

INSPECTION REPORT

LOWER FIELDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bradford

LEA area: Bradford

Unique reference number: 132182

Headteacher: Mr J Edwards

Reporting inspector: Mrs L Clark
25431

Dates of inspection: 3 – 6 March 2003

Inspection number: 248924

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: 3 – 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Fenby Avenue
Bradford

Postcode: BD4 8RG

Telephone number: 01274 770312

Fax number: 01274 770311

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr J Robertshaw

Date of previous inspection: This school has not been previously inspected.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25431	Mrs L Clark Registered inspector	Art and design Music	What sort of school is it? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19446	Mrs S Wood Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22291	Mr K Saltfleet Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Geography	The school's results and achievements
19041	Mr R Linstead Team inspector	English History English as an additional language	How well are the pupils taught?
19916	Mrs D Kerr Team inspector	Science Religious education Provision for children in the foundation stage. Educational inclusion	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
32272	Mr D Fishburn Team inspector	Information and communication technology Physical education Special educational needs	

The inspection contractor was:

Yorkshire Educational Services Ltd
16 Burn Hall
Darlington Road
Croxdale
DURHAM
DH1 3SR

Tel/Fax: 0191 378 4031

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33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Lower Fields Primary School is larger than average with 405 pupils between the ages of four and 11. Fifty-two children attend the nursery part-time. The school serves an area of significant social and economic deprivation, bisected by a dual carriageway, close to the city centre of Bradford. There are high levels of unemployment. Most pupils come from the immediate area. Approximately 21 per cent of pupils enter or leave the school at times other than the usual; this is a much higher than average proportion. Twenty-eight per cent of pupils are of non-white British ethnic origin. Eleven pupils come from travelling families and there are two children from asylum seeking families. Seventeen per cent of pupils are learning English as an additional language; five are at an early stage of language acquisition. The proportion of pupils who have special education needs is also above average at 26 per cent. A fifth of these pupils have significant difficulties. Four pupils have statements of special need though there are a number of pupils awaiting statements. The range of special educational needs includes moderate learning difficulties, behavioural or emotional problems, long-term illness and physical impairments. The proportion of pupils qualifying for free school meals is above the national average at 30 per cent. Children's attainment on entry to the school is well below average. The school is a member of the local Education Action Zone.

The school opened in September 2000 following re-organisation in Bradford of its education system. Pupils were allocated largely from two closed first schools and teaching staff came from nine different schools which had also been closed down. Older pupils have attended at least two schools before this one. A third of the school's staff came from middle schools and some additional staff were also allocated to the school. Since opening, there have been several changes in teaching staff. At the time of the inspection, one teacher had been in post for seven weeks, one was newly qualified and one was on a temporary contract covering a maternity leave. The school won an achievement award in 2001 and was also awarded Investors in People. The school is over-subscribed in some year groups.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school in which pupils achieve well. Good leadership and management have ensured that the school has come a long way in less than three years. Standards are rising and pupils make good progress because in most lessons they are taught well. There are weaknesses, but in most instances there is also good practice from which to learn. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching is good overall and in many lessons is very good.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language make good progress.
- Pupils have good attitudes to work and behave well.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education.
- The headteacher gives clear educational direction.
- The accommodation and resources for learning are very good.
- Children have a good start in the nursery and reception classes.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics and science.
- The use of literacy, particularly reading, numeracy and ICT in other subjects.
- The use of practical activities to improve teaching and learning.
- The use of assessment to tell teachers and pupils what they need to learn next.
- The role of the subject manager.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

This is a new school and has not been inspected before.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	All schools			similar schools
	n/a	2001	2002	2002
English	n/a	C	E	D
Mathematics	n/a	E	E	E
Science	n/a	E	E	E

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

Standards by the end of Year 2 were well below average in reading and in the bottom five per cent in writing and mathematics both nationally and compared to similar schools. Because the school has only had two years of results no judgement can be made about trends. Indications are, however, that standards are beginning to improve. The school has set itself challenging targets for 2003, which it is likely to meet.

Standards in English and mathematics in the present Year 6 are below average. This is an improvement on the 2002 test results. Standards in writing and in speaking and listening are higher than standards in reading, which remain well below average. The school's strategy to raise standards in writing is working well. Standards in both English and mathematics are improving because pupils are well taught in groups according to their ability. This enables higher attaining pupils to make good progress as well as pupils with special educational needs. Standards in science remain well below average. This reflects the lack of provision for pupils to work at different levels according to their ability and also the lack of assessment to identify areas for improvement. Standards in the present Year 2 are below average in writing and in speaking and listening; they are well below average in reading. Standards are below average in mathematics and science. Nonetheless pupils are achieving well, considering their low standards on entry to school. Pupils who have special educational needs or who are learning English as an additional language make good progress, as do children from travelling or refugee families. Pupils who transfer into the school make good progress though this can have an adverse impact on overall attainment because it takes time for them to settle into the school's routines.

Pupils who have attended only this school make the best progress. Thus children in the nursery and reception classes make good progress from well below average on entry to school to below average in communication, language, literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development by the end of the reception year. They make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development which is about average by the time they go into Year 1. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have had less time in school but are now progressing well. Pupils in Years 3-6 have had least, but pupils in Years 5 and 6 are learning especially well and so standards are improving.

Standards in other subjects are generally below average apart from those in geography, history, music and ICT where they are at the level expected by the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils make rapid progress in these subjects. Pupils achieve well in history because they have opportunities to find out answers for themselves to historical questions which interest them. The good provision for ICT enables pupils to make good progress. In music, standards are above those expected in Years 2 and 4 and reflect the very good progress pupils have made in two years.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The great majority of pupils are keen to come to school and are eager to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well and show consideration for others. Older pupils look after younger ones at playtimes and the school is a harmonious community.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities around the school and are keen to offer their services although there are too few opportunities made to capitalise on this in some lessons. They respect other people's values and beliefs and are kind to each other.
Attendance	Poor. Attendance is improving as a result of determined action by the school. Most of the remaining absences are by a small number of pupils and largely unavoidable.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good overall; a third of lessons are very good or better. Teaching in the nursery and reception classes is invariably good and the children have many opportunities to learn through play and through finding out by themselves. Many of the activities are imaginative and the nursery nurses and classroom assistants give good additional support to help children to learn effectively.

The teaching of English, including literacy, is good overall. The teaching of skills in writing, speaking and listening is good, with particularly good teaching in Years 5 and 6 where much is of a high quality. The teaching of reading throughout the school is satisfactory and pupils are now making satisfactory progress. The teaching of mathematics, including numeracy, is also good, with very good teaching in Years 5 and 6, and pupils learn well. Teaching in science is good in the infant classes and satisfactory in the junior classes where despite teachers' good subject knowledge pupils have too few opportunities to learn through working out answers for themselves. In the most successful lessons, teachers manage pupils well and expect them to concentrate, often using resources very effectively to maintain pupils' interest. This helps them to learn well and to feel a sense of achievement. These features contribute to the very good teaching in music and the good teaching in history and ICT. In less successful lessons, teachers do not plan sufficiently different activities for the wide range of abilities in the class. Most of the time teachers generally challenge pupils well and have realistic expectations, but occasionally learning slows when activities are not suitably practical. Not enough teaching in design and technology and geography was seen to be able to make a judgement on its quality.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. There is an appropriate curriculum which meets legal requirements. The range of extra-curricular activities is good. The provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education is a

	strength. The strategies for teaching the skills of literacy and numeracy are not as effective as they should be.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils receive a good level of assistance in class to help them to learn well. Individual education plans are well matched to pupils' needs and are used effectively to help them to make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils receive good support to enable them to make good progress in learning English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The good provision for social and moral development helps pupils to become responsible members of the school community. Very good links with the local community help pupils to become thoughtful and purposeful members of society. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory for although pupils learn about contrasting cultures in other parts of the world, opportunities are missed to celebrate these in displays of pupils' work or to promote spiritual development through singing in assemblies.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development, including behaviour, are good. However, procedures for assessing what pupils know and understand in order to determine what they should learn next are unsatisfactory.

The school has a satisfactory partnership with parents. It provides good quality information to parents in regular newsletters and in end of year reports. The home/school diaries are used well in some classes but in others they are under-used as a means of communicating with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher gives clear educational direction and has led the school well through a time of rapid development and change, successfully amalgamating staff and pupils from many different schools into a settled and purposeful school community. While the deputy headteacher and key stage managers fulfil their roles effectively, the role of the subject managers is underdeveloped.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactorily. Governors take a warm interest and have contributed well to establishing a new school. They have contributed positively to developing the school's links with the community. They have a better understanding of the school's strengths than its weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school monitors its overall performance well. However, the monitoring of teaching and learning is not sufficiently thorough.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Resources are used well. The governors carefully direct resources to the educational priorities they have adopted, applying the principles of best value to the school's purchases well.

The school is very well staffed and has additional teachers who teach specialist subjects. This makes good use of the very good accommodation, which retains all the facilities of the former middle school as well as providing good facilities for nursery and reception children. The resources for learning are also very good.

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 school has high expectations of their children and they are well taught.• Their children are helped to become more mature and responsible.• Their children make good progress and behave well.• The school is well led and managed.• Their children like coming to school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The range of activities outside lessons.• A small number of parents expressed concerns about reading, particularly the home/school reading record book.

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views which were expressed both in the questionnaires and in the parents' meeting held before the inspection. The school offers a good range of activities outside lessons. These include after school and lunchtime clubs, a wide range of educational visits and visitors to school as well as 'community weeks' when the school's work involves the local community. The team shares parents' concerns about reading and agrees that the home/school reading records are used inconsistently throughout the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 Teaching and learning are good and have had the biggest impact on those pupils who have experienced it for all, or most, of their time in school. Thus children in the nursery and reception classes progress well and their attainment rises from well below to below average; pupils in Years 1 and 2 have had less time in school but are nonetheless now progressing well and their attainment is, overall, below average; pupils in Years 3-6 have had least, but those in Years 5 and 6 are learning especially well so that they are also attaining standards that are below average. With continuing good teaching, the school is well placed to ensure that standards continue to rise, especially by the end of Year 6. Pupils achieve well. The above average proportion of pupils who have special educational needs, plus the high proportion of pupils who enter or leave the school at times other than the usual, have an adverse effect on the overall standards achieved.

Foundation Stage

2 Children's attainment on entry to the nursery and reception classes is well below average in all areas of learning. However, as a result of consistently good teaching they catch up, make good progress and achieve well. Children's attainment in communication, language, literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development although below average at the end of the reception year reflects this good achievement. As a result of very good teaching where children are given opportunities for choice and independence their achievement in their personal, social and emotional development is very good. By the end of their time in the reception year they are on course to achieve the level expected of their age in this area.

English, mathematics and science

3 Pupils' attainment in the national tests for 11-year-olds in English, mathematics and science was well below average in 2002. When compared to schools with a similar intake, it was below average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. The percentage of pupils reaching a higher level in these subjects was again well below average. At the end of Year 2 standards were well below average in reading and in the bottom five per cent in writing and mathematics both nationally and when compared to similar schools. Teacher assessment shows attainment in science to be well below the national average; although the percentage of pupils reaching an above average level was close to that seen nationally, a high proportion failed to reach the nationally expected level.

4 The school has been open for two years so only a limited amount of statistical information is available about pupils' attainment over a longer period. An assessment of the trend in the school's results in these subjects is not possible. However, standards are improving, and, unlike 2002, the challenging targets set for 2003 are likely to be met.

5 Pupils' attainment in the present Year 2 classes is below average in speaking and listening and well below average in reading and writing. Standards are below average in mathematics and science. Nonetheless pupils are achieving well overall, considering the low standards on entry to school. This is particularly notable in mathematics in Years 1 and 2 where due to very good teaching and work planned to meet their needs, pupils' achievement is very good.

6 The below average standards in English and mathematics in the present Year 6 are an improvement on the last two years' test results. In English, pupils' attainment in writing and in speaking and listening is higher than in reading, which is well below average. Achievement for pupils of all abilities is good, with the exception of reading where achievement is satisfactory.

Standards in science remain well below average and pupils make only steady progress. Too much teacher direction, particularly in their investigative work, results in pupils having insufficient opportunities to record their work independently. It also reflects the lack of provision for pupils to work at different levels according to their ability and the lack of assessment to identify areas for improvement.

7 Standards in both English and mathematics are improving because pupils are well taught in groups, and according to their general ability. The teaching of reading is satisfactory. Although the school makes good provision for reading in terms of resources and classroom assistants give good support to individuals, opportunities are missed in lessons for pupils to read together in groups or to share a book as a class with the teacher. In contrast, pupils are given good opportunities to develop confident speech and the school's focus on raising standards in writing is working particularly well in the junior classes.

8 There are no real variations in the achievement of boys and girls. Good classroom support enables pupils with special educational needs to make good progress. Similarly older pupils achieve well for they have had several changes which has affected their learning because of the reorganisation of schools in the area. It is noticeable that pupils who have attended only this school, that is, those in the nursery and reception classes, make the best progress. Pupils who have special educational needs or who are learning English as an additional language make good progress, as do children from travelling or refugee families. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on the attainment of pupils identified as gifted and talented. Pupils who transfer into the school make good progress though this can have an adverse impact on overall attainment because it takes time for them to settle into the school's routines.

Other subjects

9 By the end of Years 2 and 6 pupils' attainment in ICT is close to that expected of their age. In geography, history and music it is at the level expected by the end of Years 2 and 6, and also in physical education by the end of Year 2. Attainment in art and design, design and technology at the end of Years 2 and 6, and physical education at Year 6 is below that expected of their ages. In religious education there is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about attainment in the infant classes. By the end of Year 6, attainment is below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils' achievement overall is satisfactory. They achieve very well in ICT and music, due the very good resources such as the computer suite and music room, together with enthusiastic, specialist teaching. The school has everything in place to ensure pupils' creative, aesthetic and physical growth. In some subjects such as history, ICT and music this growth is rapid as pupils flourish because of teachers' expectations, the interesting work they have to do and the freedom they have to work independently and to think for themselves. That standards at present are no higher in art and design and physical education, reflects the unrealistic expectations teachers have of what young pupils can achieve and the ways in which they learn. There are few displays of pupils' work around school and in classrooms to provide talking points, celebrate pupils' achievements and help raise interest and standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10 Pupils have good attitudes towards school and most are keen to learn. They concentrate well and try to please their teachers, listen carefully and follow instructions. When pupils are given the opportunity they work well in small groups. An example of this was seen in a Year 4 music lesson where pupils were composing a tune using a pentatonic scale. They are keen to express their views and thoroughly enjoy practical activities. However, on the few occasions when pupils are unclear of what is expected of them they can become restless, slow to settle to written tasks or else waste time chattering to each other. Pupils for whom English is an additional language also have good attitudes to work. They are interested in what they are learning, concentrate very well and are keen to succeed.

11 Children in the nursery and reception classes have very positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy coming to school and thrive in the well-ordered environment that the teachers and nursery nurses provide. They are eager to explore new activities and share what they have done at the end of lessons. Expectations of behaviour are made very clear from the start and children respond by being polite, helpful and co-operative. They frequently help one another without any prompting, playing sensibly together and taking turns with toys and equipment.

12 Pupils behave well. The school is an orderly environment in which pupils behave in a quiet, polite and sensible manner, often holding doors open for each other or for visitors. They know and understand the school's code of conduct and treat each other with respect. Pupils are proud of their school for they helped to choose the code of conduct. This has been carefully and simply organised so that pupils know what is expected of them from arriving punctually to being ready to learn and behaving with consideration for others. At lunchtimes, the dining hall is an orderly place although at times the noise levels are high. The majority clearly understand the impact of their actions on others. There are very few incidents of bullying or racial tension; these are very quickly resolved. There have been three fixed term exclusions in the last academic year and none during the past three terms which indicates the school's policy is effective.

13 The relationships throughout the school are good. Pupils learn to respect other people's values and beliefs and are kind to each other. Adults who work in the classrooms act as good role models for the pupils and pupils are polite. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities around the school and are keen to help. There are monitors in each class whose responsibilities range from looking after the plants in the school to helping in the library. The school also has a system of "playground pals" which involves older pupils playing and looking after younger pupils. This is a valued and effective contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils help to organise activities for the school's 'community week', which involves working within the local community as well as visitors to school. This forms an important part of their social and citizenship education. They do not have enough opportunities, however, to take initiative or to work collaboratively.

14 The school's attendance figures are poor and well below national averages. There are a small number of long-term and unavoidable absences, some of which are due to health, which have a significant impact on the overall figures. However, even when these are taken into account attendance is still not as good as it should be. The school has adopted stringent measures as a matter of urgency to address this issue which are already having an effect. The system, known as 'the traffic light system', has been adopted along with other schools in the Education Action Zone and is used well to identify where the problems lie. It offers a very clear procedure aimed at getting parents to take responsibility for their children's regular attendance. Regular letters home keep parents fully apprised of the adverse effect such absences have on their children's learning. Attendance has risen as a result of these measures though there is insufficient data to draw firm conclusions as the system has only been in place for a short time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15 The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and is the main reason for the improvement in standards. The quality of teaching in the majority of lessons is good and a third of lessons are very good or better. There is a small proportion of teaching which is unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching is very good in Years 5 and 6, with particularly high quality teaching in English, especially writing, and mathematics. It is also very good in the infant classes in these subjects. The quality of teaching is good overall in English with particular strengths in the teaching of writing and speaking and listening; it is satisfactory in reading. Teaching is also good overall in mathematics and in science in the infant classes. Teaching is satisfactory in science in junior classes where despite the many opportunities pupils have to learn through investigative activities they are told what it is they have found out rather than skilled questioning leading them to work it out and record it for themselves. In the most successful lessons, teachers manage pupils well and

expect them to concentrate, maintaining pupils' interest by using resources imaginatively. This helps them to learn well and to feel a sense of achievement. These features contribute to the very good teaching in music and the good teaching in history and ICT. Teaching is unsatisfactory in art and design and physical education. Some of the weaknesses stem from the lack of a suitable curriculum. In less successful lessons, teachers do not take into account sufficiently the needs of their pupils or have not thought through the steps of learning in detail, making it clear to the pupils what they are to learn and giving clear instructions to enable them to do so. Usually, teachers challenge pupils well and have realistic expectations, but occasionally learning slows when activities are not suitably practical. Not enough teaching in design and technology and geography was seen to be able to make a judgement on its quality.

16 The school has a large proportion of pupils who experience a wide range of learning difficulties. All staff work sensitively with them so as to lessen the impact of such difficulties on their progress. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their individual targets in most lessons. Experienced classroom assistants support these pupils' learning well, particularly in the infant classes. The use of assessment sheets, stating what has been achieved during a lesson, completed by the assistants, provides a daily assessment of the progress of pupils with special educational needs. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils for whom English is an additional language is good. The strengths of teaching for these pupils are: teachers' good knowledge of English and the stages of pupils' language development and well resourced activities. The bilingual support teacher and bilingual support staff give these pupils very effective support.

17 The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are used inconsistently to guide how these subjects are taught to develop basic skills systematically from Year 1 onwards. This affects the teaching of reading in Years 1 - 6 for the school gives a considerable priority to writing. There is not enough guided reading each week for pupils to build systematically on earlier learning. When teaching is very good or better teachers enable pupils to learn very well without using the national strategies. However, pupils lose out when less effective teaching departs from the timings, groupings and detailed programmes within these schemes. At times in Years 3 – 6, because pupils are taught in ability groups for English and mathematics, teachers do not then adjust levels of work further to match the different levels within these groups.

18 The good quality of teaching and learning in the nursery and reception classes enables pupils to learn well though by the end of the reception year most are not ready to start work on the National Curriculum. Careful observation of each child's progress enables staff to teach the basic skills of all areas of learning effectively, through a wide range of play activities. Teaching in these classes is consistently good and there are some very good features. A particular strength is the way in which teachers promote children's personal and social development. As a result children feel very secure and make great strides in this area of learning. They soon learn to make sensible choices and explore through play for extended lengths of time.

19 Teachers use a satisfactory range of methods to help pupils learn, often using many in a single lesson. In satisfactory lessons, teachers have clearly given much thought as to how they are going to teach though sometimes this is not balanced by a reflection on how pupils best learn. For example, the use of a fixed set of methods in a published spelling scheme throughout the school does not always suit the learning needs of all pupils: they get stuck when they have to keep asking for help as they do not follow directions in the course book because of their poor reading skills. Teachers generally assess pupils' attainment accurately. However, marking does not make much contribution to improving pupils' achievement or standards of presentation. This is often because teachers do not involve pupils enough in these processes such as including individual targets for the next steps of improvement. Homework adequately supports the work being done in school and the demands of homework increase appropriately as pupils grow older.

20 Where the quality of teaching is good, teachers' good subject knowledge ensures that nearly all lessons have exact aims that pupils understand. In these lessons, pupils learn well because teachers are good at explaining. Lessons are well prepared and well timed. Teachers have good and detailed understanding of topics and are skilled at quickly involving pupils from the start. For

example, quick fire practice of mentally doubling and halving got all pupils concentrating and thinking hard at the start of a Year 4 lesson on solving mathematical problems. Good knowledge of the topics also enables teachers to work efficiently, using skilful questioning and commentary to give effective individual help to all who need it. As a result, learning moves at a pace and pupils stay busy and interested. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are high in most lessons, and are leading to higher standards as a result. In the most successful lessons, teachers are very good at questioning and at putting across a lot of ideas quickly. Resources are well chosen and pupils are expected to think for themselves. This in turn stimulates them to ask questions themselves which helps to reinforce their learning. In Years 5 and 6 such teaching led to interesting discussions as in one lesson on poetry when pupils busily consulted dictionaries and discussed the appropriateness of definitions as they annotated the text. In excellent lessons, teachers' animated and dramatic reading stimulated pupils' imaginations. Excellent pace and extremely good subject knowledge elicit lively responses from the pupils and result in very good achievement. Such high quality teaching also generates peace in which pupils read and reflect because they are completely absorbed in what they are learning.

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

21 The curriculum is satisfactory. The school has put into place a broad and relevant curriculum that meets the needs of its pupils and fulfils what is required by law as well as making good use of the expertise of specialist teachers who are additional to class teachers. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and there is no difference in the provision for girls and boys. While national guidelines are used as the basis for most of the teaching the lack of a scheme of work adversely affects the quality of teaching and pupils' learning in art. On the other hand, the very good scheme of work for music, devised by the co-ordinator, enables pupils to achieve very well.

22 Staff in the nursery and reception classes have worked hard and successfully this year to provide a practical curriculum which satisfactorily covers all the areas of learning required by the national guidelines. The improved opportunities for children to learn through play are already having a positive effect. However, the lack of good quality outdoor play equipment for reception children limits the provision for their physical development. The planning does not link activities together to teach basic concepts such as shape or colour and so far does not provide more structured work for older and higher attaining children to prepare them for the next stage of learning in Year 1.

23 The school has made satisfactory progress in two years at devising a curriculum that builds on the strengths of its teaching staff. However, there is more to be done. The strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are not used sufficiently well and there is big variation between classes as to how they are implemented. While the school's current curricular provision for literacy benefits writing, the alternative it has put in place to encourage reading is less effective. Similarly with numeracy; there are inconsistencies in the way it is planned and this affects how it is taught. The school largely overcomes these deficiencies by closely following the national strategies for literacy and numeracy in Years 1 and 2 and by planning a curriculum which is taught to pupils in groups according to ability in Years 5 and 6. One of the drawbacks of separating the curriculum into subjects taught by individual teachers is that the curriculum at the moment does not make planned use of ICT, literacy or numeracy in other subjects. Consequently, there are few planned opportunities for pupils to develop the basic skills of reading, writing and number in other subjects. There is a move to develop note-taking skills in science, geography, history and religious education. However, pupils do not get enough opportunities to explain findings in their own words in science. Similarly, teachers do not make the most of opportunities to link work in different subjects wherever they can to make learning relevant and interesting, incorporating ICT for example.

24 The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education including sex and drugs education is good. The co-ordinator for this aspect of the curriculum is developing the subject in a cohesive and well-directed way. As part of the "Healthy Eating Schools" project, pupils are encouraged to eat regular daily quantities of fruit, drink water and concentrate on breathing exercises before taking part in learning. This is raising pupils' awareness of the benefits of a healthy life style. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities such as clubs,

sports activities, and educational visits out of school as well as visitors into school to enrich the curriculum. These are particularly wide-ranging for sport, including after school tag rugby, football, basketball and sports tournaments for rugby, cross-country and swimming. Drama productions and ICT clubs for both Y6s and an adult "Silver Surfers" take place regularly. The school choir, attended by over 70 older pupils, is particularly popular and produces music of a high quality.

25 The school fosters very good links with the local community and this provision contributes well to the ethos of the school. It helps pupils to become responsible, aware and accountable for their actions and stresses the importance of being thoughtful and purposeful members of society. Good links with local businesses enhance the curriculum for pupils, whilst carefully planned community weeks involving the whole school and the local community broaden pupils' experiences and link education effectively with the outside world. Relationships with local schools and colleges are very positive and this includes preparation for a smooth transfer to the local secondary schools when they are eleven.

26 The provision for children with special educational needs is good. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language are given sensitive support and encouraged to join in all class and school activities. These pupils have the same opportunities and access to the curriculum as others.

27 The provision for pupils' personal development is good. Pupils' moral and social development is promoted well. The school has a clear and agreed code of behaviour in place that emphasises the importance of personal responsibility. The good relationships within the school provide a firm basis for the development of a clear moral understanding. All members of staff apply the policy consistently and pupils understand right from wrong.

28 Pupils' social development is promoted well. There is a real sense of community with clear values. Class activities such as discussion time and lessons on personal, social and health education all provide opportunities for pupils and adults to co-operate with one another and share valuable experiences together. The school monitor system and 'playground pal' scheme provide good opportunities for older pupils to exercise leadership and responsibility and pupils of all ages have jobs to do in classrooms and around the school. Nursery children for example keep the hanging baskets watered and soon understand that they have a responsibility to care for their classroom. All pupils are taught about their responsibility to the local community and this is demonstrated very effectively in community week when they organise activities such as community teas for the elderly.

29 The school makes sound provision for spiritual and cultural development. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted well in some lessons. Pupils explore their thoughts and feelings during religious education and discussion times. Teachers value pupils' views and ideas and this promotes very effectively their sense of self-worth. Some teachers are good at sharing with pupils the wonder of learning and this is particularly noticeable during library sessions where books are valued and enjoyed. In general however not enough is done to promote this sense of wonder and creativity. Teachers do not make imaginative use of display to celebrate pupils' work for example. Although school assemblies meet the legal requirements for a daily act of worship, they generally do little to develop pupils' spirituality through singing, reflection or celebration. A notable exception to this is when the visiting speaker from a local Christian trust visits the school and enlivens the occasions with songs, humour and stories that grip pupils' imagination.

30 Cultural development is promoted satisfactorily. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to study a range of artists and their work, and learn how their own culture has been influenced by events in the past. Pupils learn about contrasting cultures in other parts of the world in geography but less about diverse cultures within the wider community at home. In religious education lessons and in discussions pupils are taught to understand different faiths and respect different views.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31 The school provides a caring environment in which children can learn, regardless of their age, gender or ethnicity. There are sound procedures in place to ensure pupils' welfare, health and

safety, and the school employs appropriate agencies to support the needs of individual pupils. The school has adopted the local authority's guidelines for child protection and the systems for recording incidents are effective. All pupils are well known to the staff, and pupils feel confident to share any worries or concerns they might have, knowing that they will be dealt with sensitively. The school provides a secure environment in which all pupils and staff can work peacefully.

32 The school has good systems in place to monitor behaviour and rewards are given in line with the school's behaviour policy. There is a consistent approach to the reward system and certificates given out in the weekly "Awards Assembly" celebrate out-of-school successes as well as academic achievements, personal development, and attendance. Sanctions are also applied appropriately. The school does not tolerate anti-social behaviour, such as bullying or racism and has taken effective action on the few occasions where this has been an issue. The personal development of all pupils is monitored well, though often informally. When staff raise concerns, these are recorded and followed up appropriately. The school has developed a programme to develop pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship that is beginning to help pupils in their learning and development. The school's procedures to monitor and promote the attendance of the pupils are good. The introduction of the 'traffic light system', whereby pupils and their parents receive warnings and then further action is taken should non-attendance continue, is beginning to have a positive effect on the overall attendance figures and the school uses outside support well to help them to address issues relating to attendance.

33 The school is in the early stages of developing systems for assessing the progress of pupils in their learning and using the outcomes to plan subsequent work. However, it has made much progress since the school opened two years ago. One of the problems was the lack of information relating to pupils' attainment when they started this school. Much of the time, therefore has been devoted to setting up an overall system so that pupils' progress can be measured over time in order for the school to set appropriate targets for pupils' attainment and to assess the proportion of pupils likely to reach or better nationally expected standards. The assessment of pupils' work in Years 1 - 6, however, is unsatisfactory because it is not used to help teachers to plan work that builds on what pupils know and understand and need to learn next. There is some good practice seen in English but not in the other subjects of the curriculum. There is no system to record which areas pupils have studied, what skills they have acquired or whether they have understood a particular concept. The assessment co-ordinator has worked hard on producing documents and procedures to record and monitor assessment but these have not been fully implemented across the whole school. The school uses a range of commercial and national tests to identify achievement of all pupils in English and mathematics and has begun to analyse test data. Little target setting takes place for individual pupils, apart from those with individual education plans, and so pupils are unclear what they need to learn next. Arrangements to assess the achievements and progress of pupils for whom English is a second language are satisfactory. There are good systems for assessment in the nursery and reception classes. Teachers monitor children's progress informally on a daily basis and make periodic checks on what they have learnt in each area of learning. They keep detailed records of progress in language, literacy and number and this enables them to adapt their teaching of the basic skills to individual needs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

34 Parents think this is a good school and are happy with what it provides. They say their children like coming to school and that they are happy to approach the school with any suggestions or concerns. They believe the school is well led and managed and that the teaching is good and that there are high expectations of their children. Parents also feel that their children are encouraged to become mature and responsible and that they are well behaved. The inspection team agrees with the parents positive views of the work of the school. A minority of parents feel that there is an insufficient range of activities outside lessons. The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities, both after school and at lunchtimes. A small number of parents expressed concerns over reading, and the inconsistent use of the reading record books as a form of communication between home and school. The use of the home/school diaries as a means of communication also varies from class to class and so is not as helpful to parents as it could be.

35 There are sound links with parents of children in the nursery and reception classes. Staff

provide good information about school to new parents and give opportunities for parents and children to spend some time in the nursery before their children start school. Parents are welcomed into school at any time to help or to discuss their child's progress and parents of nursery children are encouraged to take home an activity bag each week for homework.

36 The school communicates satisfactorily with parents through regular newsletters which give information about events. There is little information, however, to inform parents of what their children are studying so they could be more involved in their children's learning. There are opportunities for parents to visit the school to see pupils work on several days throughout the year; for example, open days, theme evenings, consultation evenings or productions. A small number of adult volunteers regularly help in classrooms, and the school rightly values this. The annual written reports give clear information on the curricular areas that the pupils' have studied. They do not include attainment levels to help parents understand the progress that they have made, apart from pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 who receive their results in national tests. They do give areas for future development though it is unclear what use the school makes of the targets pupils are set. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs are not as fully involved as they should be in the setting and review of individual educational plans.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

37 The school is well led by the headteacher whose strong leadership has enabled the school to become a pleasant and purposeful community with a shared outlook for the future. Its principal aim of 'sharing the vision and achieving success' is realised and staff, pupils and parents do indeed feel part of this school. This strong leadership, underpinned by efficient management, has enabled staff with very different previous experiences, not all within a primary school and three-quarters of whom were placed rather than appointed to the school, following the closure of their previous schools, to nonetheless work together as a team with a shared interest and with a strong sense of contributing to the future of Lower Fields Primary.

38 The management of the school is efficient and essentially democratic. The deputy headteacher and key stage leaders have clearly defined roles and responsibilities which they fulfil well. Much has been achieved in a short time and the systems to enable a large school to function effectively are firmly in place. That the school is making such rapid progress is due to the good leadership and management. Part of the school's success can be ascribed to the democratic principles on which it is organised. The school's development plan, which was started before the school opened, demonstrates how to reconcile disparate staff and pupils into a cohesive school community with a shared set of aims. It is shaped by suggestions made by staff who are consulted formally at the end of each year through detailed questionnaires. It is clear to see how their suggestions have been incorporated and how the staff's self-esteem, the quality of teaching and job satisfaction have improved as a result.

39 Both the headteacher and deputy have teaching commitments and set a standard of excellence for others to follow. Generous levels of staffing have enabled teachers, particularly subject managers, to have time during the day when they are not teaching. At present, this time is not being used as effectively as it should be. The school is well aware that managing subjects is the next stage for development. Although the headteacher and deputy have monitored literacy and numeracy, subject managers are not as fully involved as they should be. Consequently, some are unaware of standards in their subjects, do not identify areas of strength or those to be developed, nor are they aware of inconsistencies in the way teachers plan lessons, for example. While the deputy headteacher has put into place a system which provides an overview of progress of individual pupils from reception through to Year 1, most subject managers have not determined when and how their subject should be assessed so as to keep track of what pupils are learning and what they need to be taught next.

40 The management of special educational needs is good and scrupulous records are kept of individual pupils and the support they receive. However, there is a need to analyse the progress that these pupils make against progress made by pupils in the rest of the school in order to see if best value is being achieved through the intensive support they receive to help them to learn. The management of provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language is also good. The

school uses the extra funding it receives for these pupils effectively, so as to improve their progress and access to learning mainly through providing extra individual support, but also through extra resources.

41 The role of the manager for the foundation stage was redefined in September 2002 and good management is already having an impact on the quality of the provision in the nursery and reception classes. Curricular improvements have recently been made to ensure that the very good start provided by the nursery is built on well in the reception classes. All staff are well trained and understand how young children learn best. The nursery is very well equipped with indoor and outdoor play equipment. The school recognises that the lack of good quality outdoor play equipment limits what reception children can achieve and has good plans in place to improve the situation this year.

42 Many of the systems the school has put in place have been aimed at developing teaching rather than learning. For example, the school recognised that spelling was poor and so bought in a spelling scheme and organised the timetable so that one lesson each week is devoted to spelling. Similarly with reading; a scheme has been purchased and classroom assistants have the major responsibility of hearing pupils read each week. At the same time, the school has not introduced a consistent strategy for teaching literacy, particularly reading, or numeracy throughout the school. There is generous allocation in terms of money and time for staff's professional development, and this has been used extensively by everyone and to good effect. The school recognises that the next stage for development is to develop teaching methods so that young pupils learn through undertaking practical and relevant activities in most subjects, and through asking and answering questions. As yet, the school has no policy for teaching and learning.

43 The newly formed governing body plays a satisfactory part in shaping the school's direction. The governors are keen to improve the school's academic results. They are involved in shaping the school's three year development plan and support its wide-reaching aim to create better community links through appointing someone with specific responsibility for this role. Initially, all aspects of governance were discussed as a whole governing body. Recently, a system of working in smaller committees to make more efficient use of time has been set up to facilitate making decisions and at the same time help to develop the roles and responsibilities of governors. All governors are linked to a subject co-ordinator; while some are closely involved with the school such as the governor for special educational needs, others are not. The curriculum committee has met only once. Therefore, there is a specific need for governors to become more aware of the importance of their role in the monitoring of whole school initiatives related to teaching and learning so as to gain a clearer perception of its areas of weakness as well as its strengths.

44 Financial planning is good. The school has a financial administrator who ensures that all budgets are up-to-date and that financial information is readily available. The school makes successful bids for additional funding which helped to set up the ICT suite, for example. Careful consideration is given to ensure that the best possible value is obtained and future priorities are also taken into account before a decision is made. Specific grants are prudently spent to ensure that advice and resources enhances pupils' learning.

45 The school has come a long way in just over two years for it started from nothing with staff and pupils with disparate experiences and expectations. Most staff had not worked together before. Satisfactory systems are in place to monitor the performance of the school. Moderation of pupils' work is well organised though not enough emphasis is placed on the importance of tracking and targeting pupils' performance and progress. Teachers who are new to the school receive good levels of support and the school makes good provision for training new teachers. The school already has a strong culture in promoting initial teacher training and training providers confirm that such training is carried out well at this school. That the school now functions as a harmonious community and is well placed to improve further is due the good leadership and management.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

46 In order to improve further, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (i) raise standards in English, particularly reading, mathematics and science;
(Paragraphs 1, 3, 5–7, 23, 56–60, 64, 67, 71)
- (ii) find ways to use literacy, particularly reading, numeracy and ICT in other subjects;
(Paragraphs 23, 67, 81, 84, 90, 104)
- (iii) find ways to use practical activities to improve teaching and learning;
(Paragraphs 6, 9, 15, 17, 19, 23, 42, 60, 66, 71, 76, 98, 101)
- (iv) make more use of assessment, including marking, to tell teachers and pupils what they need to learn;
(Paragraphs 6, 20, 33, 36, 45, 66–67, 74–75, 97)
- (v) develop the role and responsibilities of the subject manager.
(Paragraphs 39, 40, 74, 97)

In addition, the following minor issues should be taken into consideration:

- (i) raise the profile of children's work around the school to celebrate their achievements;
(Paragraphs 9, 29, 77)
- (ii) governors should ensure that they have a better understanding of what it needs to do to improve standards.
(Paragraph 43)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	70
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	57

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	20	28	15	5	0	0
Percentage	3	29	40	21	7	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	353
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	113

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	10	100

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	113

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	44
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	21

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	25	31	56

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	16	20
	Girls	21	21	21
	Total	38	37	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	68 (75)	66 (84)	73 (80)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	20	20
	Girls	23	22	23
	Total	40	42	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71 (85)	75 (84)	77 (95)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	28	32	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	16	21
	Girls	21	16	20
	Total	34	32	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	57 (75)	53 (57)	68 (67)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	15	20
	Girls	20	19	24
	Total	33	34	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	55 (73)	57 (68)	73 (69)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

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

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
280	3	0
32		
20		
1		
1		
46		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	19
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.2
Average class size	27.1

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	404.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.1
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5

Financial information

Financial year	01-02
	£
Total income	1,003,037
Total expenditure	1,001,215
Expenditure per pupil	2,435
Balance brought forward from previous year	7,389
Balance carried forward to next year	6,925

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13.1
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5.6

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	405
Number of questionnaires returned	125

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	31	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	53	42	3	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	52	3	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	49	8	3	1
The teaching is good.	64	34	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	44	11	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	40	2	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	35	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	41	47	8	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	50	43	2	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	52	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	48	15	5	15

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

47 Children's experiences and knowledge, when they start in the nursery, are well below those expected for children of the same age and a small proportion of children show significantly delayed development in their ability to speak. During their time in the nursery and reception classes, children make good progress and achieve well, particularly in their personal and social development where achievement is very good. The majority reach or are close to reaching the standards expected in this area of learning by the time they leave the reception classes. In other areas children achieve well but standards are still below those expected for their age when they leave the reception classes because many have such a lot of ground to make up.

48 At the beginning of this year, teachers in the reception classes changed the way they taught, improving the opportunities for children to learn by finding things out for themselves through carefully planned play. This has resulted in improved rates of learning, particularly in language and literacy. The planning does not always link activities together to teach a colour, shape or develop a specific aspect of knowledge and understanding, for example and so far does not provide more structured work for older and higher attaining children to prepare them for the next stage of learning in Year 1.

Personal, social and emotional development

49 Very good teaching ensures that children develop confidence and independence. They make very good progress, particularly in the nursery. Teachers have high expectations of what children can do for themselves and how they should behave. From the time they start in the nursery children are expected to select their names to register when they arrive, get what they need for a task, play sensibly and put equipment and toys away at the end of the session. One of the strengths of the teaching in all three classes is that the teachers and nursery nurses set a good example themselves. They are calm, well organised and approachable and treat children with respect and courtesy. This leads to warm and trusting relationships and helps the children to learn how to behave. In both reception classes, school routines are very well established. The children know that they must sit quietly and sensibly for registration and put up their hands and take turns to speak in class discussions. They carry out jobs responsibly, as when preparing the milk cartons for snack time. Teachers make good use of stories and discussions to help children to understand the difference between right and wrong. As a result, the children respect one another, and feel secure as they learn to work and play happily and confidently together.

Communication, language and literacy

50 When they start in the nursery class, a significant proportion of children have well below average skills in speaking and listening. Their speech is often indistinct and some lack very basic vocabulary. Good teaching ensures that by the end of the reception year, children achieve well but their attainment overall is still below the levels expected for their age. Teachers spend much time developing the children's vocabulary, explaining new words when reading stories or introducing new words in role-play. Children who are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language receive some help from a specialist teacher. Adults are sensitive to their needs, taking care to pronounce words clearly and to reinforce meaning with gestures and actions where possible, to enable them to take part in the speaking activities. Adults constantly assess what the children can do and what they need to learn next and so they make good progress, beginning to talk about their play and ask questions. Although these strategies help develop children's confidence to speak, their vocabulary is still limited compared to most children of their age.

51 Teachers question children effectively to help them understand stories and work out what might happen next. In the nursery, children select attractive books from the book corner and

pretend to read them, often following the text with their fingers. Higher attaining children in the nursery know what sound their names begin with and one boy was very proud to announce that his began with 'kicking K'. In the reception classes, children read regularly and take their reading books home to read to parents. Higher attaining children read simple storybooks confidently, working out unfamiliar words from their knowledge of letter sounds. Lower attaining children know the characters in the story and some key words. Children with special educational needs are identified early on and receive extra help with learning their letter sounds from nursery nurses though they find it difficult to distinguish between 'b' and 'd', for example. Because of the large number of children with a poor vocabulary, fewer than average reach the level expected of their age. Children are encouraged to write independently right from the start and the smooth transition from mark-making to having a go at writing words for themselves enables higher attaining children to attempt simple sentences. By the time they leave reception most children attempt to write words for themselves and understand that writing helps them communicate and record their work. Fewer than average, however, write simple sentences independently or form most of their letters correctly.

Mathematical development

52 Standards are below average in mathematics by the end of the reception year. Children achieve well as a result of good teaching for they enter the nursery with well below average skills. Children are intrigued by counting and the very simple device of using counting as a means of gathering children together at the start of the mornings and afternoons instantly gets a willing response. The approach to teaching numeracy has been well thought out and children learn to start from zero, thus paving the way well for future learning. Adults use lots of praise to reinforce and celebrate success so children want to do well for their teachers. In the reception classes, children begin to understand numerical value through practical activities such as 'paying' with toy money using 1p, 2p and 5p coins which they learn to identify accurately. Similarly, the wide range of board games which involve using dice, counting and numbered squares help to familiarise pupils with the name and concept of numbers. Even in the reception classes though, pupils are uncertain of colours and guess wildly when asked which two colours to mix to make orange, suggesting yellow and white or green and red, for example. Opportunities are missed through having a colour or shape of the week to help lower attainers to learn basic mathematical features. Higher attainers recognise that a wigwam is 'a triangle' but lower attainers seem unaware of different shapes, for example. Much use is made of incidental talk to promote children's mathematical development. An interesting discussion about frogspawn led to children asking questions which the teaching put to good use, incorporating big, middle-sized and small frogs. However, teachers are not always sufficiently aware of the need to reinforce and repeat mathematical vocabulary for the benefit of children who are learning English as an additional language.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

53 Children enter the nursery with limited experience of the outside world. Teachers plan a wide range of activities to enable children to achieve well in this area and help them make sense of the world. By the time they leave the reception classes children's knowledge and understanding is close to but still below the levels expected of their age. Activities are fun. For example, in the reception classes the water play area had become a laundry. Children playing with the teacher knew that clothes needed to be washed regularly and that it was important to be clean. Children playing with a construction kit had been asked to make a vehicle to transport food to the café. One little boy had made a space ship to deliver pizzas, demonstrating some understanding of fast food delivery. In the nursery, children enjoyed planting seedlings in the indoor garden and playing with the toy lizards hidden in the compost. They knew that their seedlings needed water and soil to grow and handled the small plants with care. Children in the nursery and reception classes regularly use the computer and very good teaching in this area enables them to use the mouse confidently to find their way around the screen. Teachers do not make the use they could of visitors from the community such as police or firemen, or visiting artists, to give children first-hand experiences of the outside world. The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Physical development

54 Standards are below average at the end of the reception year. The quality of teaching and the provision for learning in this aspect are satisfactory. Although children have three hours of

physical education in the school hall, the provision for outdoor play is limited by the lack of good quality outdoor play equipment and so this limits what reception children can achieve. Because often both reception classes are taught together in the hall, the groups are too large for children to develop skills sufficiently well. The lessons are rather long and so lower attainers in particular tend to lose concentration part way through. The nursery is very well equipped with indoor and outdoor play equipment which is used well to develop children's skills. The children in all three classes enjoy playing with large construction equipment and learn well through finding out for themselves. In the nursery, three boys constructed 'fire squirts' and saying, 'Hey! A wolf!' they happily set off. In the reception classes although there are different forms of construction equipment available and the children readily avail themselves of these, there is little attempt to link the activity to an overall theme. Higher attaining children constructed quite complex vehicles, using rollers for wheels, whereas lower attainers tended to pick up a piece and wander off or else try to take someone else's. Children have lots of opportunities to use scissors, pens and pencils and some are quite dextrous in the way they use them. Lower attainers, however, tend to hold their pencils in an awkward way. Specialist teaching in ICT means that pupils are uncommonly adept at using the keyboard and the mouse to 'click in pictures': this aspect of physical development is well above average and the children make rapid progress.

Creative development

55 Standards are below average but the children achieve well by the end of the reception year because they are well taught. Many activities have a creative element and adults are good at inspiring children with confidence. In the nursery, children's singing is haphazard: some can sing the words with much help from the teacher but many miss them out. Children with English as an additional language tend to sit and listen rather than join in except when explicitly asked to contribute. The children learn to take it in turns to choose a different instrument but some find the notion of 'different' hard to grasp. Children in the reception classes learn music with the specialist music teacher and they have a great deal of fun. They achieve very well, learning to handle and play instruments properly and learning their correct names. They loved the 'slide whistle' and giggled as the sound moved up and down. They sing cheerfully and with some vigour – they make very good progress in this aspect of their creative development because it is so well taught. The children learn to mix their own colours, painting, for example, the food they have made out of salt dough for the classroom café. Opportunities are missed, however, to exploit the full range of children's cultures by introducing different food from the standard English café fare. Because of the good teaching, children learn to play imaginatively together.

ENGLISH

56 By the end of Year 6 standards are below average. However, they are similar to those in schools like Lower Fields and show good achievement, given pupils' well below average standards when they start school. Year 6 standards in speaking, listening and writing are below average. Standards in reading are well below average. Three-quarters of Year 6 pupils are in line to reach the standard expected for their ages in English by the time they leave school though the proportion expected to attain more highly is lower than the national average. Girls and boys achieve very similar standards. By the end of Year 2 standards in reading and writing are well below average and lower than those in similar schools. Standards in speaking and listening are below those expected for pupils' ages. These standards show significant improvements on results achieved in the 2002 national tests for seven and 11-year-olds. Standards of writing have gone up in Year 2, and the overall standard in English has gone up in Year 6. This is mainly because of the good quality of the teaching of writing throughout the school, and the high quality of teaching for pupils in their final year. The teaching of reading is satisfactory.

57 Speaking and listening skills improve steadily in Years 1 and 2. Nearly all pupils learn to listen attentively. As a result they gradually learn to understand and use new words and ideas. This is because teachers talk and read to them very expressively, listen carefully to what each one says and make learning interesting. However, because of steady rather than good progress in reading and below average standards in speaking at the beginning of Year 1, many pupils do not have a lot to say, using a word or two rather than sentences. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress because of the effective individual

support they get. Higher attaining pupils also progress well because teachers give them good opportunities to take the lead in discussion. Most pupils make satisfactory gains in confidence and expression by the end of Year 2 so as to explain simply what they think, notice, feel, see and want to ask. Year 6 pupils speak confidently. For example, they describe clearly and concisely to visitors the different ways in which they help younger pupils in reading and at dinner times. Confidence in speaking "in public" develops well through good opportunities for all pupils to take part in productions, assemblies and presentations. Teachers' use of high quality material often stimulates and develops speech well. For example in an excellent lesson Year 6 pupils listened intently as the teacher read striking story openings. They were then able to give clear explanations of how the writers achieved their effects. Because of the good working atmosphere and interest in lessons pupils learn a lot by listening to each other and sharing ideas. Higher attaining pupils listen carefully so as to follow the main points of an argument. However, there is no overall plan to develop speech and drama skills in each year of pupils' time at school.

58 Pupils are now making satisfactory progress in reading in Years 1 and 2. Many did not get a good start in equating letters with sounds in the reception year. This is one of the reasons why the organisation of teaching and learning in the reception classes has changed. A few higher attaining pupils read by themselves by the end of Year 2. Average and lower attaining pupils often struggle when reading aloud, and continue to need a lot of help. The school has begun to address these poor standards by introducing a new graded reading scheme. As both teachers and support staff are still learning how to use this resource, it is not yet having an impact on standards. However, pupils' skills in finding information using dictionaries, indexes and contents pages are as expected for their ages. Higher and average attaining pupils begin to read back their own writing so as to check and correct it. Reading standards remain well below average in Year 3 and do slow down learning. Year 4 pupils have made good progress since Year 2 and now have broadly average standards. However standards in Years 5 and 6 are also well below average. This is mainly because these pupils have not had enough guidance to develop the speed and breadth of their reading and skills such as finding and interpreting evidence in text. For example, higher attaining pupils are unsure of the types and settings of books they are reading, and do not understand phrases such as "getting it in the neck". Average attaining pupils do not use the full stops and commas in books to guide their expression in reading. Lower attaining pupils read confidently but inaccurately because they lack basic skills. For example they miss words out and confuse "come" and "came", "was" and "were". Moreover library skills such as the use of book numbering systems are not secure because the school does not develop them sufficiently. Nearly all pupils use dictionaries and thesauruses effectively to improve the quality of their work. It is clear therefore that the measures the school has introduced are beginning to be effective but have not had time to have sufficient impact on standards as yet.

59 Pupils make good progress in writing, mainly because the school gives it top priority in English lessons. However standards are lower than in most primary schools. Pupils are often short of words, for example, to develop story, explanation and character, not least because of below average listening, speaking and reading skills. In Years 1 and 2 standards of handwriting, presentation and rates of writing are below average. This is because of gaps in basic skills such as forming letters and linking them. Very few pupils are adept at writing with joined up letters by the end of Year 2. Writing is often not on the line. However, higher and average attaining pupils produce readable simple sentences. Higher attaining pupils also begin to choose words well to describe feelings, as in: " 'You must keep your promise,' he said, in an angry, roary voice." Average and lower attaining pupils spell most words just as they sound, and do not shape letters consistently. Lower attaining pupils' handwriting is often difficult to read. However, pupils often enjoy writing because teachers are now showing them how to improve and succeed. A Year 2 pupil observed a portrait of Charles II and noted that he was a figure from history, because he had a: "ruffly collar, frilly cuffs and a big, baggy shirt." In Years 3-6 teachers use English lessons well to build up pupils' experience of writing in a wide range of forms. For example, they write stories, letters, brochures and drama scripts. There is less poetry writing than in most primary schools. Standards of spelling, handwriting and presentation remain below average because marking is not rigorous enough and so does not significantly affect standards. Teachers work hard to encourage pupils to develop ideas at length. For example Year 6 pupils wrote a page to explain the suitability of the title of a poem. They work enthusiastically, not least because the school encourages them to appreciate themselves as writers. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 use "writers' journals" to collect ideas and guidance on style, grammar and vocabulary.

60 Teaching and learning are good. While there is a good proportion of high quality lessons, particularly in writing, the teaching of reading is satisfactory. This is the main area for improvement. Because of their previous teaching experience, some teachers are unsure how to go about teaching reading and although most have now received training their use of the national literacy strategy is inconsistent. The school tends to rely on teaching assistants to guide and assess pupils' individual development in reading and teachers themselves do not monitor closely enough the amount, range and understanding in pupils' individual reading. Nor do they use well-established literacy hour strategies enough to improve the reading skills of pupils of all abilities. The school has taken the first steps to address these issues through a new reading scheme, a new spelling scheme and a well-organised library with updated resources. All pupils are given time each week to change their reading books and it is unusual not to meet reading support groups round the school. The school has yet to implement the early, additional and further literacy support schemes to help those pupils who are falling behind to catch up.

61 Writing is systematically taught throughout the school and the very good quality of the teaching of writing in Year 6 is a strength. These lessons run at a fast pace because of teachers' very good knowledge of the topics and determination that pupils do as well as they can. Important strengths in teaching are beginning to lift standards from their present low levels. Good relationships encourage pupils of all abilities and backgrounds to contribute to lessons. Teachers' good management, teamwork and careful organisation mean that language development is at least satisfactory in most of them.

62 Teachers often give pupils good opportunities to learn through speech and also to develop their speaking skills. In the very best lessons teachers ensure that all pupils are fully involved all the time in speaking, reading and writing. Pupils' enjoyment of learning is always evident in the many good lessons when teachers use challenging activities to involve them all.

63 Experienced support staff significantly improve the standards of pupils with particular language difficulties, in small groups and individually. The effectiveness of this work shows in the good progress and achievement of many lower attaining pupils, traveller and refugee pupils, those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Satisfactory leadership and management after a time of major changes for both staff and pupils have begun to improve standards. This is because of an accurate sense of needs and thoughtful practical responses to them.

MATHEMATICS

64 Although pupils' attainment by the end of Years 2 and 6 is below the national average, standards in mathematics are improving and the school likely to meet its target for this year. As pupils move through the infants they make well above average progress and at the end of Year 2 this represents very good achievement when their abilities are considered. Similar improvements, although not as marked, are seen in the good progress pupils make in the junior classes and at age 11, their achievement is good. Progress for pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language is good. Standards in mental mathematics are slightly above average throughout the school. However, there is still some way to go.

65 The quality of teaching and learning and the setting of pupils, particularly in ability groups in the juniors, have contributed to the improvement. Teaching is consistently good and sometimes very good. This is most notable in the infants where half the lessons seen were very good. Pupils make good progress from a starting point which is well below average. By Year 2, pupils build on the good progress they make in Year 1 with the higher attaining pupils using a diagram with numbers to 30 to find out the multiples of two and five. Lower attaining pupils begin to understand place value of two-digit numbers and confidently count to 100. Pupils of middle ability recognise and name basic two and three-dimensional shapes such as circle, triangle and rectangle, and cube, cuboid and sphere. This good progress continues in the junior classes so that by Year 4, higher and middle ability pupils use mental skills to answer number problems such as, 'In the library there are 127 books on the top shelf and 87 on the bottom. If I remove 60 how many are left?' They show evidence of some good understanding in their individual strategies such as 'take 60 from the

top shelf and add' or 'take 30 from each shelf and add.' By Year 6, higher attaining pupils use decimals, fractions and percentages to calculate answers. They draw line graphs to convert pounds sterling to South African rands, collect information about colours in a pie graph and use formulae to find the area of shapes and the length of missing sides. Middle ability pupils find the equivalence of fractions, the co-ordinates of reflected shapes and collect information using a tally chart and use this to answer questions. Lower attaining pupils find simple fractions of whole numbers, the perimeter of rectangles and draw lines of symmetry into shapes. Teachers have high expectations therefore which encourage pupils to succeed. That their attainment is no higher reflects the amount of ground they have to make up from the low point at which many started.

66 In the most successful lessons there is a good level of interaction between pupils and teachers, lessons move at a good pace and so keep pupils occupied and working. In turn pupils respond and show good levels of concentration. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language have good support in the classroom and because of this make good progress. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and as a consequence they respond well. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are good and because they are interested, they work hard. However, the national numeracy strategy is not used as effectively as it could be, with some teachers of older pupils relying too heavily on a commercial scheme. Pupils' books are marked regularly but this is often limited to an acknowledgement that the work has been finished and does not tell pupils, particularly the older ones what to do next in order to improve. Although information and communication technology is used to assess pupils' progress, it is not a sufficiently regular feature in teachers' planning to provide depth to pupils' learning.

67 The co-ordination of mathematics is good and contributes well to the improvement in standards. Much has been done to raise achievement, especially in Years 5 and 6, through judiciously grouping pupils according to ability. When analysis of pupils' attainment revealed that pupils did less well in tests than they should because they were failing to show how they arrived at their answers, the co-ordinator instituted a system to ensure that pupils learnt to show their working on one side of the page. However, in order to further raise pupils' attainment there are a number of priorities for consideration. Currently, assessment is not used as well as it should be for although information from statutory national tests and other optional tests is collected, the information gained from these is not used extensively and in detail to plan what pupils need to learn. The assessments made in teachers' short-term planning are not used to plan specific individual and group targets for learning. Teachers tend to rely on the grouping rather than focusing more precisely on the different needs of pupils in the sets they teach. Marking of pupils' work is not as rigorous as it should be. Not all teachers have had relevant training in teaching the national numeracy strategy and so its use is inconsistent throughout the school. At the moment, therefore, there is no consistency in planning and teaching mathematics lessons. The aspect of mathematics which involves pupils using and applying their knowledge is less well developed than the others.

68 Despite these factors, teaching and learning are good and pupils noticeably make progress in lessons. They achieve well; there is the potential to achieve more highly. Pupils enjoy mathematics, they are well motivated, generally enthusiastic and work hard.

SCIENCE

69 Standards in science are below average at Year 2 and well below average at Year 6. Only a small number of pupils reach the higher levels of attainment. The subject has not been a priority for development in the past two years and little has been done to analyse what pupils do well and what needs to be improved in order to raise standards.

70 Teaching is satisfactory overall and pupils achieve satisfactorily from their low starting point. Teachers follow a balanced curriculum that ensures that all strands of the subject are taught systematically. For example, by the time they are 11, pupils have an understanding of how the movement of the earth around the sun affects seasons in their study of physical processes and know that gravity is a force as is air resistance. As a result of their study of life processes they understand how the food chain works and can identify major organs in plants and in the human body. Through studying materials they know that some solids dissolve and some do not, and that some solutions can be separated. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and ensure that

pupils are taught specialist vocabulary and learn to use scientific equipment safely.

71 There are strengths and weaknesses in the way science is taught, particularly in Years 3-6. Teachers understand the importance of teaching through practical activity and provide plenty of opportunities for practical experiments. However, all too often pupils are told exactly what to do at each step and are not given enough opportunities to plan and test for themselves, or to try different approaches to solving problems and record their findings in their own words. This limits the learning of many pupils. Lower attaining pupils often do not have the time to complete an experiment and there is often unfinished work in their books; higher attaining pupils do not have the opportunity to try harder work and record their findings independently. Too often pupils have to copy a class conclusion from the board or fill in missing words from a work sheet when recording their work. This means that teachers do not really know how much individual pupils have learnt in the lesson and what they need to learn next. When they are working practically, pupils are enthusiastic about their work and generally work well in pairs and groups.

72 Teaching is better in Years 1 and 2 and pupils achieve well. Pupils have plenty of opportunity to find things out for themselves and record their work independently. This enables teachers to assess what they have learnt and provide harder work for higher attaining pupils. In a good lesson in Year 2, pupils learning about electricity investigated battery operated equipment to find out how batteries worked. They had a good range of household equipment to choose from and worked sensibly in groups to find out which way round batteries had to go. Pupils were very interested. They already knew that some equipment worked from plugs into an electric circuit and higher attaining pupils soon discovered that the electricity in a battery flowed in one direction only. The teacher used questions well to encourage them to think for themselves and had harder work to hand for those who finished quickly.

73 In all lessons teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs are given additional support to help them take full part in the practical activity. They are sensitive to those who are learning English as an additional language and very often a classroom assistant gives extra support; as a result, these pupils learn well. The practical activities promote pupils' personal development well. They learn to co-operate when sharing equipment and take delight in discovering some of the wonders of the natural world for themselves. This was particularly evident in the Year 2 lesson when bulbs flashed on, buzzers worked and pupils' faces lit up with pleasure! Teachers develop numeracy skills well when graphs and charts are used to record findings and when pupils learn to read scales on thermometers for instance, but do not yet make good use of ICT.

74 There are weaknesses in the way the subject is managed at present. There is no consistent approach to lesson planning. Where planning is good it caters for the full range of ability within the class but too often the lesson plan takes no account of the needs of different groups of learners. There are not enough regular checks made on teaching and on pupils' work for teachers to be clear about where weaknesses lie and how to raise standards. Some teachers need training on how to teach scientific skills most effectively to primary age children. Nevertheless, the school is very well resourced for the subject, teachers are competent and the school is well placed to make improvement in its provision.

ART AND DESIGN

75 Standards are below average at the end of Year 6. Although pupils are beginning to make progress, their progress over time is uneven as is their achievement. In part, this reflects the lack of a scheme of work designed to develop pupils' skills systematically so that they build on what they know and understand. Pupils are taught in a purpose-built art room which has recently been cleared to allow them space to work in and to enable resources to be stored so that they are accessible. Understandably this has occupied much of the subject manager's time who was appointed at the start of the term to teach art throughout the school. Without adequate records of what pupils have learnt, however, much of the teaching has been concerned with finding out what pupils know and can do. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory overall though there are flashes of creative brilliance.

76 There is much potential in the provision for art which is allocated a generous amount of time as well as a specialist artist to teach throughout the school. The teacher's relative inexperience of teaching, however, means that without a clear scheme of work to guide what is taught sometimes the work is inappropriate to the pupils' ages and experience. The expectations of what pupils can understand and accomplish veer from the far too challenging to the far too simple. For example, pupils in Year 4 are expected to be able to discuss whether the abstract artists' movement was unsuccessful whereas pupils in Year 1 are not expected to cut out by themselves the hands they have drawn. The teaching has enormous strengths in the teacher's very good subject knowledge and enthusiasm for art. There is good use of different methods such as photocopying to enlarge drawings or photographing still lifes. However, opportunities are missed for pupils to use the digital camera to develop their ICT skills at the same time. Relationships with pupils are very good. Pupils clearly enjoy their art lessons because they are unexpected and often fun. Higher attaining pupils clearly find much of the work fascinating and it certainly stimulates them. For example, a higher attainer in Year 4 explained: 'If you look at abstract art you don't know what it's going on about at first and then if you look close you begin to see shapes'. The weaknesses, however, mean that all pupils do not make as much progress as they should. Often the work is too difficult for many, particularly those who are lower attaining or who have special educational needs. Exercises such as drawing a quick sketch of a complex painting by an artist such as Francis Bacon or Auerbach are extremely difficult, for example. Sometimes the balance between theory and practical activities is too heavily weighted towards the theoretical. Pupils have limited opportunities to choose their own resources as when creating a still life, for instance. The paintings they are given to look at are not selected sufficiently carefully so that it is clear to pupils what they should be looking for. These weaknesses are exacerbated by the lack of planning and structure.

77 The displays of pupils' art show that many pupils have the potential to produce work of a good standard. There is, however, not much of a range to see. Younger pupils' self-portraits have a lively mix of watercolours and pastels. Their woven fabrics are of a good standard though the materials they have used to weave with are virtually identical. Pupils in Year 6 show a satisfactory grasp of how to smudge chalk and charcoal on paper to produce effective pictures of stuffed animals. There is, however, as much work displayed throughout the school by other artists, including the teacher's own, as there is by the pupils and so opportunities are missed to celebrate pupils' achievements and help raise interest and standards.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

78 By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils attain below average standards, although, due a number of circumstances, this represents satisfactory achievement. It is only recently that the subject has had sufficient focus in the curriculum. Schemes of work, based on national guidance have only been available to teachers from the beginning of the year. Significant gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding have been identified such as how to join materials. However, examples of pupils' completed work show that there is potential to raise standards.

79 Pupils in the infants understand the need to make simple designs and on prepared sheets draw their models of puppets. They identify the materials to be used concentrating on colour and texture to match their purpose. For example, sparkling for Cinderella's gown and grey felt for 'Aladdin's waistcoat'. They use wheels and cams to make a moving 'Wobbly animal'. They can estimate, measure, mark out and cut simple shapes with some accuracy. Their joining skills are improving, particularly more intricate skills such as sewing using a running stitch. In the junior classes, younger pupils design and make money containers. In Year 5 they make functional designs for working musical instruments, using corks and rubber bands to make a six-string guitar. The oldest pupils show a greater degree of maturity in their designs. In their plans for slippers they note the equipment and materials needed, and basic instructions. These include separate drawings and diagrams to show in more detail which materials are used and how.

80 Not enough lessons were seen to make a firm judgement about the quality of teaching and

learning throughout the school. However, it is clear that all pupils have good attitudes and talk about their designs and models with enjoyment and enthusiasm. Provision for design and technology is much better than in most primary schools. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are taught by the subject co-ordinator in specialist accommodation and all teachers have good classroom assistance. Resources are good, particularly for older pupils in the design and technology room. These include workbenches, a good range of tools for measuring, marking, cutting and joining, reference books and computers. These are under-used at present.

81 These are positive features on which to build and raise standards to those expected nationally. At present, pupils are not encouraged to discuss and evaluate their individual ideas or change, if necessary, their designs and progressive plans. They have limited opportunities to use a greater range of materials, tools and media such as food, stiff and flexible materials, textiles and powered models controlled by computer and batteries. At the moment, not enough attention is paid to the use and quality of finish of their work, nor do pupils evaluate sufficiently what works well and what could be improved. At present there are no planned links with other subjects such as literacy, mathematics, science and ICT.

GEOGRAPHY

82 Although only a single lesson was observed, an analysis of pupils' work and discussions with them and their teachers, show that by the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and they attain the standards close to those expected of their age. There is insufficient evidence to make firm judgements about the quality of teaching and learning.

83 In the infant classes, pupils' experiences are used to develop early skills of geographical enquiry. They use the school and its grounds, and the immediate locality for map work and directions. They draw simple maps of their journey to school and the landmarks they pass. Moving to a wider perspective, pupils study a contrasting location in the United Kingdom, the fictional Isle of Struay in Scotland, based on the book by Mairi Hedderwick. Comments such as, 'Bradford has a lot of roundabouts' show they understand the contrasts with their own homes, jobs, transport and their every day lives. By Year 4, pupils consider environmental problems such as marine pollution and its effect on wildlife, and argue for and against the building of a new motorway. They learn about less economically developed countries in the world and compare their lives with children in an Indian village. In Year 5, pupils look at the water cycle and how water is used in different parts of the world. The oldest pupils build on this and study the work of rivers studying how erosion and deposition affects the course of a river.

84 The subject lacks a policy to guide teachers. Schemes of work are based on national guidance. Assessment of pupils' progress is underdeveloped. Geography makes a useful contribution to pupils' cultural development. However, its contribution to literacy would be better if pupils were encouraged to write more freely, rather than copying work and filling in gaps. There are few displays of pupils' work in this subject around school and in classrooms to provide talking points, celebrate pupils' achievements and help raise interest and standards. The Internet is not used as extensively as it should be to allow pupils to research information or to bring pupils' learning alive and deepen their knowledge, skills and understanding. Resources for geography are good.

HISTORY

85 Standards are as expected for pupils' ages by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is good achievement, as pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world are below average at the end of the reception year. Teachers make good use of the latest national guidance to develop pupils' history skills though the three topics they study each year. All pupils, including travellers, refugees, those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, therefore make steady progress.

86 By the end of Year 6 pupils compare the value of different sources of evidence such as archaeology, pictures, films, old diaries, artefacts and the Internet. They regard studying history at school as important because they feel it is an essential part of their general knowledge and that we can learn lessons from it. Pupils of all abilities recall key facts about ancient civilisations. They understand how and why Romans, Saxons and Vikings invaded and settled in Britain. Pupils also understand how life for children and families was different in Tudor and Victorian times. They understand how to investigate evidence of change in local history by studying the 1841 and 1891 Census records. By the end of Year 2 pupils have a satisfactory understanding of chronology. Pupils also learn how we may find out about the past from eyewitnesses who wrote down or depicted what they saw. They begin to make notes about what they discover, labelling pictures and writing simple sentences. For example a higher attaining Year 2 pupil wrote at length describing reasons why the fire of London spread so quickly. Pupils also remember the key reasons why famous people are important. A lower attaining Year 2 pupil studying Florence Nightingale noted: "She made hospitals better."

87 The quality of teaching and learning taken overall is good. This is because teachers have detailed knowledge of the topics, provide interesting resources, and give pupils plenty to do. For example a Year 5 teacher introduced a study of the Second World War by getting pupils to talk to older family members about it. They then brought in to school a good many artefacts from the period. They were interested in the study because there were opportunities to pursue key questions and to discover historical answers to their own interests. Teaching is also effective when pupils have varied opportunities to learn through simple observation. For example, Year 1 pupils drew their own favourite toys and compared them with those children played with a hundred years ago. They understand how school and home life were different in Victorian times. In order to discover how buildings reveal history, pupils made observational drawings of local houses showing satellite dishes, drain pipes and burglar alarms, before comparing them with older buildings.

88 Teachers enliven pupils' understanding of the past through well-planned use of artefacts. Visits to places of historical interest give pupils further good opportunities to learn through observation and direct experiences. Teachers make good use of writing in history to increase pupils' understanding and also to extend their literacy skills. For example pupils in Year 5 write thoughtful letters home as if they were evacuees. Year 2 pupils compose royal proclamations to describe how people are to rebuild London. Year 6 pupils also use the Internet effectively to create their own history web sites and to find information about the 1970's.

89 Good leadership and management ensure pupils follow interesting programmes of practical investigation and discovery about the past which they evidently enjoy. Their work in history makes useful contributions to their cultural development and understanding of society.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

90 Standards in ICT are in line with those expected by the end of Years 2 and 6. ICT is both taught and co-ordinated well by a specialist teacher who teaches ICT throughout the school. In the last year, since the introduction of specialist teaching and appropriate training for other staff, pupils' competence and confidence in using ICT have risen. However, one of the drawbacks of specialist teaching is that not all teachers use ICT to help pupils to learn in other subjects. Therefore the teaching of ICT skills across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The resources for learning are very good and the provision benefits from good technical support.

91 No lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2 but the quality of their work indicates that pupils achieve well and attain standards in line with those expected. They learn to use ICT to word-process their work and to record what they have done in different forms. In Year 2, pupils design "Happy faces", drawing lines, and applying spray and colour techniques. They are able to link picture images to words.

92 Pupils are well motivated and keen to learn. In Years 3 - 6, the quality of teaching is good and so pupils learn at a brisk pace. The teacher's good subject knowledge ensures that pupils are very attentive and understand what they are learning; for example, in one lesson, the teacher demonstrated very well the use of spreadsheets through good questioning which challenged pupils to think before answering. Technological vocabulary, such as 'active cells', helped pupils understand. As a result, they made good progress and produced spreadsheets which identified differences in the total cost of combinations of different foods. Pupils enjoy working in the computer suite; they work together well and listen carefully to the teachers' instructions. They concentrate very well and behave sensibly and treat equipment responsibly. Teachers use the 'interactive whiteboard' very effectively when instructing. This helps pupils when they move on to working on individual computers. Pupils are very proud of the quality of the work they produce.

93 Older pupils have the opportunity to explore the possibilities of ICT in other ways; for example, pupils in Year 6 attended an after school club to prepare a school web site as an entry for a competition organised by a local museum. The subject is well led and managed. As yet, assessment is not used as fully as it should be to keep track of pupils' progress and to set targets for development. The subject is at the early stages of development; progress is good so far.

MUSIC

94 Standards are in line with those expected by the end of Year 6. Standards are above those expected by the end of Years 2 and 4, reflecting the very good progress pupils have made in two years as a result of very good, specialist teaching in most classes and very good teaching by class teachers in Year 2. That standards are no higher in Year 6 than in Year 4 is a reflection on their previous not their present experience. The scheme of work, devised by the co-ordinator, is extremely good and very precisely matched to the differing needs of pupils of different abilities within each year group. The scheme of work enables pupils to develop skills progressively, building on what they know and understand. It incorporates all aspects of music and is conceived very much with the interests of children at its heart. Resources for learning are very good and are carefully matched to support the curriculum and to provide instruments of different sizes for different age groups. The subject is very well led and managed. Displays of pupils' work in the music room celebrate pupils' achievements as well as demonstrating to other pupils the standard of work expected and achieved.

95 The quality of teaching is invariably very good and has high expectations of what pupils can learn. Not a moment is wasted. When it is appropriate, as in composing, for example, pupils are divided into groups according to their ability. For example, lower attaining pupils in Year 3 used ICT to enter the letter names of the notes they had composed for chime bars to produce a neat, readable score that they were proud of. This took account of the limitations pupils' well below average reading skills place on them yet nonetheless enabled them to succeed as well as others. By the end of Year 2, pupils use their voices to make high and low sounds following a picture score. They begin to understand conventional notation in terms of high, middle and low sounds. They are aware of the meaning of some musical terms. Higher attainers know, for example, that 'pulse' means 'beat'. The teaching takes care to involve children who are learning English as an additional language, encouraging them to speak, so that their vocabulary and range of ways of expressing themselves is systematically broadened. Colourful resources are used well and 'pop up puppets' were greeted with much enthusiasm as children cried: 'It goes up and it goes down!' By Year 6, pupils compose music which they record graphically and are able to evaluate their success by attempting to play another group's composition. The 'composers' were very quick to point out what they had inadvertently missed out and acknowledged that if it did sound the same as they had intended that it was 'luck' rather than their careful notation!

96 Standards in Year 4 are already higher than expected for their age. Pupils created an accompaniment for a class composition using the pentatonic scale, which was both tuneful and

well matched to the words. Pupils in this year group perform and sing with confidence. Two-thirds were prepared to sing solo and all work hard to improve their performance. The very good teaching ensures that no time is wasted and lessons begin and end with well-known routines which include sung responses. Pupils concentrate and work really hard in these lessons, gaining much satisfaction from their achievements.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

97 Standards are below expected levels by the end of Year 6 and in line with those expected by the end of Year 2. In swimming, pupils make satisfactory progress and by the end of Year 6 most pupils can swim 25 metres. Despite the very good accommodation and plentiful resources, the pupils' learning and their achievements in this subject are largely unsatisfactory. This is because older pupils do not follow a programme of work that is well matched to their age and level of attainment; expectations of what pupils can do are often unrealistically high and so although pupils try hard they do not always succeed and sometimes tend to give up and spend time chattering. The high level of noise in most lessons further slows pupils' learning. The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has not ensured that lesson planning is detailed enough and systems to monitor pupils' progress have not been established.

98 The subject is taught largely by a specialist teacher whose experience has been with much older pupils. Consequently there is a lack of knowledge as to how pupils in primary schools learn. This adversely affects the quality of both teaching and learning in Years 2 – 6 and in some way partly explains why standards are unsatisfactory overall. Pupils in Year 1 follow a curriculum that is relevant and meets their needs. They make satisfactory progress due to sound teaching. In a satisfactory dance lesson in Year 1, the teacher's calm and controlled manner helped pupils to experiment and explore ideas of linking simple galloping and prancing movements into a horse dance. This the pupils did well and the teaching ensured that sound progress was made. However, important details such as lightness, speeds of movement and smooth changes in direction were not developed enough. In some lessons pupils' movements are inhibited by their footwear.

99 The quality of teaching overall is unsatisfactory. The lack of detailed plans, stating what is to be taught and learnt and how this is to be achieved adversely affects the quality of both teaching and learning. Consequently, opportunities are missed for providing appropriate times to learn through practising a step at a time before building up into a more complex sequence of movements. Often this results in pupils quickly losing interest. In Year 6, carrying and storage of equipment was poorly managed by the teacher: there were too few pupils per mat, they were carried incorrectly, pupils were noisy and inattentive and the whole operation took too long. As a result of poor storage, the mats curl up at the sides so they present a hazard when pupils move from one to another. In other lessons teachers distribute resources such balls, bats and ropes, rather than incorporating this as a part of pupils' learning. Pupils are not encouraged to collect or replace their own equipment, this slows the pace of the lesson and leaves the pupils inactive for too long. Pupils' independent learning is underdeveloped in several indoor games sessions and, as a consequence, noisy and poor behaviour and attitudes ensue. The lack of praise and lack of provision for pupils to reflect on their own performance through observing other or to share their work and ideas in front of others further inhibits pupils' progress. Extra-curricular activities are used well to give pupils' additional experience in physical education.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

100 Standards are below those expected for 11 year olds. There was not enough evidence to make a clear judgement for seven-year-olds as no lessons were seen and there was very little work in pupils' books. Over the past two years the subject manager has worked hard to put in place a scheme of work that takes full account of the locally agreed requirements for the subject as well as

the needs and experiences of the pupils. This provides good support for teachers and ensures that all aspects of the subject are given an appropriate amount of time.

101 Standards are slightly lower than they should be at Year 6 because this balance is not always maintained. Pupils spend more time learning about religion than they do learning from religion. As a result, pupils develop a sound understanding of the major world faiths. In discussion, pupils recall stories from the major faiths they have studied including Buddhism, Sikhism and Christianity. They recognise that all have some key features in common such as special places of worship, rules or commandments, prayers and sacred writings. Many pupils come to school with no personal experience of religious faith at home and they achieve well to develop their understanding of its importance in many peoples' lives. Higher attaining pupils are often those with some personal family experience and they can set their learning in context and talk more confidently about what they have learnt because they have the vocabulary to do so. On the whole, pupils report that they enjoy the subject, especially when lessons are enlivened by the use of artefacts or visits.

102 Evidence for learning from religions is more limited. Pupils all understood the need for respecting different faiths but there was very little independent writing in their books to show that they had regular opportunities to respond and reflect in a personal way to the religious belief of others. In older classes, too much of the written work in books is based on exercises from a textbook. This means that teachers cannot assess what pupils have learnt from a lesson and what they need to learn next, and it does not leave room for higher attaining pupils to develop their answers in greater depth and detail. There was more evidence for personal response in the books of younger pupils. Pupils in Year 2 who had studied special places knew that a church was special to Christians and a Gurdwara special to Sikhs. They had thought about their own special places such as 'my Nan's house' and 'my bedroom' and had drawn careful pictures of them.

103 Only two lessons were seen so it is not possible to make overall judgements on teaching and learning. A notable strength in a Year 4 lesson was the way in which the teacher used a story about Gandhi to lead a sensitive discussion on responses to anger. Her story telling ability held pupils' interest; her very good use of questions and the good relationships that existed within the class enabled pupils to recount their experiences, ask questions confidently themselves and express their own views on the story. It is clear that teachers make good use of the subject for speaking and listening opportunities and these discussions support pupils' personal development well as they learn to respect what is important in other peoples' lives. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of pupils with learning difficulties. Those who are learning English as an additional language are successfully encouraged to take full part in the lesson. Pupils who have personal experiences of religious practice at home are used as a valuable resource for learning where appropriate, enabling the class to benefit from and celebrate the religious diversity the school enjoys.

104 The good management of the subject so far has ensured that the school is well placed to improve further. At present not enough use is made of ICT, to research the subject for example, or to present pupils' work. There are not enough regular checks made on teaching and pupils' work to identify what improvements are needed to raise standards. Not enough use is made of visits to places of religious interest and visitors of different faiths to bring the subject alive.