

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **YEARSLEY GROVE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Huntington, York

LEA area: York

Unique reference number: 132228

Headteacher: Mrs A Burn

Reporting inspector: Sheila Pemberton  
20810

Dates of inspection: 2 – 5 June 2003

Inspection number: 248955

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	primary
School category:	community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	mixed
School address:	Yearsley Grove Huntington York YO31 9BX
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Appropriate authority:	governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Brian Kale
Date of previous inspection:	not applicable

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12511	Linda Buller	Lay inspector	Educational inclusion	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How good curricular and other opportunities are How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents / carers
30823	Brenda Clarke	Team inspector	English Art and design Physical education English as an additional language	
25509	Judith Clarke	Team inspector	Music The foundation stage	How well pupils are taught
11510	Keith Oglesby	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology	
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

With 467 pupils on roll, Yearsley Grove Primary School is larger than most primary schools. It is housed in two recently linked buildings that until September 2000 were separate infant and junior schools. Although pupils come from a diverse range of backgrounds, a good proportion of them live in families who face challenging circumstances. Their homes are situated on the northern outskirts of York in privately owned, council and housing association property. A small number of pupils, 33, joined the school mainly during the junior phase. Boys outnumber girls; 248 boys to 219 girls and most children attend the school's nursery. When they join the reception classes, over a half of all children's early achievements are below average. The achievements of the remaining half are mostly typical for their age, with a small group achieving more than most four-year-olds. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. However, since many families now receive family tax credit and other benefits, this percentage is misleading. Most pupils are of white British origin. Others are predominantly Asian and speak either Bangladeshi or Chinese at home and English at school. An average proportion of pupils has special educational needs of whom a smaller than average number is stated. However, a further 20 per cent receive additional help for their learning in lessons. Moderate learning difficulties account for most pupils' problems, but a few pupils have sensory difficulties and a substantial group has emotional and behavioural problems. The school has recently received *Investors in People* and *Artsmark* awards.

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

This is a good school, where headteacher, staff and governors do their best through good teaching and very effective leadership to raise standards which are still too low in English and mathematics. After three years of consolidated effort, standards are beginning to improve. The school provides pupils with a good education and a pleasant place for learning. It provides good value for money.

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

- Very strong leadership and effective management by the headteacher provide the school with a good basis for development and improvement.
- The school provides a rich and full curriculum that makes a good contribution to pupils' learning.
- Good teaching throughout the school meets most pupils' needs.
- The school takes good care of its pupils.
- Because most teachers are very good at managing difficult behaviour, pupils usually work steadily in lessons without disturbance to their learning.
- It provides parents with good information about their children's achievements and tries hard to involve them in its life and work.

#### **What could be improved**

- The quality of pupils' spoken language.
- The reading of less able pupils in Years 3 to 6.
- The spelling and punctuation of pupils in Years 5 and 6.
- The amount of time allocated to mathematics in Years 3 to 6.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Although the school has not previously been inspected, it has made many good improvements over the last three years. Standards are beginning to rise, with additional training the teaching is much stronger and the attitudes and behaviour of pupils in the juniors have become mainly good.

### 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				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	N/A	D	D	C	well above average A above average B
Mathematics	N/A	E	D	D	average C below average D
Science	N/A	D	C	B	well below average E

- When they start school, the achievements of about half of all children are low for their age. At the end of reception, a few children pass the goals for their early learning, up to a half achieve the goals and the achievements of the rest remain below or well below these goals.
- In 2001 and 2002, standards in national tests were higher in the infants than the juniors. This was mainly because pupils made much better progress in the former infants' school than in the former junior school and the achievements of many pupils in the junior school were affected by poor attitudes and behaviour.
- Comparisons with similar schools are misleading since they are based on eligibility for free school meals. Because this factor is no longer relevant for low income families who receive other forms of benefit, the grades comparing pupils' achievements with similar schools have each been raised in the above table by one point.
- In 2002, standards improved strongly in reading in Year 2 from below to above average.
- Nationally, and in comparison with similar schools, seven-year-olds reached good standards in mathematics and satisfactory standards in writing and science. This was because more able pupils did well in reading and even better in mathematics. Their performance in writing was satisfactory.
- Almost a half of all seven-year-olds did well by achieving a high standard in science.
- From 2001 to 2002, boys did better than girls in mathematics and girls did better in reading and writing. Inspection findings indicate that there is no apparent reason for this difference.
- Many pupils in this year's Year 2 reach satisfactory standards in reading and mathematics. Fewer pupils are working at the higher levels than in 2002. In recent national tests, standards improved and more pupils than in 2002 reached the expected level in writing.
- Standards remain below average in English and mathematics in Year 6 this year and average in science. This is because it is taking longer to compensate for gaps in the learning of older pupils whose early achievements were low. In 2002, boys achieved the

same results as girls in English but did better than girls in mathematics and science. There is no obvious reason for this. The school failed to achieve ambitious targets for English and mathematics in 2002. Targets for attainment in English and mathematics this year are considerably more realistic.

### PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils' attitudes are good. Many enjoy all activities, work hard and are keen to do their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good behaviour in classrooms helps most pupils to pay attention to their teachers and to get the most out of lessons. Most pupils behave well at lunchtimes but a few find it hard to behave well when away from their teachers.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils are usually sensible and reliable. Good relationships with their teachers make lessons enjoyable and improve pupils' learning.
Attendance	Good. It is above the national average. High unauthorised absence affects the learning of pupils whose parents take them out of school during term-time.

### 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.*

Teaching in English and mathematics is almost consistently good throughout the school. Teachers' very good grasp of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is raising standards in reading, writing and mathematics in the infants. Although the use of both strategies is mainly good in the juniors, not enough attention is given to marking in Years 5 and 6 to ensure that pupils improve their spelling and punctuation. Similarly with mathematics, where too little time is allocated to the subject for less able pupils to practise new learning. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they get a lot of help in lessons and close attention in groups outside classrooms. Because they speak English with confidence, pupils who use other languages at home make similar progress to other pupils. Particularly strong in Years 5 and 6 is teachers' excellent use of new technology. This improves pupils' progress in different subjects. Children in the foundation stage make good progress because teachers provide a good start to their learning. A very good feature of most teaching is the management of pupils' behaviour. This provides a calm atmosphere for learning.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Special emphasis on technology and a wide variety of activities outside lessons strengthen pupils' learning. Children in reception miss some opportunities for physical development.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The school helps pupils with special educational needs to make good progress towards the targets set for their learning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils with English as an additional language receive helpful guidance and speak English with confidence.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision for moral, social and cultural development makes a positive contribution to pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of pupils' well-being and is effective at maintaining harmonious behaviour in lessons. Close checks on pupils' progress and the use teachers make of assessment ensures that most pupils do their best in all subjects. Many parents find it difficult to maintain close partnerships with the school or to provide support for their children's learning. Good communication with parents keeps them well-informed about events and their children's progress.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership and management for the school. The systematic way that improvements are planned is developing the expertise of teachers and key staff to increasingly high standards and raising many pupils' achievements.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. A very well-informed governing body uses its many skills to improve pupils' achievements and to provide a school that offers a rich curriculum and good facilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	By thoroughly checking all aspects of provision, the school has a very clear view of strengths in its performance and takes effective action to improve areas in need of development.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes very prudent use of its budget and excellent use of new technology for learning and management. It uses all expertise available to search out additional sources of finance and gets the best value from spending on resources. As a result, the school has a satisfactory level of staffing but a good quality and range of accommodation and resources.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They feel comfortable about approaching teachers with their concerns.</li><li>• The teaching is good.</li><li>• Their children make good progress.</li><li>• Teachers help their children to become mature and responsible.</li><li>• Their children like school.</li><li>• Children are expected to work hard and do their best.</li><li>• They are well-informed about how their children are getting on.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some parents would like more homework for their children.</li></ul>

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views of the school. They also judge that pupils receive reasonable amounts of homework for their age.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children join the reception classes with a very varied range of early achievements. A few children, about eight per cent in 2002, make such good progress that they are working towards the first level of the National Curriculum before reaching Year 1. This applies for the same children in language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. More children surpass their goals in mathematics. Last year, 22 per cent were working towards level 1 at the end of reception. This good achievement is reflected in more able pupils' progress in mathematics in Years 1 and 2. Children's attainments vary slightly in different areas of learning each year. At the end of reception in 2002, a smaller than average group, (between 50 to 60 per cent) achieved the goals for early learning in personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. Fewer children of average ability reached the goals set for their learning in communication, language and literacy and mathematics.
2. Around 40 per cent of all children will not reach the goals set for learning at the end of reception. Most of them come from backgrounds where their parents face challenging circumstances and provide little help for their learning at home. It is this large body of children, whose early achievements are very low on entry into school, who make good progress in the foundation stage, but whose attainments lag behind those of other pupils in the infants but especially when they reach Year 6.
3. Standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science in Year 2 are satisfactory this year. With very skilled teaching in English and mathematics, a greater proportion of the pupils who were not ready for work in the National Curriculum at the end of the foundation stage make good progress in the infants. For most pupils, standards in speaking and listening improve and are good in the infants. Only a few remain whose ability to take part in discussion is limited. This positive achievement allows pupils to crystallise their ideas and has a marked effect on their writing and understanding of the texts they read. However, in this year's Year 2, there are slightly fewer more able pupils and this is likely to marginally lower the school's results in national tests.
4. Although standards are rising in Years 3 and 4, they are still not high enough in English and mathematics in Year 6. Almost all pupils reach satisfactory standards in science, where there is more high attainment than in English and mathematics. Although pupils now make steady progress with their learning, this was not so in the past. Factors that have contributed to below average standards in Year 6 mainly date back to the time pupils were in the former junior school. These include:
  - significant weaknesses in the teaching of English and mathematics
  - the junior school's failure to put these weaknesses right after its last inspection
  - a lack of strategies to improve the learning of the large proportion of less able pupils
  - unsatisfactory behaviour that slowed down many pupils' progress
  - the attitudes to learning of some of the pupils who join the school in Year 6
  - a lack of time for less able mathematicians and readers to practise new learning.

5. Since the schools were amalgamated, most of these weaknesses have been dealt with. In Year 2 and Year 6, standards are at a higher level than most pupils achieve nationally in art and design, design and technology and geography. Standards are satisfactory throughout the school in information and communication technology (ICT), religious education, history, music and physical education. Pupils whose first language is not English do as well as other pupils at both key stages since none are at the early stages of learning the language. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make good gains in their learning. The school gives good help and encouragement to these pupils in their work. Taking into account their early achievements, they do well in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactorily in the juniors. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in the life and work of the school.

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

6. Most pupils' attitudes to school are good. Their enthusiasm for school is apparent in above average levels of attendance. In most lessons, where a range of good and varied teaching styles is used, pupils are keen to learn and respond with enthusiasm. This was seen, for example, in design and technology in Year 6 where the very effective use of an interactive white board held pupils' attention and enabled them to see the variety of shelters in use in the environment. As a result, pupils used this knowledge to very good effect when designing and selecting the materials for the construction of their own shelters. In the foundation stage, children settle quickly to a range of interesting activities, which arouse their curiosity and make them active learners. In each class, however, a few pupils lack self-motivation, although teachers try hard to involve these pupils their negative attitudes do at times slow the pace of their learning.
7. Pupils with special educational needs have good attitudes towards work, both in classrooms and when they are withdrawn from class to work in small groups. They enjoy their tasks, particularly those well-matched to their needs and those of a practical nature. Relationships with teachers and learning support assistants are good and this means that pupils benefit from positive encouragement from all members of staff. Other pupils are appreciative of the gains made by pupils who find learning difficult and this has an important impact on their self esteem.
8. In almost all lessons behaviour is good. Teachers manage pupils very well and ensure that they know what is expected. As a result, most pupils work well and co-operate with one another when working in groups or pairs. However, eight pupils were excluded from the school for poor behaviour in the last school year. This reflects the fact that behaviour does not always match the high standards set by the school. For example, in physical education in Year 3, the behaviour of some pupils disrupted the lesson and slowed the pace of learning. Although the behaviour of most pupils is satisfactory at lunchtimes, a few pupils find it difficult to behave sensibly in less structured situations.
9. Personal development is good. Relationships between staff and pupils are good and are one of the reasons why pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Relationships between pupils are generally satisfactory. In most lessons they work together amicably and share equipment sensibly although younger pupils in the foundation stage sometimes find this difficult. Many pupils offer and accept constructive criticism. For example, in dance, pupils in Year 1 made sensible comments about the work of other pupils, while in mathematics, older pupils provided spontaneous applause when a less able pupil gave a correct answer. Throughout the school, pupils take responsibility for a range of jobs such as acting as members of the school council and *play pals*, (where older pupils support younger ones at playtimes). However, pupils' responsibility for their own learning is less well-developed. Due to good provision for their personal

development, most pupils know what is right and wrong. They are aware of the impact of their actions on others both in school and in the wider world.

10. Attendance is good and is above the national average. The level of unauthorised absence is well above average. Authorised absence is due chiefly to a few pupils who have poor levels of attendance, sickness and parents taking their children on holiday in term time.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

11. Most of the teaching is good or better with a substantial amount that is satisfactory. This strong position reflects teachers' commitment and the quality of recent training that is supporting their drive to raise standards. The results of good teaching are seen in pupils' achievements. These mostly match the quality of teaching except in Years 5 and 6 where they are satisfactory. This situation arises because many pupils in these classes have the most catching up to do from low and very low starting points. Also, 12 pupils who joined the school in Year 6 have missed the opportunity to benefit from significant improvements in teaching.
12. An important attribute of most teaching arises from the necessity to contain the behaviour of small groups of pupils with behavioural problems. As most classes contain at least one of these pupils, the school has chosen teachers who form very effective, positive relationships with pupils. The respectful and firm way that most teachers deal with pupils ensures that learning usually occurs in a calm and favourable environment. Good behaviour and receptiveness to learning reflect teachers' relationships with pupils throughout the school. This strength of teaching is evident in adventurous lessons, such as drama in Year 4, where the teacher was so confident of her relationships with the class that she trusted everyone and allowed them considerable freedom to organise their own work. Very efficient organisation of the tasks and materials in art in Year 2 ensured that pupils had no opportunities to waste time or fail to understand what they should do.
13. Because teachers work well when using national strategies for literacy and numeracy, rising standards are evident from reception to Year 4. Very good teaching in the foundation stage and infants lies in the high levels of skill teachers bring to early learning in literacy and numeracy. As a consequence of effective teaching, standards are rising in reading in the infants and lower end of the juniors. For example in Year 2, as pupils located specific information in reference books, the teacher guided, explained and demonstrated the use of contents pages, indexes and glossaries. Skilled teaching of mathematics is based on effective use of the National Numeracy Strategy. In a very good lesson in Year 3, the teacher raised the quality of mental and oral mathematics to a high level through her involvement in the work, humour, adding difficulty to the tasks and strong praise. Work at the right level of challenge makes learning enjoyable for all pupils.
14. Although teaching in literacy and numeracy is strong there is still more to do to improve teaching. Less favourable to the achievements of less able readers are limited opportunities for them to read with adults. As many lack help at home, one or two weekly sessions are not enough to improve their skills or their interest in books that lack range or interest. Also, teachers are not recording the achievements of these pupils closely enough to improve their efforts. In numeracy, teachers in the juniors allow too little time for pupils to complete their work. This weakness mainly affects less able mathematicians who work more slowly than others and have insufficient time to practise new learning.

15. Since many pupils thrive on practical work, teachers incorporate a good range of investigations and experiments into their planning. As a result, pupils work hard and enjoy tasks that develop their understanding of science. This strategy also helps pupils to achieve good standards in art and design and design and technology. Teachers make good use of agreed targets to improve pupils' learning. They have good knowledge and understanding of all subjects. For example, in music, teachers' planning, skills and confidence have improved with specialist advice. The emphasis teachers place on accurate vocabulary and technical terms allows pupils to communicate with others about their learning. While this strategy is successful in the foundation stage and infants, some teachers in the juniors do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to articulate their ideas.
16. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers and support assistants plan pupils' work well. Learning support assistants effectively run carefully structured programmes for pupils. Specific help which addresses particular needs means that pupils make good gains and improve the skills that they need to make progress. Pupils with special educational needs play a full part in all lessons and teachers provide them with the same opportunities as other pupils. Teachers make good use of ICT to develop the learning of pupils with special educational needs.
17. Most teaching in the nursery and reception classes is good because teachers understand young children's needs and provide a calm and purposeful place for them to flourish and learn. Teaching is well-planned and helps children to learn by playing and finding things out for themselves.
18. Highly supportive to pupils' learning is the very skilled way that teachers in Years 5 and 6 use new, interactive whiteboards. With very strong expertise in the use of this equipment, these teachers use approaches that are sometimes inspired and have a powerful impact on the pace of pupils' learning. Planning is good. It works on pupils' interest and builds securely on what has gone before. Assessment is also good. Teachers ask searching questions, listen patiently to pupils' answers and make useful notes on weekly planning sheets to extend, modify or re-emphasise aspects of their teaching. Because teachers explain the objectives of lessons, pupils are clear about what they will learn. Teachers expect pupils to listen carefully, behave well and work hard. Most pupils live up to these high expectations and show commendable levels of application to learning. Teachers organise lessons well and use techniques and groupings that enable pupils to learn at a good pace.
19. Marking is generally thorough, but is most effective when teachers add encouraging comments and guidance on what pupils need to improve. In Years 5 and 6, teachers often miss errors in spelling and punctuation. Without this guidance, pupils lack the impetus to improve and clear ideas of their own weaknesses. Homework is provided by all teachers but is often not completed by many pupils.

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

20. The school offers an enriched curriculum, which meets statutory requirements to teach all subjects of the National Curriculum. Over the last three years, teachers have done well in putting a whole school approach to planning and schemes of work in place for all subjects. In addition to teaching a full programme for each different subject, the school makes strong efforts to improve the achievements of many less able juniors through lessons outside the school day. The curriculum for children in the foundation stage is satisfactory overall. Teachers take account of all six areas of learning when planning activities to interest and stimulate children in these classes. Religious education is taught in line with the locally Agreed Syllabus. The time allocated for teaching is greater than the nationally recommended levels for younger pupils but is well below that recommended for pupils aged seven to 11.
21. Social inclusion for all pupils is a strength of the school. All staff make very good efforts to include pupils of all abilities in every activity. They place great importance on pupils' personal development, encouraging them to reflect on their learning or behaviour and think about how to improve. Personal, social and health education is taught in separate lessons as well as through subjects such as religious education and science. Effective procedures for sex education and raising awareness of drugs make good use of the partnership between the school and outside agencies.
22. The school implements national strategies for literacy and numeracy well. Teachers have highlighted writing as an area for development and this is beginning to lead to an improvement in standards in this aspect of English. The school tries hard to ensure that all pupils are offered equal opportunities across the whole curriculum. All pupils are fully included in lessons and all receive the same chances and opportunities. Although pupils who are gifted or talented have been identified, there is currently no additional provision made specifically for them. Good provision is made for the pupils with special educational needs. All statutory requirements of the curriculum are met for them to access the full National Curriculum. Learning needs are identified early and individual education plans indicating the help pupils need are detailed and have measurable, achievable targets for pupils to work towards.
23. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good. Activities are popular and well-attended and include clubs for music, football, gym, gardening and ICT. All of these enrich the learning of pupils who participate and help them acquire new skills and knowledge. Older pupils have the opportunity to participate in a residential visit, where they gain personal and social skills while enjoying adventure activities. Links with the community and other institutions are good. For example, the school's partnership with local beacon schools has contributed to high standards in art and design and has resulted in the school achieving a *Silver Arts Mark* award. Visits to places of interest such as museums and theatres provide good first-hand experiences for pupils. This adds value and breadth to pupils' education. Trainees and students from higher education establishments provide pupils with experiences of working with a wider range of adults. The school's involvement in the Huntington family of schools has enhanced the programme of liaison with the local secondary school, including the teaching of bridging units to pupils in Year 6, which prepares them well for their transfer to the next stage of education.

24. Provision for pupils' spiritual moral social and cultural development is good overall. The school's ethos embodies clear values and a strong commitment to the care and well-being of its pupils. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Acts of collective worship focus strongly and successfully on moral and social development. They are often less successful in developing pupils' spirituality. An assembly in the infants focused on the life of Louis Braille and was successful in giving pupils the opportunity to explore what drives and motivates other people and in giving them time to reflect on what a special person he was. Spontaneous expressions of awe and wonder are not routinely linked to pupils' spiritual development and opportunities are missed in some lessons to allow pupils to explore emotions, share in the wonder of discovery, delight in beauty, or to think about their place in the world.
25. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. A clear code of conduct is shared with pupils and parents, leaving no-one in any doubt about the school's high expectations for good behaviour. The principles, which distinguish right from wrong, are taught consistently through the application of clear rules, often devised by pupils themselves. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their behaviour and are also encouraged to find ways of resolving problems and avoiding conflict. There is a School Council where elected representatives put forward their views, or issues of concern. All staff act as good role models, courteously reinforcing the school's code of conduct, with quiet reminders or queries such as *are you making good choices?* This results in positive responses from most pupils.
26. Provision for pupils' social development is good. Throughout the school pupils learn to share and take turns when playing and working together. All adults encourage pupils to be friendly, polite and considerate. This has a positive impact on the development of good relationships which are evident in all classes. In lessons, pupils, with a few exceptions, co-operate well, share resources and work effectively in pairs and small groups. Pupils in the juniors enjoy some additional responsibilities, for example, at lunchtime *Playground Pals* help other pupils to resolve any difficulties and to promote harmony. Pupils raise money for charities such as the local children's hospice, or for national events such as Comic Relief. They develop an appreciation that members of a community should support one another and are prepared well for citizenship through involvement in environmental projects.
27. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Teachers plan work in many subjects to enable pupils to learn about their own and other cultures and religions. A visit by a parent, who talked to pupils about her Hindu faith, clearly had an illuminating effect on pupils' understanding and interest. Fieldwork, visits to museums, theatres and places of historical interest develop pupils' knowledge of their own culture and of the wider world. Pupils enjoy opportunities to perform in special productions not only in school, but also at a Viking festival in York. Opportunities to see performances by professional musicians and dancers, to work with artists in residence and to take part in competitive sports, greatly enrich pupils' experiences.

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

28. The school has good procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare. Pupils throughout the school take part in discussions during *circle time* that increase their understanding of personal and social issues and raise their awareness of matters related to health and personal safety. Issues of health and safety are well understood by governors and staff. Risk assessments are carried out and thorough procedures ensure pupils' safety from fire and electricity. First aid and medical arrangements are good.



29. Systems for checking on and improving attendance are good. The analysis of absences through the use of a computer system enables the school to identify pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern. Staff are then able to work with parents to ensure that their children attend regularly. The school discourages parents from taking their children on holiday during term-time and reminds them of the benefits of full-time attendance on pupils' learning.
30. At the time of its amalgamation, the school needed strong systems to address the poor behaviour of many pupils from the former junior school. Evident from the good behaviour of most pupils in the juniors at the present time, the school has achieved this with considerable success. Procedures for monitoring and encouraging positive behaviour are now good. All staff effectively operate a system of positive reinforcement to which most pupils respond well. This includes the use of rewards such as verbal praise, stickers and certificates. Incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour are recorded and parents and pupils are involved in devising solutions, which include sanctions where appropriate. Any bullying is dealt with promptly and firmly.
31. Satisfactory procedures are in place for monitoring and promoting pupils' personal development. Teachers know their pupils well and use this information to give them the support and guidance they need to develop confidence and self-esteem. Pupils with special educational needs are given good help in their work and are helped to achieve the targets set in their individual education plans. Pupils are expected to take responsibility for themselves, for example, in design and technology in Year 3, pupils were reminded that it was their responsibility to ensure that they sat next to a person who would be a good listener. Some pupils find these choices difficult and the school is aware that a priority for them is to provide additional counselling for pupils who may be experiencing problems that have a negative impact on their learning.
32. The school uses good procedures to assess and record what pupils know and can do. The results of National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science are analysed in detail and staff use this information to set priorities for teaching in the next school year. For example, writing was identified as a weakness in English. As a result, amendments were made to how writing is taught that are beginning to have a positive impact on standards. In other subjects, teachers assess how well pupils have achieved at the end of each unit of study. They use this information to set realistic targets for individual pupils and to predict how well they will achieve by the end of the year. Strengths of the school's assessment procedures are the way in which the information is used to provide pupils with additional support for their learning.

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

33. Most parents have positive views of the school. They feel that their children make good progress, that teaching is good and they are confident to approach the school with questions or problems. A few parents express concern about the amount of homework given to pupils. Inspection findings are that although teachers provide pupils with enough homework, teachers do well to provide additional lessons before the school opens for any pupils whose learning needs a boost.

34. The school has worked hard to involve parents in their children's education. They are kept up-to-date about school events and routines through regular newsletters and an informative prospectus. They are provided with good quality information about their own children through annual reports of their progress. During termly meetings between parents, pupils and teachers, targets for each pupil are discussed and agreed. By involving parents in pupils' individual targets, the school places them in a good position to support their children's learning at home. Importance is also placed on keeping parents well informed on curricular initiatives, the most recent example being a numeracy workshop, which in turn has been followed-up by an issue of *Numeracy News* which provides parents with advice about how numeracy is taught in school and how this can be extended at home.
35. The special educational needs co-ordinator and teachers have good links with parents, so that when review meetings are held, there is a close working relationship between school and home. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well-informed of their children's progress and have opportunities to be fully involved in their work.
36. Through their involvement, parents have a satisfactory impact on the work of the school. A few parents help in classrooms and others support their children's work at home, for example, by listening to them read, although this is not consistent. An active parent-teacher association makes a strong contribution to the social life of the school by organising social and fundraising events.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

37. Strong determination to get the best deal for pupils combined with a dynamic and exacting approach to achieving this are at the heart of the very good leadership and management of the headteacher. Over the past three years, the headteacher has energetically and successfully managed the amalgamation of two schools with very different characteristics. She has brought teachers, support and administrative staff together to form a harmonious whole while overseeing building that has brought radical improvements to a school that is now favourable to pupils' learning and well-being. Crucial to the success of the new school is the headteacher's ability to unite teachers in the strong spirit of determination that is gradually improving all pupils' achievements. This has been managed successfully despite a heavy turn-over of staff in the last two years. The enthusiasm that teachers bring to co-ordinating different subjects of the curriculum is making learning better and more enjoyable for pupils. By giving co-ordinators real responsibility for their subjects, the headteacher has created a situation where standards in English and mathematics are rising in the infants and showing marked improvement at the younger end of the juniors.
38. An important task the headteacher faced at the opening of the new school was to contain the behaviour of a significant number of pupils in the juniors. A strong managerial skill that was employed so effectively to achieve a successful result is the headteacher's ability to appoint staff who are up to this challenge. Before improvements to standards were tackled, a lid was placed firmly on the poor behaviour of pupils who face difficult circumstances at home. Once a whole school policy for behaviour was established, the process of raising standards in English and mathematics began. A system where teachers work in pairs to co-ordinate most subjects is in place and it provides co-ordinators with a helpful overview of standards. Particularly effective is the co-ordination of English and mathematics where co-ordinators have received considerable support for their role from local education authority advisers and good opportunities for thorough monitoring of teaching and learning. As a result, teachers

and governors are clearly aware of areas of provision in need of improvement. This awareness is reflected in the objectives of the school's development plan.

39. The special educational needs co-ordinator has a very clear overview of the provision and its impact on pupils who have special educational needs. This is a full-time role that has a strong impact on supporting other teachers and pupils. She helps to ensure that special educational needs staff are well deployed and to monitor their work. She provides good support to colleagues, helping them in the early identification of pupils requiring extra help and in keeping meticulous records of the progress pupils make towards achieving the targets set for them in their individual learning plans.
40. The school benefits from the involvement of a very well-informed and pro-active body of governors. Experienced members of the body bring strong expertise to the school by playing upon strengths arising from their lives and work. For instance, the chair of governors visits the school very regularly to share his managerial skills with the headteacher. The special educational needs governor is very well-informed and active in her role as she works in this area in another school. A local councillor brings perspective and resources from his work in the local community, while a governor whose job involves expertise in health and safety is responsible for assessing risks to the building and pupils' well-being. The very strong leadership of the headteacher is responsible for bringing together governors, parents, pupils and staff in the process of development planning. This collaborative exercise is driven by the head and deputy headteacher, incorporates all elements of provision in need of development and identifies areas where individuals on the staff need additional training.
41. Development planning is based securely on a very high class of financial planning. The headteacher and governors are united in getting best value from all spending. This means that new initiatives are driven not only by very prudent budgeting but also by the systematic searching-out of alternative grants to support projects. These include the building of a new library, changing rooms for physical education and a suitable outdoor area for the physical education of children in the reception classes.
42. The school has enough teachers and there is a good balance between young and experienced teachers who between them have good knowledge of all subjects. The skills of classroom assistants are usually used well to support teaching and learning in lessons and when working with small groups of pupils who the school has identified as needing additional help. A programme of professional development is in place; this is well linked to the needs of individual teachers and the priorities of the school. Good procedures support the professional growth and confidence of newly qualified teachers. The accommodation is good. Pupils benefit from recent improvements to the building, such as, the installation of a suite of computers that was carried out during the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools. Further improvements are planned, however, as some lessons for pupils in Years 3 and 4 are disrupted due to the open-plan nature of the classrooms. Resources are mainly good and teachers use them well to improve pupils' learning.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

43. The school should

(1) Raise standards in English by

improving pupils' fluency and command of spoken English through

- even greater opportunities for discussion in pairs, groups and when whole classes work together

improving the reading of less able pupils by

- increasing the frequency by which they read to adults
- providing a greater range of interesting books that closely match their needs

placing greater emphasis when marking on accuracy in the spelling and punctuation of pupils in Year 5 and 6.

*(paragraphs 4, 14, 15, 19, 61, 62 and 64 of the report)*

(2) Raise standards in mathematics in the juniors by

- increasing the time allocated to teaching and learning in lessons to allow some pupils more time to practise new learning.

*(paragraphs 4, 14 and 72 of the report)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	74
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	19	29	25	0	0	0
Percentage	1	26	39	34	0	0	0

### 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	441
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	45

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	114

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	13

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	33
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	21

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.5
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	27	27	54

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	23	25
	Girls	25	25	23
	Total	48	48	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 [87]	89 [94]	89 [97]
	National	84 [84]	86 [86]	90 [91]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	25	25
	Girls	25	22	25
	Total	48	47	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 [90]	87 [97]	93 [94]
	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	36	33	69

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	27	25	32
	Girls	22	23	30
	Total	49	48	62
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 [70]	70 [58]	90 [90]
	National	75 [75]	73 [71]	86 [87]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	25	26	29
	Girls	22	23	30
	Total	47	49	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68 [57]	71 [75]	86 [83]
	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
338	10	
0		
2		
3		
0		
1		
0		
3		
1		
3		
1		
0		
0		
0		
3		
0		
1		

*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)	14.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.1
Average class size	30

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	167

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001 – 2002
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	£
Total income	966304
Total expenditure	865802
Expenditure per pupil	2561.5
Balance brought forward from previous year	165621
Balance carried forward to next year	266123



Number of pupils per FTE adult	13
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	10

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
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:

432

Number of questionnaires returned:

67 (14.3%)

### Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school	57	37	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school	67	28	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good	25	60	7	1	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home	25	61	13	0	0
The teaching is good	61	37	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on	52	42	1	1	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem	60	39	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best	58	36	0	0	6
The school works closely with parents	36	54	4	3	3
The school is well led and managed	40	46	3	1	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible	46	49	1	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons	40	42	6	1	10

### 5 (7.5%) parents made additional comments

#### Strongest points in order:

- There is a good atmosphere in the school.
- Out-of-school activities give plenty of opportunities for pupils.
- Parents are encouraged to contribute to the life of the school.

## **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**

44. Children enter the nursery in the term following their third birthday with a very mixed bag of early achievements. They experience from two terms to a full year of the school's good provision. However, this form of staggered intake does not provide a full year in the reception classes for children whose birthdays fall in the spring and summer. These children spend only two terms in reception before going into Year 1. This uneven provision means that the significant group of children, whose early experiences are limited, miss some opportunities to engage in the interesting and exciting activities provided in the foundation stage.
45. Despite a wide range of starting points, all children make good progress because teachers are skilled at teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and also because they provide children with targeted, individual teaching. Teachers also provide a bright and attractive environment alongside opportunities for children to explore the good range of activities that have a positive impact on their learning.

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

46. Provision for personal, social and emotional development is good and children make good progress in this area because teachers have high expectations of them. Good teaching enables almost 60 per cent of the children, particularly the older ones in the group, to reach the goals for their learning in this area at the end of their time in reception. In awareness of the unfavourable social circumstances faced by about 50 per cent of the children in the nursery, staff place special emphasis on encouraging children to share equipment and to take turns. A significant group of children find this difficult, so teachers use very clear strategies to make it plain that everyone will eventually get a turn. In the nursery, for example, children use their name cards to show that they would like to take part in a chosen activity. In this way, they have no doubts about who is next and when their turn will come. Many children show that they are beginning to understand the need to be polite and thoughtful when they serve one another with fruit at snack times. They recognise that by serving their friends first, their own choice of fruit may be limited. In the reception classes, getting changed for lessons in physical education is a lengthy process, but it is accomplished independently because teachers encourage children to manage on their own. Most children fold their clothes beautifully and place them carefully on their chairs so that they are ready to get dressed at the end of a lesson. Lining up for lunch or going to the other classroom is accomplished in a sensible and careful way.
47. The teaching of personal, social and emotional development is consistently good. Because staff are patient and caring, children develop awareness of the needs of others while they are learning. Teachers promote children's personal development through praise and encouragement. Children grow in confidence and self-esteem because staff value their contributions to all activities. All staff give clear guidance about the work and ideas of what they expect of children within the boundaries of a kindly, quiet and secure environment. This clarity of purpose enables children to do their best, to work happily together and to understand the difference between right and wrong. Patient supportive teaching in the foundation stage produces happy, confident children who make good gains in their learning.

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

48. Good teaching enables children to make good approaches towards the early skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Although a significant group of children will not attain the standard that is typical for their age, by their final term in the reception classes a small proportion are ready to work at the first level of the National Curriculum. Because many children have poor oral language, teachers in the foundation stage make good use of a wide range of strategies to help improve their limited vocabularies and give them confidence in speaking. For example, in the nursery, children were encouraged to tell one another about their holidays as they sat in a circle. They held a teddy bear so that they would feel secure and confident and most managed to express their thoughts with encouragement from the teacher's gentle supportive questioning. However, the quality of children's contributions to the discussion varied widely. Some spoke coherently in simple sentences, others spoke in phrases and a significant group of children managed only single words. In a reception class, the teacher encouraged children to be *good listeners* and *speakers* when reminding them of the requirements for good speaking and listening. As a result, children recognised that this objective makes an important contribution to their learning. As in the nursery, all children in the reception classes contribute at different levels to questions and discussions led by their teachers because they are given the help they need to articulate their ideas.
49. All children enjoy stories and poems. At present they are particularly engaged by the story of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, and the way that he manages to eat his way through so much food. Teachers use bright attractive books to engage children's interest in stories and information and to encourage them to read. In the nursery, staff maximise the pre-school achievements of occasional gifted readers by providing them with a range of demanding and attractive books. Children enjoy reading and teachers encourage them, with varying degrees of success, to share the school's books at home with their families. Teachers display writing in all areas of the nursery and reception classes and this encourages children to write. As a result, children are keen to work at a *mark making* table, to produce simple books and lists with widely varying degrees of skill. The systematic way that writing is taught captivates children's interests and has led to a small group in reception producing lovely writing with good, expressive vocabulary. For example, a more able child wrote, *the very beautiful butterfly flew away to the trees*.
50. Individual help for children in the foundation stage helps them to develop the skills of language and literacy. In the nursery, teachers provide many opportunities for children to write. For instance, children record their names when they complete activities and also make themselves badges to show they have finished a task. Good organisational strategies have a beneficial effect on the way children learn.

### **Mathematical development**

51. Although many are not ready for work in the National Curriculum, all children are helped to make good progress with mathematical development as a result of strong, practically-based teaching. Teachers in the nursery and the reception classes know how children learn and provide them with a good range of activities and experiences to develop mathematical skills in both lessons and play. In the nursery, most children count confidently to six, the *lazy lizards and alligators* in the water tray. Catching and counting ducks and frogs in the tray reminds children of counting rhymes about ducks and frogs on logs and helps them to use mathematical language.
52. Children in reception became very excited and involved in a good lesson where a teacher introduced them to a game of *hide and seek*. One child hid a toy caterpillar

and another had to find it before the teacher led the rest of the class in counting to 20. In this fun activity, more able children, about a fifth of the class, managed to count to 20 before the caterpillar was found. Others continued with their happy involvement with numbers, counting on from different starting positions and reaching a variety of totals of up to 10. In another lesson, a group of more able children worked together to place 20 caterpillars on a leaf. In this good lesson, a child told her partner that as they had 14 caterpillars already they only needed six more, so that the best thing to do was to cut out three more each. As they cut out the caterpillars and stuck them down carefully, children did their best to check as they went along how many caterpillars they had got and how many more they would need. In this way children not only practised counting but also their social skills.

53. Good practical teaching allows children many opportunities to practise skills and consolidate their understanding. For instance, teachers introduce counting rhymes regularly to strengthen children's ability to order numbers. Teachers plan lessons well to build securely on children's earlier learning.

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

54. Teachers provide a wealth of interesting and challenging activities to extend children's vocabulary and understanding of the world. This is essential for the many children whose boundaries are limited by unfavourable social circumstances. Good teaching ensures that all children make consistently good progress. In the nursery, children have been looking at different mini beasts and the way that snails leave trails behind them. Attractive displays and books ensure that the children are engaged by their learning. Children in the reception class have kept frogspawn and watched it develop into frogs. They also planted seeds and are busy watching them grow. In the nursery, a parent helper works with children planting in the garden. As a result, children are becoming aware of the life cycles of frogs and butterflies and consolidate their understanding as they complete jigsaw puzzles. A strength of teaching is the way that teachers plan the curriculum. This builds effectively from different children's starting points.

### **Physical development**

55. Children's physical development is promoted by good teaching, which extends and improves children's skills so that at the end of the reception year, about half of the group is ready to start work from the National Curriculum. Outside areas and the school hall are used for physical development. However, limited opportunities exist at present for children in the reception classes to use large-scale equipment to improve their agility and balance in secure areas outside their classrooms. This constraint that limits children's physical development will soon be removed as it is highlighted for improvement in the next phase of the school's building programme. Teachers emphasise that children control pencils, pens and paint brushes accurately as they work. For example, children are shown how to hold pencils correctly in order to develop clear, firm handwriting. The results of this endeavour are seen in the good quality of children's handwriting and the skilled use of artistic materials throughout the school.
56. Teachers in the nursery encourage children to use outdoor equipment to develop the skills of climbing, balancing and jumping. Children particularly enjoy using the range of equipment that teachers have arranged to make an adventurous circuit. In one lesson, children got a lot of pleasure from using remote controlled cars as they picked up mini-beast cards from different points on the playground. Some children found the demands of watching the car and directing it to the correct place extremely difficult. Teachers in

the reception classes encourage children to recognise that physical exercise is good for their bodies and to this end, make sure that children experience a good range of interesting games to warm up and cool down. Because teachers encourage children to improve through demonstrations of good work, children tried very hard to improve the accuracy of their throwing as they threw beanbags into hoops. They work together happily in lessons and have great fun.

### **Creative development**

57. Children achieve well in creative development as a result of opportunities for them to learn new techniques and use different materials. With good teaching that is based on high expectations and imaginative activities, over 50 per cent of the children make good progress towards work in art and design from the National Curriculum. Children in the nursery are busy creating a woven landscape to provide a backcloth for the animal glove puppets they are making. They really enjoy making music and playing their own musical instruments, as they accompany the teacher singing *Mary, Mary, quite contrary*. In the reception classes, children create pictures of butterflies with paint and pencil crayons. They are very careful to check that their markings are symmetrical and pay close attention to detail in their work. Children use play dough and clay to create caterpillars, and other mini-beasts from very different materials. In the nursery, children enjoy role play in a *giant's kitchen* and listening to music played by a *golden harp*. Working together features highly in role play where teachers encourage children to share resources and work together. Dressing as mini-beasts and fluttering around as butterflies are great favourites with the children. These activities also make a good contribution to children's social and moral development.

### **ENGLISH**

58. Standards in reading and writing for pupils aged seven are at the levels expected for their age. Since there are fewer more able pupils in the current Year 2, standards in reading are not as high as in the 2002 national tests, while writing remains similar to previous test results. Since a high proportion of children enter the school with below average attainment, they make good progress to achieve national levels. This is because consistently good teaching in Years 1 and 2 ensures that pupils learn new skills in a systematic way. There is good attention to the teaching of basic skills, such as punctuation and the recognition of the sounds of letters. Careful monitoring of pupils' progress enables teachers to identify those requiring additional help and to provide an intensive, additional early literacy programme for pupils in small groups.
59. By the end of Year 6, inspection findings show that standards in English are below those expected. In the current Year 6, 12 pupils joined the school since the end of Year 5. Few of these pupils had special educational needs for their learning but a significant proportion of them had previously experienced problems stemming from their behaviour. Also, the parents of some new pupils were unhappy with the progress made by their children in the junior departments of other schools. This brings an increased challenge to teachers in Year 6. Levels of attainment in the year group are disproportionate with a small number of more able pupils, but approximately 45 percent who do not achieve average standards. Additionally, pupils in Year 6 have had the least part of their education in the newly amalgamated school, and new initiatives have not impacted fully on standards.
60. Very strong leadership for English has developed the subject throughout the school and has had a marked effect on raising standards in Years 1 to 4. Particularly effective is the way in which leadership has enabled teachers to work together to agree new

procedures and plans of work, successfully developing a one-school ethos. For example, handwriting is taught systematically from reception onwards, so that by the end of Year 2 most pupils join letters, and by Year 6, most use a joined, fluid handwriting style.

61. Good analysis of pupils' writing has enabled the co-ordinators to address areas of weakness through staff training. Good support from local education authority literacy consultants has added expertise to this training. Throughout the school, most pupils now write confidently in line with their differing levels of ability. They are taught to add strength to their writing by using words carefully chosen for effect. For example, an average Year 4 pupil wrote *Whistling wind, shivering trees*. By Year 6, pupils develop a range of writing styles, writing a letter of complaint, or devising a play script. More able pupils begin to use differing sentence structures to add variety, for example, carefully chosen phrases such as, *from summer, to winter, through frost and rain, wind and sun*. While successfully developing the flow of pupils' writing, this sometimes results in a lack of attention to spelling. For instance, junior pupils rarely use dictionaries in lessons, and teachers' marking lacks rigour when key words and titles are wrongly spelt.
62. Many pupils' speaking skills are low for their age. The school's analysis indicates that a much higher proportion of pupils in Year 6 are weaker at speaking than other pupils nationally. This affects writing, especially on the correct use of grammar and sentence structure. Because they know that many children enter school with poor spoken language, teachers in Years 1 and 2 get the best out of pupils by making sure they all take part in discussion. Despite this strong early input, when they reach the juniors many pupils become increasingly reticent because they lack confidence to offer extended answers to questions. A strength of teaching is teachers' good use of subject specific words. However, because teachers do not consistently plan activities that place strong emphasis on speaking and listening, opportunities are missed to systematically develop pupils' spoken language. Teachers' very good management of behaviour ensures that, from an early age, pupils learn to listen carefully in lessons. They are taught to be polite, and to listen to and respect the views of others.
63. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 systematically learn the sounds that letters make so most spell out new words when reading. There are clear systems for learning key words and regular spelling tests. This enables most pupils to achieve satisfactorily and a significant group read above national expectations. Throughout the school, teachers provide helpful sessions, where pupils learn skills such as deduction, and develop expression when reading.
64. Many pupils, especially in the juniors, get little encouragement or support for reading at home. A weakness in teaching is that the school misses opportunities for pupils to read frequently to adults and in a range of genres. Although the school has recently joined a scheme where interested adults share books with pupils, at present, there are not enough opportunities to compensate for a lack of home reading. Reading records that are kept by older juniors lack value other than recording the dates and titles of texts. Also at present, class libraries contain mostly fiction, and many books are in poor condition. With the impending opening of a new library this will be remedied. Standards in reading are depressed in the juniors because a significant number of pupils lack essential skills with spoken English and find it hard to grasp simple story lines or to understand very basic vocabulary.
65. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in Years 1 and 2. This is because of the carefully targeted additional support they receive, and teachers' careful planning of work that meets their needs. In junior classes, provision is satisfactory

overall. While pupils have clear individual education plans, the work teachers provide does not always match pupils' needs and this limits the amount of progress made.

66. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to practise literacy skills in other subjects. For example, in design and technology, pupils in Year 2 write instructions for making cars. Leaflets illustrating food chains are produced in science in Year 4. Teachers provide sound opportunities for pupils to develop word processing skills in the computer suite, but rarely encourage pupils to work with classroom computers to support their learning. A teacher in Year 6 used drama very effectively to develop pupils' understanding of the book *The Night of the Gargoyles*. Very good praise and encouragement boosted pupils' confidence enabling them to make rapid progress in understanding the feelings and impact of gargoyles on humans. An enthusiastic drama co-ordinator provides good opportunities for pupils to take part in local drama festivals, enriching provision.
67. The additional weekly time allocated for extended writing pays off, by providing pupils with the chance to complete more thoughtful work. Teachers use the extra daily allocation of reading time productively to hear groups of pupils read, but this time sometimes lacks structure for others in the class, and does not provide additional scope or challenge as pupils move through the school.
68. The quality of assessment is good. A strength of provision is the rigorous monitoring of pupils' attainment and progress. This provides a very helpful tool for tracking the performance of groups and individuals, and targeting pupils for extra lessons in literacy and numeracy. The two co-ordinators provide very strong leadership. With a very clear focus for observations, they ensure that agreed procedures are taught in all classes, and areas of weakness are addressed. This has been pivotal in bringing the school together and giving a common purpose to teaching and learning. Rigorous identification and systematic development of provision in the subject places the school in a good position to raise standards further.

## **MATHEMATICS**

69. By the end of Year 2, almost all pupils reach the expected level and about a quarter achieve beyond this. This is similar to the standard reached by seven-year-olds in other schools. In national tests in 2002, the results were even better; standards overall were above average. This was due to the exceptional number of more able pupils in that year group who achieved higher levels. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in the infants. Teaching is good overall. Pupils behave well, listen carefully and are keen to learn.



70. By the end of Year 6, standards remain below average. This matches the results of the national tests in 2002. However, these results were significantly better than in 2001, so the school has maintained this improvement. It has managed to do this because teaching is good overall and sometimes very good, the curriculum is well-organised and most pupils work hard and want to learn. About two thirds of all pupils reach the expected level and a small number are working beyond this. While it is the case that almost one third of pupils achieve below the level expected for 11-year-olds, most of them are making steady progress and doing the best they can. This is confirmed by the careful records that the school keeps. Several of this group are now close to average levels, particularly where the teaching is very good. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and also make steady progress. There are no significant differences between the achievements of girls and boys.
71. All teachers follow the guidance and lesson structure of the National Numeracy Strategy. Most lessons start promptly, keep up a brisk pace and challenge pupils with good questions and demanding activities. The co-ordinators have done well to ensure that the strategy is used well in all year groups. This consistency is a strength of the teaching. It means that pupils know that in lessons they have to be alert, listen carefully, think for themselves and calculate quickly. As a result, pupils' attitudes are almost always good. They enjoy lessons, work hard and know how well they are doing. One group of pupils in Year 6, for example, said *we are much more confident now at getting started on word problems, it's the way the teacher explains and helps us*. However, there remain a small number of pupils in the older classes whose behaviour and attitudes are not good enough. These have not had the consistent teaching in numeracy now seen throughout the school. For example, in one lesson in Year 5, some pupils did not listen properly and so did not understand and gave up. Teachers manage such behaviour well, but in a very small number of lessons this slows learning.
72. A weakness in lessons in the juniors is that pupils do not have quite enough time to practise what they learn. Too much of the written work in pupils' books is unfinished. As a result, some pupils are not as sure about new work as they might be. The school has opted for shorter than usual lessons of up to 45 minutes. This has proved successful in some other schools. It is particularly helpful in ensuring that lessons move along quickly and no time is wasted. However, in more than half of the lessons, pupils do not manage to complete the written work, or draw any satisfying conclusions from their investigations. In a very good lesson in Year 3, for example, pupils were keen to test a general rule for adding odds and evens by using larger numbers. Unfortunately they had to stop just as they were beginning to see a pattern emerging in their results. Many pupils do not find it easy to record quickly, or present their work logically, so they need enough time to improve these skills. The school is aware of this and is considering a more flexible approach to timetabling mathematics.
73. A strength in the teaching is that all teachers encourage pupils to discuss mathematical ideas, explain how they find answers and use correct vocabulary. This helps pupils to understand what they do. However, for many pupils with weak oral skills, this does not come naturally. Teachers help by giving lots of opportunities in lessons, for example, by asking *Can you explain what you did?* Or, *Can anyone think of a quicker way?* They make sure pupils have the words to use, for example, when pupils in Year 2 used weighing scales they practised *in-between* or *just below*. Pupils in Year 6 find it useful to refer to the teacher's attractive display of more complex mathematical vocabulary. Teachers use questions effectively. They make sure that everyone is included and that pupils have time to answer. For example, in a lesson in Year 3, the teacher thanked everyone for giving one pupil time to think. In a lesson on fractions in Year 4, the teacher's clear explanations and good relationships persuaded some less able pupils

to make brave attempts to explain their thinking to the class. In another lesson in Year 4, some shy pupils succeeded because the teacher encouraged them with *Come on, say it, I just know you are going to be right*. All of this helps pupils to think about mathematics and their confidence grows. By the time they reach Year 6, many pupils study a two-part problem, highlight the key words and work towards the answer logically.

74. Teachers generally succeed in matching work to pupils' ability so that the more able are challenged and the less able are not left behind. However, there are weaknesses in a few lessons. Teachers know their pupils' strengths and weaknesses very well, both from the school's good assessment procedures and from their own questions and good marking. In the best lessons teachers use this information sensitively to help pupils of all abilities to make progress. In a lesson in Year 6, the teacher prepared work which appeared to be the same for everyone. However, on closer examination there were three levels of difficulty. This helped pupils' self-esteem and so all worked hard. In a very small number of lessons; the more able pupils are not stretched, or pupils repeat work at the same level that they have done in previous years.
75. Teachers make good use of the skills of learning support assistants and other adults in lessons. They are well prepared and make a good contribution to learning. Support staff help individuals and groups, making sure that they take a full part in the lessons. In Year 1, for example, the learning assistant realised that a pupil with special educational needs had worked out an answer, so she made sure that the teacher asked him. The class gave a spontaneous round of applause. In some lessons, adults take a wider role, for example, joining in the discussions and pretending not to understand so that pupils are challenged to find more evidence. Pupils like this because it motivates them and helps to develop their thinking skills. One boy in Year 3 was busy for some time before deciding *I bet they only pretended to argue to make us do hard work*. In a very small number of lessons, the support assistants are not used as well as they might be, for example, when they spend too long listening to a teacher's introduction.
76. Teachers give pupils useful opportunities to use their mathematical skills in other subjects. For example, pupils make timelines in history or graphs and charts in geography and science. Some opportunities are missed, for example, when more precise measurements might have raised the quality of the product in design and technology. In ICT, pupils develop mathematical ideas well when they make spreadsheets and databases. Some teachers make outstanding use of electronic screens in numeracy and other lessons. They use these to demonstrate processes in spectacular ways, which capture pupils' interest and help them to understand. In some lessons, all pupils use remote control devices, which encourage them to complete a large number of rapid calculations in a very short time. Pupils love this and it helps to secure a range of mental strategies.
77. The management of the subject is good because the co-ordinators and senior staff work together well. They build on good standards in the infants and attainment is rising in the rest of the school. Teaching and learning are kept under constant review, for example, lessons and planning are monitored regularly and suggestions for improvement are shared with teachers. There are good assessment systems and these are used well to identify where extra support may be needed. The school has made good use of outside help, for example, from the local education authority and from national research projects. The co-ordinators have organised information evenings for parents and a valuable home loan system for mathematics games is in

place. Good leadership, combined with the teachers' strong commitment to improve their expertise, places the school in a good position to raise standards further.

## SCIENCE

78. Standards in science are broadly in line with those expected nationally for seven and 11-year-old pupils. Assessments of the attainment of pupils in Year 2 show that this year fewer pupils than in 2002 achieved a high level with their learning. This year's assessments of the achievements of pupils in Year 6 indicate a slight dip in the proportion of pupils achieving at higher levels when compared with last year's results. This reflects the lower proportion of pupils in this year group whose attainments are above average.
79. By the end of Year 6, knowledge and understanding in science are satisfactory for pupils' ages. Teaching in the juniors is mainly satisfactory and some is good. Teachers often use *concept cartoons* to good effect at the beginning of lessons to identify any misconceptions pupils may have about a topic. Where teachers are skilled at using interactive whiteboards, they encounter few problems in keeping pupils interested and focused. The size and quality of images they project ensure that all pupils see clearly and are actively involved in a lesson. In Year 5, the teacher's introduction of an electronic microscope allowed pupils to examine the inside of a lily. Their resulting gasps of amazement at the clarity and beauty of the enlarged flower was a genuinely spiritual moment, which made a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual growth.
80. Teachers extend pupils' skills in scientific enquiry through the many opportunities they provide for experiments. On a few occasions, over-direction by the teacher stifles spontaneity and the excitement felt when pupils find things out for themselves. Pupils record their knowledge and discoveries well in a range of interesting ways. Pupils in Year 4 produced mobiles and concertina books designed for younger children, when recording examples of food chains. At other times, pupils report their findings orally. For some pupils, their poorly developed skills in spoken language make this difficult, but good encouragement and support from teachers make this less daunting and enable all pupils to take an active part in lessons.
81. Teaching is good in Year 1 and Year 2. This is because teachers provide activities which are interesting and varied that hold pupils' attention and provoke thoughtful responses. In investigational work, pupils test their predictions by setting up fair tests. In such an activity, pupils in Year 2 were quick to challenge their teacher who was trying to introduce too many variables into a test, reminding her that *you only change one thing each time*. Pupils record their findings using writing, drawings or labelled diagrams and are very keen to say what they think and to discuss the views of others. Teachers support the development of enquiry skills well, by introducing worksheets containing investigations that build pupils' understanding of scientific processes.
82. All teachers follow nationally recommended units of study when planning their lessons. This ensures coverage of the full curriculum and gains in pupils' knowledge and skills from one year to the next. All teachers organise lessons to include listening and instruction, a practical, finding-out section and a record and report section. Almost without exception, pupils make most progress in the practical sessions which create visible excitement, a buzz of interest and animated discussion with partners. Teachers are also good at linking pupils' learning in science with their work in literacy and numeracy. All teachers assess pupils' progress. While teachers in Year 6, produced high quality revision materials for pupils to use at home and school, in preparation for National Curriculum tests.

83. Two recently appointed teachers act as co-ordinators. They quickly identified strengths and weaknesses in the subject by devising a questionnaire to seek the views of all staff. A resulting, prioritised action plan is bringing positive developments to the subject. For example, increased emphasis on scientific enquiry has positive outcomes which can be seen across the school. A portfolio of pupils' work to exemplify levels of attainment and resource boxes linked to specific units of work has been established to help teachers. The co-ordinators have introduced two science clubs to foster pupils' enjoyment of science and a science notice board keeps pupils up-to-date. The coordinators monitor teachers' planning and offer advice and support. The enthusiasm and emphasis the co-ordinators bring to science place the school in a good situation to raise standards.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

84. Standards reached by pupils by the end of Year 2 are good. Pupils develop good skills of close observation when drawing and painting and show perseverance and attention to detail in their work. Due to timetabling arrangements no art and design lessons were observed in Years 3 to 6, and there was limited work available for scrutiny. However, the two pieces of art completed by pupils in Year 6 indicate standards above those expected for this age in drawing and sculpture. It is obvious that teachers have high expectations, because pupils' artwork shows detailed planning, adaptation when making, evaluation, and has a consistently good quality of finish. Teachers display pupils' work attractively. This enhances significantly the school environment and holds pupils' work in good esteem.
85. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 ranges from good to very good. Teachers have very good knowledge of the subject and use subject specific vocabulary, for example, *texture* and *embellish*. This develops pupils' speaking skills, giving them new words to describe their work. Good demonstration of key skills enhances the quality of pupils' achievements. For example, pupils use pencil tips in differing ways to create line and shade, mix media carefully to achieve good match of colour, and use a variety of methods to add texture to the design. Sufficient good quality resources enable pupils to work independently and to make choices. At the end of one lesson, the teacher gave good opportunity for pupils to evaluate their work, discussing favourite aspects and improvements. The scope of learning increased because the teacher explained how William Morris depicted natural things in his work.
86. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoy art and show high levels of interest because lessons are well planned and organised. Teachers' praise and enthusiasm ensure that confidence levels are high and no time is wasted. Pupils readily help one another, for example, when threading needles, or spontaneously saying that they like another's work. Throughout the school, teachers' good attention to standards of finished products gives pupils a real sense of achievement. For example, pupils in Year 6 constructed highly individual, skilfully constructed masks of very good quality, and showed obvious pride in the finished products.
87. Teachers plan a full programme covering all aspects of the curriculum for art and design. For example, pupils in Year 3 study the work of famous artists, using Matisse as a stimulus for appropriately proportioned, sensitively drawn figures. Pupils in Year 1 design large sculptures for specific areas of the school, for example, a huge tree to be placed in the flower garden. However, teachers use sketchbooks inconsistently, so that there are few records of the skills developed to complete a finished product. As a result, many pupils pay scant attention to their drawings and designs when using them.

88. Teachers make good use of ICT to enhance pupils' achievements in art. For example, pupils in Year 4 use a stamp facility to design wrapping paper, and the icons *draw* and *fill* to complete vibrant stained glass windows. Teachers provide satisfactory opportunities for pupils to use artistic skills to illustrate work in other subjects, for example, observational drawings of religious symbols.
89. The co-ordinator is a knowledgeable practitioner, but due to the school's pressing focus on raising standards in English, mathematics and science, has had limited opportunity to develop the subject. The curriculum is enriched by the work of artists in residence and visits to interesting places such as the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. The school has recently received a silver *Artsmark* award for pupils' achievements in art and design.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

90. Standards in design and technology are better than those reached by most seven and 11-year-olds. This is because of the enthusiasm of co-ordinators who use their considerable expertise to provide very good role models, advice, training and good quality resources for teachers. Particularly helpful to other teachers is the variety of templates co-ordinators provide to ensure that pupils always follow the process of planning, making and evaluating the success of their designs. Equally important, is a ready supply of materials that allows teachers to be adventurous in their planning and gives pupils access to a good range of tools and equipment.
91. Good progress is evident in Year 2 and Year 6. A project involving seven-year-olds in making vehicles with reclaimed materials increased their vocabularies with words such as *axle*, *spindle* and *chassis* and allowed them to plan on computers. The task was completed with photographic records and sensible evaluations such as *I would put the axles opposite each other*. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils' vehicles are considerably more complex. Their shapes reflect the models seen on a popular television programme and combine technology with science to produce controllable vehicles with chassis and an eye-catching finish. Even though pupils in Year 6 use terms such as *framework*, *strength of material* and *aesthetically pleasing*, some struggle a little to compare materials used for different purposes. Their lack of fluent language got in the way when comparing materials used for a bus shelter with those for a make-shift tent. The teacher's excellent use of ICT through an interactive white board provided pupils with a strong focus for their learning.
92. An important contribution to pupils' learning is their enthusiasm for practical activities. In a very good lesson in Year 3, the teacher set very high expectations of achievement and good behaviour. By treating them with care and respect, the teacher used every opportunity to develop pupils' learning. A strong feature of the teaching was the link established with work in science. When looking at how air pressure is used to produce and control movement, the teacher involved pupils in using the scientific skills of prediction, investigation and recording their findings. The needs of less able pupils and pupils with special educational needs were met through questions at the right level of challenge. The teacher required pupils to give extended explanations when answering questions and directed her questions to pupils who were not contributing as much as others. Some found it difficult to record their findings as the chosen form of writing was too demanding. However, the co-ordinators are aware of the difficulties met by less able pupils when recording their work. To remedy this they are looking for different ways to evaluate the success of a project for pupils who find it hard to record their evaluations.

93. Because of their determination to raise standards, the co-ordinators' action plan for the subject is full of ideas for improvement. They intend to refine existing ways to record pupils' learning so that teachers will have more precise information of the skills that individuals need to practise. Future plans to tailor programmes of work that are more relevant to the needs of pupils in the school provide a good basis for raising standards even higher.

## GEOGRAPHY

94. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 attain good standards in geography. Although leadership for the subject is lacking in the absence of the co-ordinator, strong teaching is sustained throughout the school, and teachers' planning is founded on ideas provided by a nationally approved programme of work. A good feature of teaching is the uncompromising use of geographical terms. This was evident in Year 2, when a teacher asked pupils to *give me a human feature of Struay.....now give me a physical feature*. This strength was also apparent in Year 6 when a teacher used very good resources to ensure that pupils learned the main features of the water cycle. In Year 2, pupils responded to questioning without hesitation and used geographical terms with accuracy and ease. In Year 6, pupils' responses were not as certain or fluent. They needed far greater encouragement and effort from their teacher when asked to use terms related to the course of a river on its journey to the sea. This was the case even though the teacher packs the classroom with the specific vocabulary of different subjects and regularly checks pupils' learning by asking them to record definitions on a laminated sheet.
95. Similarly in Year 2, the teacher used questioning to assess pupils' learning while at the same time extending their thinking and ideas. Consequently, pupils' knowledge of their locality was strong when discussing features of the city such as York Minster and the River Ouse. They also demonstrated good knowledge of the human features of a different locality by smiling tolerantly at their teacher when she suggested that people on a remote Scottish island are employed at a well-known supermarket. The very positive relationships the teacher builds with pupils and firm management of their behaviour produce a very pleasant working atmosphere in Year 2. This provides pupils with the time, freedom and confidence to express their ideas in discussion. There was little variation in the confident response of more able pupils and of pupils with special educational needs. Although pupils' behaviour is very good and they are keen to learn, it takes very strong teaching based on the firm management of pupils' behaviour to achieve the same effect with older pupils in the juniors.
96. Teachers are good at holding pupils' interest by providing them with high quality resources such as packs of photographs taken by the teacher in Year 2. In Year 6, pupils' learning accelerated to a very high level when the teacher used an interactive white board to show moving images and sounds of a river on its passage to the sea. By using her excellent skills with this powerful tool for learning, the teacher captivated pupils' imaginations and held them engrossed in the work. To expand on new learning about *flood plains, meanders* and *tributaries*, pupils examined photographs of the source, middle river and estuary. Most of them located areas in the photographs with good degrees of accuracy and a few took the initiative to make notes using the newly acquired vocabulary as they worked.
97. Good and very good teaching, the return of the co-ordinator and the extension of new technology to other classes combine to ensure that existing good standards in geography will be maintained. As the school is in a good position to provide an even

wider curriculum in the subject, with improvements to the spoken English of many older pupils, there is room for standards to continue to rise.

## HISTORY

98. Standards in history are similar to those reached by most seven and 11-year-olds and the leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. One of the difficulties experienced by an established co-ordinator is that although she trained for the work when the schools amalgamated, teaching in the nursery separates her from the daily life of pupils in the main building and she lacks the support of a second co-ordinator in a different key stage. What has been achieved by the co-ordinator is to ensure that teachers understand where pupils are up to with their learning. This results from the establishment of a simple but effective system for tracking pupils' progress that bases assessment on more than recorded work. For example, teachers take into account how successfully a pupil approaches a piece of research, or the level of response made to questioning.
99. This form of assessment was evident in a lesson in Year 4, where many pupils found it difficult to carry out independent research. While a small group of more able pupils used good knowledge of aspects of life during the Second World War as a basis for investigation, the teacher helped the rest of the class to launch themselves into the work by providing more facts to channel their thinking. It was apparent in this lesson that many pupils lacked the imagination to empathise with the two million children who were evacuated from their homes. Despite the fact that they were provided with considerable information on the topic, pupils' responses to questioning about whether *the evacuees ever saw their parents again*, were restricted and in some cases came down to a few words or Yes.
100. The use of ICT is a good feature of otherwise satisfactory teaching in history. To bring the subject to life for pupils in Year 4, the teacher used two computers linked to an internet site with recordings from people who described their personal experiences during the Second World War. In Year 6, teaching and learning were enhanced by high quality resources made by the teacher. By using pupils' acknowledged interest in technology, the teacher got them to think hard about the sequence in which a variety of phones was produced from the late 1940s to the present day. Because the teacher had tapped into their interest, pupils had a good try at pegging enlarged photographs of different types of phones onto a timeline. They were most successful with the oldest and most modern phones.
101. Teachers extend the impact of the limited range of artefacts owned by the school by taking pupils on visits to places of historical interest. They make especially good use of the extraordinary amenities available in York and the wider locality to add to pupils' understanding of people and past periods represented in a Victorian Schoolroom, the Castle Museum and Eden Camp. When studying the Vikings in Year 5, pupils dressed in role to take part in a Viking Festival. Their writing about the event shows the interest this activity generated and the enjoyment pupils got from watching a series of plays that gave insights into aspects of life in York following the settlement of the Vikings. With teachers' planning based securely on a nationally recommended programme of work and sound teaching in the subject, the school is in a sound position to maintain standards in history.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

102. Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly typical of those achieved by most seven and 11-year-olds. Since its establishment, the school has made great strides in improving resources and staff expertise. There is a very good computer suite which all classes use regularly and all staff have received training. The school has made a particularly wise investment in electronic screens and projectors; these are in several classrooms as well as the suite. Teachers use them well to demonstrate quickly to the whole class, and so pupils make the most of their time on computers. Teaching is good and pupils are enthusiastic. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make steady progress.
103. The school has a good scheme of work based on national guidelines. This ensures that pupils learn essential skills in a logical order and that all requirements are met. However, there are still some minor gaps in the programme, the school is aware of these and has appropriate plans to put them right. By the end of Year 2, pupils control a robot device with a series of commands and use simple paint and graphics programs. They combine pictures and text, many choose well and show restraint when they change fonts and colours, for example, in the cards they make. They know that the internet can be searched for information, although most need help when doing this. They use a search engine in other subjects, for example to find out about the Great Fire of London.
104. Pupils in Year 6 insert and retrieve information from a simple database. They know how to make a spreadsheet and use a formula to calculate, for example, when comparing speed and distance, although they do not have much experience of exploring the effects of changing the data. They know how to search for information on the internet; more able pupils are beginning to select and organise this information well, for example with a *power point* presentation. They edit text confidently and improve their stories using cut and paste. The school has not yet been able to teach e-mail because of technical problems but this should be put right soon. Pupils have just begun to learn how to use control systems, for example, to make traffic lights work. They are confident when using menus and icons, although most type with only one finger and are slow on the keyboard.
105. There are some strengths to the teaching. Teachers' own knowledge is often good. Where they are unsure about a particular teaching point they make determined efforts to prepare themselves before the lesson. The co-ordinator provides useful material for this. Teachers plan lessons carefully and explain new learning clearly, using an electronic screen. As a result, pupils soon grasp new ideas and can usually work without waiting for help. Teachers also find the screen valuable in the final parts of lessons, when they celebrate what has been learned and clear up any misunderstandings. These plenaries help pupils to see how well they have done and what they need to do to improve. Teachers and other adults are quick to support pupils who are unsure.
106. Teachers give pupils plenty of opportunities to explore in lessons, rather than asking them to work their way through a series of tasks. This works well because pupils gain confidence and find out things for themselves. However, in a small number of lessons, this exploration lacks a more specific challenge to give pupils a chance to show what they can do. This detracts from the attitude and work rate of a small group of pupils who have not yet decided whether computers are serious work or just fun. It also misses opportunities to give teachers a more accurate picture of what pupils understand. Another weakness is that in some lessons the teachers do not relate computer work to what pupils already know. For example in lessons using a CD-ROM



encyclopaedia, teachers did not use a book version to discuss similarities and differences.

107. Teachers make increasing use of ICT to support learning in other subjects. In Year 6, for example, the teacher made outstanding use of a multimedia presentation to illustrate a geography lesson. Pupils in several classes use digital cameras and scanners to provide starting points for some very good art work. In Year 1, the pupils compare computer-generated graphs with hand-drawn ones when they think about counting scales in mathematics. The school has recently purchased sensors to measure temperature, sound, and pulse rates in science lessons. All of these activities enrich the curriculum and provide good opportunities to use and improve their computer skills.
108. Leadership is very good. The co-ordinator and headteacher communicate a clear vision of how the subject will develop in the school. They have a good picture of current standards, strengths and weaknesses; the school is well placed to raise standards further.

## MUSIC

109. Pupils throughout the school attain satisfactory standards in music. They enjoy lessons and take pleasure in listening to music during assemblies. Strong teaching in the subject reflects the expertise of a number of teachers and the commitment of non-specialist teachers to teach good quality lessons. Teachers benefit from considerable input from very good co-ordinators, who prepare teaching materials and lesson plans for non-specialist teachers, coupled with guidance from an advanced skills teacher who is providing valuable training within the school. As a result, teachers' confidence has risen and they report that their skills have improved. In turn, this has a beneficial impact on standards. A few pupils are learning to play tuned musical instruments and this has a positive effect on their achievements.
110. As a result of good teaching, all pupils make steady progress in music. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoy lessons and listen carefully when teachers play music. Pupils in Year 2 particularly enjoyed a work by Wagner that was played at the beginning of a lesson. They correctly identified that it got louder as it went on and one pupil said it made her feel sad. Pupils in Year 1 use their voices well as they create their own music by singing with *high, low, laughing* and *long* voices. While in Year 2, pupils use their voices to add sounds to the *Wind Song*, a poem read by the teacher. These pupils came in at the correct time and listened carefully to the words of the poem so that they were quite clear when they should stop. They also sang in parts maintaining their own part well and enjoyed the challenge of keeping a steady beat.
111. Technical language is used well by teachers to introduce pupils to the correct terms for different effects. In Year 4, for example, pupils developed a good understanding of *rhythmic ostinato*. In Year 6, the use of a whiteboard made a considerable impact on a lesson and created an exciting visual image. As a result, pupils were absorbed in a simple but attractive score that the teacher displayed. They worked hard to give their own individual interpretations of the symbols used. Pupils then applied their learning to create simple scores for their own music and performed the finished work for the class at the end of the lesson. In this lesson, the teacher's excellent use of ICT added another dimension to pupils' learning. It enabled them to achieve well, as did very high levels of collaboration when they worked with their groups. Constructive comments from teachers at the end of performances give pupils the opportunity to enjoy praise and also helpful comments on how they could improve.

112. The very effective leadership of the music co-ordinators has recently resulted in an *Artsmark* silver award in recognition of teachers' work in promoting the arts throughout the school. The co-ordinators have organised visits from a wide range of people who share their expertise and add to pupils' musical experiences in workshop situations. Music festivals and other performances of music feature in the opportunities available for pupils to increase their skills in the subject. Pupils in a well-attended choir, for instance, work hard and make good progress in improving their singing. The co-ordinators' enthusiasm places the school in a good position to raise standards in music. Towards this end, the co-ordinators' are working next towards an *Artsmark* Gold award. Good resources provide all the materials needed to achieve successful teaching and learning.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

113. By the end of Years 2 and 6 standards are satisfactory. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve standards appropriate for their ages and make satisfactory progress. Almost 80 percent of pupils in Year 6 can swim 25 metres. The planning of lessons is good, because teachers systematically follow detailed curricular plans, enabling pupils to learn new skills in a consistent way. This results in good levels of confidence, so that pupils are enthusiastic about lessons and keen to participate. Whilst continuing to drive up standards in English, mathematics and science, the school has successfully maintained a good focus on physical education and healthy lifestyles, allocating a good amount of time to the subject.
114. Teaching is consistently good in Years 1 and 2, and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. A good feature of lessons is the importance placed on warm-up and stretching exercises, so that from an early age, pupils are aware of the beneficial effects of vigorous physical exercise. Teachers are good role models, dressing appropriately, and demonstrating new skills so that pupils are given good direction for new learning. For example, in games in Year 2, the teacher demonstrated correct positioning of feet and hands when passing a ball, resulting in pupils carrying out chest passes with good direction and accuracy. In a very good lesson in dance in Year 1, the teacher provided excellent opportunities for pupils to evaluate the work of others, and in so doing, adapt their own movements. This successfully raised the levels of performance as pupils were challenged to try new movements. Because the teacher linked the dance to a story taught in literacy lessons, pupils reinforced earlier learning, gaining deeper insight of the characters in the book.

115. Other good features of teaching are the clear explanations given to pupils so they know the purpose of the lesson. Teachers manage pupils well, so that most lessons run smoothly and pupils behave well. Because teachers give praise and encouragement, pupils are keen to participate and do so with enthusiasm. In one lesson, three pupils did not bring their kit, and so sat apart from the group with no specific task or role. This was unsatisfactory, because the teacher did not involve these pupils in, for example, evaluating other pupils' good work or writing about it. Most teachers show good awareness of health and safety, ensuring that pupils remove jewellery and handle equipment sensibly.
116. Lessons in physical education make a strong contribution to pupils' social development. There are good opportunities to work in pairs and groups. For example, pupils in Year 4 worked with partners to solve an orienteering challenge, listened to suggestions and supporting one another well. Pupils in Year 6 worked well together to negotiate their roles in a group gymnastics performance.
117. Pupils have good opportunities to experience outdoor and adventurous activities at a residential centre. The school also provides a good range of activities outside lessons such as, football training for boys and girls, or gymnastics for pupils in Years 5 and 6. This gives good opportunities for pupils to develop skills further, and to socialise with pupils from other year groups and classes. Pupils also compete in local netball and tag rugby competitions, further enriching provision.
118. Two enthusiastic, knowledgeable co-ordinators manage the subject well. They have combined the best practice of two schools to develop a whole school plan of work. This is successful, because teachers have detailed lesson plans that ensure coverage and good progression for pupils. There is no consistent system for assessing pupils' progress or for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in the subject. The school has a satisfactory range of resources, enhanced by two school halls for indoor lessons, and an extensive field for athletics and games.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

119. The standards pupils attain in religious education by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are typical for their age and in line with the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. All pupils, including those who have special educational needs, learn at a steady rate. The school develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity and Hinduism in Years 1 and 2 and of Christianity, Judaism and Islam in Years 3 to 6. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to consider religious, moral and social issues that help them to understand how these issues influence their own lives.
120. In Years 1 and 2, teachers introduce pupils to stories from the Old and New Testaments as well as some from the Hindu faith. In doing this, they guide pupils to associate particular texts to particular religions. By celebrating festivals of different faiths, pupils begin to recognise similarities, such as, the significance of light to both Christians and Hindus. Teachers make good use of stories such as *Dinosaurs and all that rubbish* to develop pupils' understanding that the world is a very special place. *He hasn't made the right choice* stated one pupil in Year 1 about a man who caused a lot of damage to his environment. *Don't destroy nature...never, ever pick the bark off trees*, suggest other pupils as good ideas for maintaining the environment. Pupils in the infants record very little work, partly because insufficient time is allocated to provide opportunities for consolidating what they learn, or to express their thoughts.

121. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are taught about a range of different customs and beliefs. This gives them insights that help them to respect the faith of other people. It also provides them with encouragement to reflect upon their own beliefs. Pupils learn the specific vocabulary and key features of the religions that they study. They explore worship and places of worship. They learn about rules from different religions but more importantly, they learn from them, when they begin to relate them to the rules which help to shape their lives.
122. Teaching is satisfactory overall but sometimes good. Teachers in the juniors balance the focus of lessons on central beliefs and key practices of the major religions, with opportunities for pupils to consider their thoughts, feelings and beliefs, which they record in a range of interesting ways. Teachers use interactive whiteboards to good effect in lessons, engaging pupils' interest and accelerating their learning. Similarly, a talk about Hinduism by a parent enhanced pupils' learning and enabled them to write from an informed position, producing lively, interesting work.
123. Religious education makes a good contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers encourage personal responses as a means of developing pupils' spiritual understanding. Although they often allow a brief time for pupils to reflect on their thoughts and feelings during lessons, teachers sometimes miss opportunities in religious education to develop spiritual growth.
124. The co-ordinator manages the subject well. By monitoring teachers' planning and examining pupils' work, she has an informed view of the subject. At present there is no agreed system for assessing pupils' learning. This makes it difficult for teachers to be clear about the levels of attainment pupils reach. A new locally Agreed Syllabus comes into operation in September 2003 and the coordinator and other teachers have done a great deal of preparatory work to place the school in a good position to raise standards and implement a smooth transition to the new syllabus.