when pupils are working independently, provide enough challenge to keep the rate of learning as high as at other times in the lesson;
- evaluating the rate of pupils' progress over time through analysing pupils' completed work and talking with pupils and then taking effective action to deal with any weaknesses identified.

Paragraphs: 2, 4, 5, 7, 18, 22, 36, 46, 63, 66, 68, 71, 76, 78, 89, 92, 95, 101 and 105.

In addition to the areas for improvement above, the school should take measures to:

- improve the standards of presentation and pupils' handwriting by Year 4;
Paragraphs: 4, 18, 58, 68, 74 and 78; and,
- increase the opportunities for Year 3 and 4 for investigational work in science.
Paragraphs: 6 and 22.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

19

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	1	6	11	1	0	0
Percentage	0	5	32	58	5	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	58
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	21

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	5

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	20
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	7.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete 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	34	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Because fewer than ten pupils took the tests for pupils in Year 2 in 2002 the results are omitted from the report. This is in line with the governors' reporting arrangements to parents.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.79
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	12.1
Average class size	19.3

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	35

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4.3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.8
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	296964
Total expenditure	248938
Expenditure per pupil	8298
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	48026

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	58
Number of questionnaires returned	17

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	88	12	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	94	0	6	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	65	35	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	47	35	12	6	0
The teaching is good.	94	6	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	65	24	6	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	94	6	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	88	6	6	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	53	41	6	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	88	12	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	82	12	6	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	29	6	12	29

Other issues raised by parents

At the meeting, parents expressed their support for the school and about how well the staff have managed during the period of threatened closure that many parents found upsetting.

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

56. Children get off to a flying start because the work for them is very well planned. This makes activities exciting and interesting, ensuring that children develop good working habits and that they learn to work with independence and confidence. The children benefit from the rich and varied curriculum that links the different areas of learning together very well and makes the best use of the time for teaching and learning. This raises standards quickly and most of the children are well on their way to achieving the goals set for them in all the areas of learning. They are taught all together in the Reception class; two teachers share some of the teaching to allow the acting deputy headteacher time to fulfil her management role and there is a full-time learning assistant.

Personal, social and emotional development

57. Children learn what is expected of them quickly because of the way that the teacher and other adults in the Reception class guide and support them. There is very good provision for developing children's personal skills because of the expert teaching. This provision underpins the work in the other areas of learning ensuring that children are well equipped to tackle activities independently. It provides a firm foundation for the children's learning. Teaching ensures that activities provide chances for children to develop independence and to work constructively with one another. Well-directed praise, support and encouragement ensure that children are happy to approach adults to seek help. They do this, often having tried things out for themselves, knowing their efforts will be appreciated. This is a strong reason why they form very good relationships with the adults who work with them and how well they learn to get on with one another. Already, most of the children sit quietly, knowing when to listen carefully and how to take turns when talking. This is evident, for example, when they listen to stories and they readily speak out in a familiar group. Sometimes, when excited, they find this more difficult. The strategies teachers use vary; for example, in a singing lesson some time was wasted settling children between songs because of the way the children were grouped, slowing the pace of their learning. It was difficult for the staff to work closely with children who were more restless as both were standing in front of the children. By comparison, when listening to stories, the adults sit within the group of children, encouraging them to listen and look at the pictures thus ensuring full concentration.

Communication, language and literacy

58. Children do well and quickly learn how to communicate their feelings and needs because of the way staff encourage them to offer their ideas. Good teaching ensures that children gain the early skills in reading and writing in a meaningful way thus strengthening their understanding and enjoyment of language. Reading well-loved stories and integrating the language used in other aspects of their work consolidate the children's understanding of new words and they respond well to them. For example, when working on the large gymnastic apparatus, children knew how to move because they understood what was meant by over, under and through. They had come across this language when listening to 'We're all going on a Bear Hunt', and were able to apply these words in a different setting. When reading aloud, teachers use good expression to capture children's interest and to emphasis the drama of what is happening. Children join in readily, memorising the sequence of the story and using the pictures to help them. The repetition of popular stories provides the first stages of understanding story structure and in developing children's skills of recall to support their reading. Support from parents and the high level of dialogue between home and school ensure that children are supported well with their reading. Parents know what is expected because reading diaries point out how well the children are doing. Even though there is a high level of talk and children are confident to speak about what they are doing only the higher attaining children speak

clearly and organise their thoughts. Children's standard of talking is below that of their ability to listen. Children have many opportunities to handle tools to help develop their skills in writing. Higher attaining children write short stories, often with recognisable words, for example, about 'Penguin Small'. Average attaining and lower attaining children know that words and letters carry meaning and use these to record stories they have read. Children are beginning to form recognisable letters but many of these are not yet correctly formed and not enough emphasis is placed upon this in the early stages of writing.

Mathematical development

59. Children have some very good chances to develop their mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding through using stories and good quality resources. For example, in a very good mathematics session, teaching expertly developed children's mental skills and consolidated the use of symbols such as + and =. The higher and average attaining children were developing a good understanding of how to choose the largest number first and then to count on the smaller number when totalling two amounts. They used this well to solve mentally a series of problems involving numbers up to ten. Children's interest was captured because the task was set out as a story. As the prince and princess went on their journey they added golden coins to the number in their purse. Children were told, "this is shut your eyes maths" and were encouraged to visualise how much was in the purse at different points in the story. Higher attaining children quickly grasped what was involved and added accurately. The task increased in complexity as larger numbers were used so that a high demand was placed on the more competent children. The average and lower attaining children were able to take part at the start of the story and strengthen their mental skills as well. Subsequent group work was well focused to ensure that all children had a mathematical experience at a level suitable to their needs. Almost all of the children count reliably up to ten because of the good chances given for repetition and practice. Teachers use songs and rhymes successfully to strengthen children's mathematical development and many children show an interest in numbers and counting. Higher attaining children make good use of language such as next to, bigger and smaller than, to explain what they know about numbers. For example, when asked, "Which of those numbers is nine?" they confidently replied, "It is next to eight and smaller than ten!" Most average attaining children recognise the numerals from zero to nine and all children can count objects accurately to at least five. Good teaching ensures that learning is meaningful and children's mathematical development increases at a fast pace.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

60. Stories and interesting activities provide a good starting point for developing children's understanding of their own world and that further afield. Teaching is good because there are many chances for children to investigate objects and materials. Activities that allow children to build and construct models and use these to develop an understanding, for example of how to join different materials, successfully increase their understanding of how things work and what they might be used for. Children gain greater insight about their own cultural roots by visiting places of interest in the local area and this supports the good learning going on in class. For example, a visit to the local church resulted in the children making their own models and recording their visit using photographs, as well as their own writing and drawings. ICT was also used to record word-processed accounts of what they saw, to describe some of the items they looked at and to label their work. The many happy, smiling faces in the photographs reflect how much the children enjoyed the visit. Themes such as 'houses' and 'finding out about themselves' provide some useful opportunities for children to compare their life with, for example, characters in stories such as 'The Three Little Pigs'. As in the other areas of learning, teaching makes useful links between the different areas of learning. Children's knowledge of living things and the wider world is consolidated well in stories and rhymes as well as being told factual information about, for example, animals which live in cold climates.

Physical development

61. Children have good chances to develop their physical skills in the classroom, in the outdoor area and in the hall. Teaching is good because again the links made with the other areas of learning allow children to consolidate new learning in meaningful ways. Children move with confidence and safety when working with large apparatus. They follow instructions well and incorporate different ways of moving such as slithering, rolling, crawling and jumping to find their way over, under and through, for example, ladders and climbing frames. They negotiate with others and solve problems amicably when their pathways cross. When handling paintbrushes, working with tools in the sand and building models they use them with growing dexterity. When making, for example, teddy bears they used scissors carefully and applied glue with developing control. Some children moulded dough by pushing, pulling and squeezing and used tools sensibly and carefully to model their bears' eyes, mouths and ears. This work linked well with aspects of communication, language and literacy and in developing children's understanding and knowledge of the world they live in.

Creative development

62. The classroom organisation and how activities are planned provide many opportunities for children to explore colour, texture, shape and form and express their feelings and idea through talk and by using their imagination. Children use the stories read to them to support their imaginative play. For example, a group of boys made the cave where the bear lived and made pathways in the sand to show the journey the bear hunters took. They retold the story together with good recall and embellished aspects of the story by making bear-like sounds. Interactions from adults often support the children's learning well by posing questions to extend their thinking and talking. Children are given ample time to explore new experiences and revisit those they enjoy most. This helps them to try out different ways, for example, of painting or to experiment with water. Often children concentrate up to 20 minutes on these sorts of activities because they play so well together and they become engrossed in what they are doing. Children enjoy expressing themselves in songs and rhymes; they join in with actions willingly and have a repertoire of songs they can draw upon. Planning is good and provides opportunities for children to express themselves imaginatively in role-play and drama.

ENGLISH

63. By the end of Year 2 and Year 4, standards in English are average. Pupils make sound progress in English because teaching is satisfactory. This is partly due to the systematic teaching of the skills pupils need to read and write and the chances teachers provide for pupils to develop these skills further in subjects such as history and geography. Pupils take on new learning at a satisfactory pace because teachers have a secure understanding of how to teach literacy. They share information clearly and explain to the pupils what they are to learn; this gives purpose to most of the work undertaken. Whilst planning sets out what the different groups in the class are to learn, the activities to support the learning are not always demanding enough of the higher attaining pupils. For example, teachers often give all pupils the same task, which higher attaining pupils work through first rather than working at a more challenging level from the start. By comparison, pupils with special educational needs often have well-structured tasks that help them to build up small steps of learning that provide success in what they are doing. ICT is used to support pupils' reading and writing skills, for example, to research information, compile lists and re-draft writing.
64. Pupils have some good opportunities to talk with each other to improve their speaking skills. This is a feature not only in English but also in other subjects, such as music and design and technology. The pupils make good use of these chances, often working together sensibly, and teachers take these opportunities to introduce new language and help pupils to use, for example, grammatical terms correctly. In spite of this, standards in speaking and listening are below those expected for pupils in Year 2 and 4 because pupils often find it difficult to describe their experiences clearly and to develop their ideas further without adult help. Only the more

confident or higher attaining pupils expand on their answers and even then they need further prompting from teachers. Most pupils listen carefully and this shows in the relevant comments they make and the questions they ask to develop their understanding further. The school has correctly identified speaking and listening as a weakness and has put in place further training for staff.

65. Pupils build soundly upon the reading skills taught in literacy lessons and standards are average by Year 2 and 4. Pupils benefit from the involvement of their parents and helpers in supporting their reading at home and at school. Teachers provide useful comments in the pupils' reading diaries. These aid helpers and parents by directing them to the areas requiring the greatest support and they also celebrate the successes in the pupils' reading, which builds confidence. Pupils have the confidence to tackle unfamiliar words because teaching ensures they develop strategies to cope with this.
66. By Year 2, pupils enjoy listening to stories but find it quite difficult to explain what they like about the books they read. Whilst they use their knowledge of letter sounds to help them read more difficult words they do not readily use strategies such as reading on in a passage to work out the meaning of a word. However, some of the higher attaining pupils explained how they might use the pictures to help them gain understanding of what was written. The below average speaking skills inhibit the pupils' ability to talk more widely about the books they have read and the characters in them. Some aspects of teaching do not fully develop pupils' skills in reading for meaning because they are not demanding enough. For example, in one lesson, pupils spent time cutting out phrases to arrange in the correct order to show how well they understood the text. The level of reading in this task was minimal in comparison to the time taken to cut and glue the strips of paper. Higher attaining and average attaining pupils, with help, explain the differences between fiction and non-fiction books and how they are arranged in separate sections in the library. They understand the purpose of an index and a glossary and that the index is arranged in alphabetical order. They find it more difficult to use their knowledge of the alphabet to find information quickly.
67. By Year 4, pupils share their enjoyment of reading confidently. Higher attaining pupils are tackling some challenging texts such as 'The Hobbit' and abridged editions of 'Jane Eyre'. They make reasoned choices using the illustrations on the cover of the book, the title and the short explanation on the back cover as a starting point. Often they will check that the language in the book is not too difficult by reading short excerpts. Like pupils in Year 2, they are less sure about how they would set about finding the meaning of an unfamiliar word but with help suggested using dictionaries. When reading aloud a short prepared text, they read accurately and fluently but only the higher attaining pupils put in expression to add interest to the listener. They recall key points from stories and talk about the characters but, like pupils in other year groups, find it more difficult to expand on their comments and observations. Pupils in Year 4 have a clear understanding of how to access information from non-fiction books but are only just starting to use clues such as titles, sub-headings and bold type to quickly find the information they need.
68. Teachers provide satisfactory opportunities for pupils to write for different purposes, such as instructions, accounts and descriptive writing. This is true in subjects such as design and technology, history and, particularly in the youngest class, religious education. Pupils are gaining a secure understanding of how stories are structured but sometimes chances are missed to take the pupils' learning further. For example, in Year 3 and 4, average attaining pupils in a lesson threw a dice to build up a sequence of events for a story. Rather than challenging them to expand on each sentence, some were asked to add some descriptive words and others to copy the text. For one group this exercise essentially became a handwriting task rather than an opportunity for them to expand their language and writing skills further. The interesting start to the lesson, when some lively discussion took place about themes in stories, was not capitalised upon in the independent work that followed. By the time pupils are in Year 2, they write short pieces of text, which have a clear beginning, middle and end. By Year 4, pupils extend their ideas and their writing sets out these ideas in more

complex sentences. Throughout the school, pupils use their knowledge of letter sounds to help them spell and, by Year 4, the higher attaining pupils spell mainly accurately and other groups make sensible attempts that are easy to understand in spite of not always being spelled correctly. Some of the gains made in handwriting during the first year that the school was open have not been maintained and standards are below those expected for pupils in Year 2 and Year 4. Not enough attention is given to encouraging the correct formation of letters and the present methods of developing handwriting are not proving effective in raising standards. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and provide some useful comments summarising how well the pupils have done, which builds the pupils' self-esteem and provides a useful pointer to others working with the pupils.

69. Work that pupils are expected to do at home supports pupils' skills in reading well and contributes soundly to developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of spelling patterns. Parents support the home/school reading partnership successfully.
70. Pupils enjoy their English work. They like hearing stories because teachers read these expressively and capture their interest. They know how to work on their own because this is expected and most manage this. During lessons almost all of them listen sensibly and most take part willingly in discussions. At times, one or two of the more confident pupils demand more of the teachers' attention and calling out interrupts the flow of the lesson. This also has an influence upon the involvement of other pupils and teachers have to work harder at these times to ensure they are gaining a picture of how well pupils understand the work being covered.
71. Since the school opened, the co-ordination of English has provided a clear steer for teachers by setting out what is expected. The targets identified for helping pupils of different attainments to make good progress are well conceived but as yet the teachers' planning does not take enough account of these targets when setting up tasks to challenge the different groups. This explains the sound progress made in Years 1 to 4 as opposed to the good progress made by the children in the Foundation Stage.

MATHEMATICS

72. Standards in mathematics are average by the end of Years 2 and 4. Most pupils' progress is satisfactory as they move through the school; some pupils, mostly the higher attaining, do not make the best possible progress.
73. Most pupils' progress is satisfactory because the subject is soundly led, providing a secure framework for teaching and learning. There are clear plans for its continued development. All teachers place good emphasis on developing important number skills. Teachers ensure that they follow the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy. Information gained from tests is helping teachers to identify weaknesses and set targets to help raise standards. There is a good range of resources to support learning. Regular and thorough monitoring of lessons by the headteacher is gradually improving the quality of teaching in the subject. Teachers' marking is used well to help pupils move forward, although not all pupils act on the advice that teachers give.
74. Some pupils do not always make the best possible gains in learning because teachers do not always give pupils work which is matched to their abilities. For example, lower attaining pupils in Year 3 sometimes carry out the same work as higher attaining pupils in Year 4 and this leads to them struggling with the tasks. ICT is not used well enough to promote learning in mathematics and too little attention is given to the development of number skills through other subjects. The headteacher does not monitor pupils' work to help identify weaknesses, such as the low standard of presentation, especially apparent in Years 3 and 4.

75. Most pupils make sound progress in the development of understanding of number, shape, space and measures. To date pupils have not completed much work covering handling and interpreting data and this area is weaker as a result. By the end of Year 2, pupils use mathematical names for common two-dimensional shapes and identify right angles as measures of turn. They are starting to use standard units to measure the length of objects. They are developing a secure understanding of the value of digits depending on their place, for example, that the one in 15 is worth ten. They are beginning to represent and solve simple number problems. They learn to understand that data can be collected and presented in different forms, such as bar charts and pictograms. By the end of Year 4, pupils count in multiples of five and seven, start to identify number patterns, and round to the nearest 100.
76. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Good aspects of teaching were evident in a lesson in Year 1 and 2. High expectations of what pupils could do resulted in challenging work, and pupils put effort into getting their work right. Purposeful questioning developed clear understanding of new knowledge and a good choice and use of resources ensured that learning was effective. In this lesson, high levels of enthusiasm from the teacher, good relationships, secure subject knowledge and a brisk pace helped to keep pupils motivated and involved. These positive features ensured that pupils responded well. Weaker aspects of teaching relate to the limited use of 'real-life' mathematics, to help pupils appreciate that numbers are all around us in our everyday lives, and to help generate increased interest and enjoyment. Teaching gives too little emphasis to solving problems and encouraging pupils to communicate their thinking to help develop understanding. This is because worksheets and workbooks are often overused as a resource for learning; work is sometimes not hard enough and pupils are not as motivated to learn. Pupils are sometimes kept busy in lessons with routine tasks, for example colouring in shapes and graphs, which do not extend mathematical understanding or increase their rate of learning.

SCIENCE

77. Standards are broadly average by the end of Years 2 and 4; progress for most pupils is satisfactory. Planning indicates that all required areas of the science curriculum are covered, and teachers are starting to assess pupils' work to discover what pupils know and understand to inform their planning more effectively. The subject is led well and there are clear and rigorous plans for its continued improvement, such as the development of investigative approaches to facilitate learning. The school has good resources, which help to extend learning.
78. Teaching and learning are mostly satisfactory as pupils move through the school. Positive features of teaching include good relationships with pupils, and some good choices and use of resources, which reinforce learning. In some lessons, purposeful and regular questioning and secure subject knowledge coupled with effective marking help pupils to move forward in their scientific understanding. These strengths help to ensure that pupils respond well to science and make at least sound gains in learning. Learning is slower, however, when pupils of different abilities complete the same activities and some tasks, such as colouring, lack scientific focus. In Years 3 and 4, there is not enough emphasis on investigative work to enable pupils to develop important skills such as predicting and fair testing. There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their writing, number and ICT skills in science lessons. At present, there is no evaluation of pupils' completed work to identify strengths and areas for improvement to help raise standards and improve, for example, presentation, which is unacceptably varied from one class to another.
79. Despite these weaknesses, progress is sound for many pupils, including those with special educational needs, in their acquisition of scientific knowledge and understanding. By the end of Year 2, pupils know the names of body parts, begin to distinguish between natural and man-made materials, and can make a simple electrical circuit using batteries, bulbs and wires. They are starting to obtain, consider and present evidence gained through investigation, which

is given good emphasis in the Years 1 and 2 class. For example, pupils discover through investigation, when they roll different toy vehicles along a flat surface, that there is a reason for things speeding up, slowing down and changing direction. They develop some of the skills of scientific enquiry, such as predicting, observing, measuring, recording, and considering what makes a fair test. By the end of Year 4, pupils learn that it is gravitational attraction which pulls objects down towards earth. They learn the difference between materials which conduct heat and those that insulate. They classify insects and record their findings in simple tables.

ART AND DESIGN

80. Standards in most aspects of art and design are close to national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 4. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their ability to explore and develop ideas using a variety of skills, techniques and materials. Teachers have a secure subject knowledge and follow clear guidelines to help pupils to learn effectively. Sketchbooks are used well to teach a range of skills, and recently introduced assessment arrangements help to ensure that pupils build on earlier learning.
81. By the end of Year 2, pupils show a developing eye for detail as they carefully draw a natural object. They use microscopes and viewfinders to see how fabric is woven and sketch what they see. They use a computer graphics program to produce colourful abstract designs and draw buildings and fruit, showing a developing use of shading, and increasing detail. By the end of Year 4, pupils study patterns and texture in nature and experiment with woven patterns. They complete and print graphic designs, evaluating and revising the printing process to produce better results.
82. The scrutiny of artwork reveals teaching is satisfactory. Sound features of teaching include appropriate use of the digital camera to help improve the quality of pupils' work, and effective encouragement given which develops the pupils' confidence. There is a suitable emphasis on the development of essential skills and knowledge of materials. This enables pupils to develop their ideas and try out their skills using different techniques in drawing and painting. At times, teachers do not always explain well enough to pupils what they want them to do or question them carefully to check their understanding. For example, pupils were told very fleetingly about the use of viewfinders in framing an object. Pupils did not grasp that moving the viewfinder altered what was seen in the frame and that they could be turned to provide a horizontal landscape or vertical portrait view. Although this impeded progress to an extent, most pupils enjoyed the art lesson and settled to the drawing task, concentrating well.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

83. Standards in design and technology are as expected for pupils in Years 2 and 4. Teaching is satisfactory and the pupils' rate of learning is as expected. Over time pupils make sound progress in acquiring skills in designing and making and in their knowledge and understanding of how things are made and how they work.
84. The pupils undertake projects each term that draw upon national guidance. Teachers adapt this guidance successfully to take account of the ages and needs of the pupils. Within these projects there are some useful chances for pupils to develop their reading, writing and mathematical skills. For example, pupils write up what they have done and what they have found out and label diagrams using their knowledge of capital letters and full stops to set out their work in a coherent way. Teachers introduce pupils to a range of materials so that by Year 4 they are making some reasoned choices about what would be the best materials to make a picture frame. Useful links with science, drawing upon pupils' previous learning, strengthen this understanding and bring purpose to the learning in both design and technology and science. In Year 2, pupils are learning how to strengthen their structures and how to animate them using different fasteners to join parts of their model. In both classes, teachers make appropriate use of looking at and investigating models and products to provide a starting point.

This gives pupils insight about how items are made and how they can use this to help them with their own planning and designs.

85. Pupils in Year 2 choose materials best suited for the purpose, for example, of making a dancing figure and strengthen the limbs by adding pipe cleaners and lollipop sticks to provide greater rigidity. Their finished models reflect their design and some well-conceived questioning encourages pupils to refine their thinking and evaluate their work. This is also evident by Year 4, with a greater level of investigation beforehand into making their product suit a design brief. For example, pupils asked their parents about the shape and colour of the picture frames they were going to make for them. Their designs showed a good relationship between what was expected and their finished frames matched their expectations well. In a lesson seen in Years 3 and 4, the pupils responded well to the teacher's enthusiasm for the subject and this led to a good understanding of the importance of design and careful planning. The lively discussion thoroughly developed pupils' understanding of the different materials used for money containers though at times the confident and higher attaining pupils tended to dominate the discussion. As a result the more reticent and lower attaining pupils do not keep up with the rest of the class.
86. At present, there are few links with ICT to develop pupils' learning further, other than to use the computer for word processing. This is to some extent beyond the teachers' control as ICT is still at an early stage of development and access to computers is restricted to the computer suite. Co-ordination of design and technology has provided clear guidance for teachers. The teachers' use of the national guidance is providing a clear framework for ensuring sound progress.

GEOGRAPHY

87. Standards in geography are below national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 4; pupils' geographical knowledge builds satisfactorily but their mapping skills are weaker.
88. By the end of Year 2, pupils complete plans of the playground, recognising and remarking on the features of places. They identify different types of houses, such as terraced and detached, and in a walk in the locality they carried out a simple survey of traffic that passed the school. By looking at road signs in the vicinity of the school they began to consider issues related to road safety. Pupils are starting to express views about the local area, and to ask and answer questions about places. By the end of Year 4, pupils are able to map out a route of a journey around school, showing developing spatial awareness, but do not yet include a key for their map to aid understanding. They show an awareness of localities further afield when they research information about India, using ICT. They consider what to look for in a good location for a settlement, distinguishing between town, countryside and seaside settlements.
89. Teaching and learning are satisfactory because pupils are gaining a satisfactory understanding of peoples and places. However, mapping skills are not taught in a logical sequence to support learning and this slows pupils' progress in this area. For example, younger pupils are introduced to world maps before they have the capacity to understand them. Pupils often spend time colouring maps; this does not extend their geographical understanding well enough nor does it make best use of the time for learning. At present, pupils' work is not checked for quality and consistency, and weaker aspects are not identified or dealt with to ensure that the demand placed upon pupils is high enough. For example, pupils of different abilities complete the same work, which means the higher attaining pupils are not always challenged to do their best. Arrangements for assessing pupils' work to help track progress have yet to make a positive impact. Other weaknesses are evident. For example, standards of presentation are varied, with too few pupils taking a pride in their work. There are too few links with ICT to help develop knowledge, skills and understanding, although these are beginning to develop. The subject has a scheme of work, which provides a clear structure for teaching and learning, but this is not helping to raise standards because it is not being used to best effect to support the development of pupils' skills in mapping.

HISTORY

90. Standards in history are close to national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 4. As they move through the school, pupils make sound progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of events, people and changes in the past. Resources, such as historical objects and photographs, are used well to instil interest and involvement among pupils and to support learning successfully. History is communicated effectively in different ways, such as through stories, diagrams, pictures, and drama, to increase pupils' motivation. Good links with other subjects such as English extend pupils' understanding further, for example when pupils in Year 2 pretend they are Samuel Pepys and write an entry in their diaries. Visitors, such as a theatre company who performed a play about life in ancient Egypt to pupils in Year 4, also contribute successfully to pupils' learning.
91. By the end of Year 2 pupils are starting to recognise some of the differences in the way the past can be represented. They begin to answer questions about the past by looking at old and new toys. They show an increasing sense of the passage of time when they compare modern kitchens with those in the past. They show knowledge and understanding to nationally required levels, for example, about events leading up to the Great Fire of London. By the end of Year 4, pupils discover why the Romans invaded England. They learn about aspects of the way of life of the Romans, such as their architecture. In work about the ancient Egyptians, pupils put themselves in the place of the pharaoh and consider which of their treasures they would take with them to the next life.
92. There are some weaknesses, which slow the rate of learning and prevent pupils from making the best possible progress. At present, there are too few visits, within the local area and further afield, to help bring the subject to life for pupils. The recent introduction of consistent approaches to assessing and recording pupils' progress has yet to make an impact. The work given to pupils is still often the same irrespective of their level of attainment. Some tasks involve too much time being spent on activities such as colouring that do not extend pupils' historical understanding well enough. Links with ICT are under-represented, although there is evidence of the use of the Internet by pupils in Years 3 and 4, for historical research such as in work about the British Empire. Pupils, especially those in the class of oldest pupils, do not present their work neatly enough or take sufficient pride in their work.
93. Teaching and learning are sound. Positive features of teaching seen in a lesson in Years 1 and 2 include secure subject knowledge, good questioning to develop thinking and aid learning, and an enthusiastic approach. There was good use of praise, which helped to generate interest and involvement among pupils, and a good choice and use of resources helped to improve understanding. By comparison, time was not used to best effect to secure learning because calling out by a small number of pupils slowed the pace. Strategies to encourage pupils to wait their turn when speaking in whole-class discussions were not effective in this part of the lesson. The following independent work lacked a clear historical focus to help pupils consolidate their historical knowledge and understanding further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

94. Standards in ICT are below those expected for pupils in Year 2 and Year 4. The building of skills in ICT is satisfactory but there are gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding that result in lower than expected standards. For example, pupils are not sufficiently aware of how they can use ICT to help their learning in other subjects and how its use in the wider world has brought about many changes. The school has had a number of difficulties, beyond their control, in setting up some of the programme for teaching ICT; this is related to problems with the email facilities from the commercial server they employed. Within the school development plan, ICT is earmarked for further growth. The lack of easy access for pupils to computers other than in the computer suite limits their use as a tool for learning in other subjects. There

is clear guidance for teachers within the policy for teaching ICT that forms a secure framework for them in developing pupils' learning.

95. Teachers use the national guidance for teaching ICT and this provides a firm basis for developing pupils' learning. Suitable attention is given to the different ages and needs of the pupils. For example, sometimes effective support is provided by teachers and learning support assistants working with one age group each. At other times the lower attaining pupils receive additional adult support to guide them. This provides enough adult help to ensure that pupils can learn what is expected of them. Teachers share their knowledge of ICT clearly and this gives pupils a secure understanding of what they are learning and why. In a short, but effective, session in Years 3 and 4, some good links were made with pupils' previous learning. These developed pupils' understanding of constructing questionnaires and extended their knowledge of different ways of illustrating information graphically. This helped them to understand the importance of planning beforehand when gathering data. The pupils' speaking skills inhibited some of the learning because they found it difficult to describe the different types of graphs they had come across. They found it difficult to remember terms such as horizontal and vertical without prompts from the teacher. Nevertheless, they made some good attempts at suggesting the types of questions that might be asked and whether the answers would be in words or numbers. In this session, the teacher's secure knowledge was shared effectively with the pupils, and by the end of the lesson they were beginning to understand the need to plan carefully to make things happen and to consider carefully the expected outcomes. Pupils work hard when using computers to support their work. They act sensibly and share equipment fairly. Most pupils concentrate well because they enjoy the work and want to succeed. One or two find this more difficult and at these times teachers could do more to remind pupils of what is expected and ensure that they make sensible choices. For example, some lower attaining pupils in Year 3 struggled to choose a map of India that they could easily use to develop their understanding of its physical features.
96. By Year 2, pupils understand how to open programs and make choices, for example, to change the colour and size of text. They use computers to word process their writing and to present it in organised fashion. Pupils understand that this provides a finished piece of work that is often pleasing to the eye and error free. They make references to their favourite programs but find it difficult to explain why they enjoy using them and how they support them with their work. They thoroughly enjoy the opportunities they have to use computers but do not use the correct terminology, for example to describe the different functions on the toolbar. They are aware of the digital camera and how it is used to record events taking place in school. They are less sure about the uses of other forms of technology for recording or communicating information, for example tape and video recorders and telephones. By Year 4, the pupils' understanding of the Internet and its use to gather and find information quickly is secure. Pupils have researched information about India in geography and for historical topics. They talk clearly about how the Internet provides a great deal more information than a book and that finding the information can be quick and easy. They have some understanding of how technology might be used in the world outside school but need help in developing this further; for example, they know very little about the use of scanners in supermarkets. It is evident that pupils have a limited recall of the ICT work they learned in the period before they came to Thorpe. Whilst they can explain how to open, save and print their work they are unsure about how they would alter features in the text such as the size and colour. A number of pupils have computers at home and their knowledge of email and its use in communicating with others is better than their classmates' knowledge. Like some of the younger pupils, the older pupils are not sure of how different types of technology such as facsimile machines and camcorders can be used for communication purposes.

MUSIC

97. Standards in music are below those expected for pupils in Year 2 and Year 4. By Year 4, the pupils have made satisfactory progress since they started at Thorpe but gaps in their learning previous to this time result in their weak knowledge of different types of musical instruments

and how these can be used to develop their ideas, the beginnings of musical notation and the appreciation of music from other times and places. These weaker areas lower standards by Year 4.

98. There is clear guidance for teachers in the policy for teaching and learning. This provides a framework for planning; coupled with the national guidance it provides a secure basis for teachers' planning.
99. By Year 2, pupils are beginning to extend the range of musical instruments they know and develop a satisfactory understanding of the different playing techniques they can use to alter the sound the instruments make. This is because teaching ensures that pupils have time to handle and experiment with different musical instruments to consolidate their understanding. They have some knowledge of musical terms such as pitch and can relate this to the sounds they make with the different instruments. They are developing a satisfactory understanding of how sounds can be made and altered. They recognise simple patterns, clap a repeating rhythm and make sensible suggestions about the types of things that the sounds could represent, such as rainfall.
100. Pupils in Year 4 enjoy music, and talk enthusiastically about what they have been doing, although they need quite a bit of help to remember anything further back than the previous term's work. Pupils enjoy listening to music and discussing how this helps to paint pictures in their mind. They are developing a secure understanding that music can be used to represent feelings and events but find it difficult to recall music they have listened to in this way. They are being introduced to a range of musical instruments but find it difficult to remember the correct names of the instruments they have used. They make short compositions based upon starting points such as a firework display but are only just beginning to use symbols to represent sounds to record their work.
101. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers provide some good chances for pupils to work together and talk about their work. The pupils enjoy having these types of opportunities because it allows them a level of independence. The quality of learning that took place was not always equally successful. The younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 made the most of the opportunity. This was because the teacher organised them into pairs, giving the pupils the chance to have an equal say in what they noticed and in what they wanted to report back to the rest of the class. The Years 3 and 4 pupils did not work well in their larger groups and time was wasted when one or two argued over the choice of instruments and who should do what within the group. The pupils' personal skills were not sufficiently well developed to give them this level of independence and the rate of learning slowed in this part of the lesson. Even though the pupils were able to put together a short composition based upon the action in Marc Chagall's painting 'The Violinist', this was mainly because the higher attaining, more dominant, pupils in each group controlled the activity. Most pupils were not sufficiently involved in experimenting to enable them to develop their composing skills well enough.
102. Assemblies contribute satisfactorily to pupils' musical development. Opportunities to listen to songs and music from other times and places provide a useful stimulus to the pupils' personal development. The theme of supporting friends was well understood by older pupils when they talked about the lyrics from the Beatles composition 'With a little help from my friends'. Pupils enjoy singing and list their favourite songs. They explain the reasons for their choice such as finding the words humorous or the melody attractive. The repertoire of songs pupils know well is small. Older pupils are beginning to make up the deficit by learning the words and tunes at the same time as the younger pupils. They try hard to sing in tune and are gaining confidence but they need further practice in singing to raise standards to the level expected for their age. ICT is used to support pupils' singing in assemblies by accompanying their singing from taped compositions and for listening to the work of different composers. It is not used to advantage to record pupils' own compositions or singing in lessons. There are infrequent opportunities to help pupils to listen to their own performances and so identify what they are most pleased with and what they would improve.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

103. Standards in gymnastics are close to expectations by the end of Year 2. Standards in games' activities are close to expectations by the end of Year 4. Progress was satisfactory in both lessons observed during the inspection. Planning indicates that the curriculum for physical education is taught. Swimming will take place for older pupils from next year for the present Year 4 pupils. The subject is soundly led. The headteacher has introduced a consistent approach to assessing pupils' progress in physical education as they move through the school. However, there are no after-school sports' clubs to enrich and extend the curriculum, although these are planned for the future.
104. Pupils of all abilities, including those with learning difficulties, make satisfactory gains in developing basic skills in simple games. By the end of Year 2, pupils travel with, receive and send a ball, working collaboratively with a partner, showing developing levels of control and co-ordination. By the end of Year 4, pupils throw objects with greater accuracy, using correct techniques. They start to show a developing understanding of tactics and positioning in a simple game.
105. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Good features of teaching include good emphasis on the development of important skills, which help pupils to tackle activities with confidence. There are secure relationships and control because teachers make pupils fully aware of what is expected of them. The teachers' own enthusiastic approach keeps pupils fully motivated and the good use of resources ensures that pupils are able to practise and refine their skills at a suitable pace. These features help to ensure that pupils respond well and that learning is satisfactory. Weaker features of teaching include insecure subject knowledge, such as the need for a suitable warm-up and cool-down period to ensure pupils do not strain muscles. There are some missed opportunities to promote pupils' personal development by encouraging them to organise themselves and there is not enough emphasis on encouraging pupils to evaluate their own and others' performance through watching each other in lessons or by recording their performances using ICT.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

106. Standards in religious education are below those expected for pupils in Year 2 and Year 4. The local guidance for teaching religious education was introduced to Bradford schools in the summer term 2002. A misunderstanding at the start of this academic year led to pupils following national guidance rather than local guidance. Gaps in what pupils should have previously learned and their recall of knowledge and understanding about faiths other than Christianity lead to the lower than expected standards. Most pupils have a limited understanding of how religion can provide a framework for how people live their lives. In spite of the difficulties with the guidance, and the short time pupils have been in the school, they have made reasonable progress in the work undertaken because teaching and learning are satisfactory. Some of the work completed when pupils were in earlier year groups shows some sound promotion of their spiritual development. Booklets, such as a 'Wish for the World', raise some thoughtful points about the impact of people on the Earth's resources and the 'I am special' collection of thoughts helps pupils to understand that they are part of something greater than their own families and the school community.
107. By Year 2, pupils are developing a sound understanding of prominent religious figures such as Mother Theresa. They have a secure understanding of some Christian festivals. Pupils have learnt about the meaning of religious symbols and make connections between the candles used for Christingle and the lamps lit during Diwali. Teachers provide some useful opportunities for pupils to discuss important aspects of religion. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 developed greater understanding of how the Bible was compiled by talking about how people now and in the past recorded events. A well-prepared introduction ensured that pupils'

knowledge about how people in the past shared their teachings was consolidated. Pupils learned that stories were passed on by word of mouth and through writing such as in ancient scrolls. Some effective links made with Islam drew out the similarities between the Qur'an and the Bible and how they both are thought to carry the word of God. The pupils enjoyed listening to these accounts but found it more difficult to offer their own ideas without the teacher's help. This was also a feature of discussions with pupils about their past work. Pupils know a number of stories from the Bible such as Moses and Aaron, Jonah and the whale, and Joseph and his coat of many colours. Their recall of the principal messages behind these stories needs some prompting but they are able to explain how the stories can set standards for our lives such as caring for others, doing as you are told, and not picking on others because they are different. Their recall of Christian festivals is secure and they are able to explain the reasons why Christians celebrate them. Only the higher attaining pupils can recall aspects of other religions consistently and with a sound level of understanding. They know about the period of Ramadan and its similarity to the Christian period of Lent. With help they can describe that Ramadan is a time of fasting between sunrise and sunset, whilst Lent is a time when Christians often give up something they enjoy.