

INSPECTION REPORT

**HOLY FAMILY & ST MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Pontefract

LEA area: Wakefield

Unique reference number: 108267

Headteacher: Mrs Christine Weir

Lead inspector: Parveen Raja

Dates of inspection: 8th – 11th December 2003

Inspection number: 256479

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	101
School address:	Cobblers Lane Pontefract
Postcode:	WF8 2HN
Telephone number:	01977 722840
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Anne Dyer
Date of previous inspection:	8 th June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Holy Family and St Michael's is a small Voluntary Aided Catholic Primary School in the Diocese of Leeds. It serves the parishes of Holy Family and St Michael's in Pontefract and Knottingley. There are 101 pupils on roll, of whom nine per cent are entitled to free school meals, which is below the national average. The school has 17 pupils with special educational needs including four with a Statement of Special educational need. Four pupils come from families with English as an additional language but none are at an early stage of English language acquisition. The pupils' attainment when they start school is below average and most children start the reception year with some pre-school education. Fifteen per cent of the pupil's who come from the Knottingley parish, travel to the school on the coaches every day.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
6282	Mrs Parveen Raja	Lead inspector	English, science, geography, history, art and design, design and technology, English as an additional language, personal, social and health education, citizenship
14404	Mr Alan Rolfe	Lay inspector	
11816	Mr Geoffrey Jones	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, music, physical education, Foundation stage

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school's effectiveness is **sound** and it provides **satisfactory** value for money. The very caring ethos and concern for the welfare of the individual results in good relationships. Consequently pupils have good attitudes to work and behave well. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well. Overall achievement through the school is satisfactory but some of the higher attaining pupils in junior classes do not achieve as well as they could in English and science. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although the unsettled nature in the leadership has resulted in a lack of rigour in monitoring the provision and contributed to the inconsistent quality of teaching and learning.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are above average in information and communication technology (ICT) at Year 6.
- Standards are below average at Year 6 in English and science because the rate of progress through the junior years becomes slow over time.
- There is a lack of consistency in the quality of teaching in the junior years because assessment is not used rigorously to inform the next steps in learning which results in the underachievement of some of the higher attaining pupils.
- Children in the reception year achieve well.
- Provision for the pupils with special educational needs is good and they achieve well.
- Pupils are provided with very good care and well supported to maintain good standards of behaviour and good attitudes to work.
- There is a lack of opportunities for pupils to develop independence and initiative in learning.

Overall the school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection in 1998. Improvement has been good in behaviour management strategies and the resources for ICT. The school has developed satisfactory procedures for checking pupils' learning and reports to parents are improving. Teachers use homework satisfactorily to support pupils' learning. The school has worked hard to ensure that the curriculum is well supported by appropriate guidance. There is now consistent monitoring of teaching and learning through the school but the protracted absence of the headteacher has meant that the role of the senior management team is not fully developed as yet.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

There were only 19 pupils in the last reporting year (2003). Small variations in the actual numbers attaining the different grade can result in large variations in the percentage of pupils achieving these grades. Hence caution is needed in interpreting the data.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	C	C	D	B
Mathematics	E	E	D	B
Science	C	D	E	D

*Key: A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Achievement is satisfactory overall. Achievement in Years 3- 6 is good in ICT because pupils are provided with challenging work which is well linked to interesting topics. In English and science junior pupils' achievement is uneven because pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop and practise skills to solve scientific problems and to use their reading skills to gather and sift information. Standards are improving in mathematics. In the 2003 tests, the proportion of pupils

achieving the expected level and above for their age has increased in mathematics, declined considerably in science and is about similar to that for the year 2002 in English. Standards of the present Year 6 are above average in ICT, average in mathematics and below average in English and science. Standards are average in history, geography and physical education.

Achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils with English as an additional language are given appropriate support and achieve as well as their classmates. Currently standards at Year 2 are average in all the subjects seen. The 2003 end of Year 2 tests show that standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been maintained with very good improvement in the number of pupils achieving level 3 in writing. Reception children are provided with stimulating activities, most children achieve well and are on course to reach the expected standards for their age.

Pupils' personal development is **satisfactory** overall. The attitudes and behaviour are good, as is their attendance. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and well supported by Catholic ethos but opportunities for developing independence and initiative in learning are limited.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory overall with some weaknesses in the junior years** Teaching is **satisfactory overall** The most effective teaching was seen in the mixed age class of reception and Year 1 pupils. Some good teaching was also seen in the Year 2/3 and Year 5/6 classes. In all the classes, teachers work well with support staff who contribute effectively to pupils' learning. In particular the additional support given to the reception children is very good. Adults present good role models and show high level of care for pupils. They treat all the pupils with respect and maturity. Some aspects of teaching in the Year 4/5 class are weak because at times behaviour management strategies are ineffective. In both the classes for juniors, higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged in English and science because they generally do the same activities as others in English and science and there is an overuse of work sheets in these subjects. In most of the satisfactory lessons the range of the activities is generally narrow and too often the activities do not stimulate enthusiasm and inspire imaginative responses. Routines are used well in the infants' classes to consolidate learning. Teachers make good use of the computers to support learning in all the classes. The curriculum is enriched by visitors to the school, educational visits and inter-school competitions.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership and management of the school **are satisfactory**. The headteacher provides **sound** leadership in creating a school climate in which all individuals feel valued, resulting in good relationships and enhanced pupil confidence and esteem. The school has appropriate monitoring procedures, which are used well to identify its needs. Consequently, governors, headteacher and staff are clear about the strengths and the areas to be developed. Teaching and learning are monitored on regular basis but emerging issues are not always addressed systematically. Governors are very supportive of the school and during the long term absence of the headteacher they worked well with acting headteachers to ensure that pupils had a satisfactory educational provision. Financial issues resulting from a fall in number of pupils on roll have been a key priority. These issues are now resolved and the school is well set to focus on raising standards of attainment.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the school and most have no significant concerns. Pupils in the infants and juniors, whose views were sought, feel that the school is good and they like coming to school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Junior pupils should read a wide range of challenging texts, carry out research and develop library skills systematically; they should also do extended writing for different purposes and audiences.
- Increase the range of opportunities for experimental work and investigations in science with an emphasis on scientific vocabulary.
- Ensure consistently good quality of teaching and learning in the juniors.
- Ensure that activities are interesting and stimulating, and are based on assessment information so that they are well matched to the wide range of ability in the classes and provide appropriate challenge for higher attaining pupils.
- Provide a range of planned opportunities to improve speaking and listening skills throughout the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' achieve **satisfactorily** in relation to prior learning. Pupils enter the school with attainment levels which are below average. Children in the reception year achieve well and attain average standards in all the areas of learning. In Years 1 and 2 pupils achieve average standards in all the subjects seen. Progress in the Years 4/5 class is slower than elsewhere and whilst pupils make satisfactory progress in the next, Year 5/6, class the pace in learning is not so quick as to make up for the loss of progress in the lower junior years. At the end of Year 6, standards in mathematics are average but in science and English standards are below average. Throughout the school, pupils are provided with challenging and interesting work in ICT; they make good progress and achieve above average standards in this area. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with work that matches their needs well, are well supported and consequently achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average in English and science at Year 6 and higher attaining junior pupils do not always achieve as well as they could.
- Achievement is good in ICT and standards are above average throughout the school.
- Achievement is good in the reception year and children achieve average standards for their age.
- Pupils with special educational need achieve well.
- Weaknesses in provision for development in reading and limited opportunities for extended writing and speaking and listening cause standards in English to be lower in the juniors.
- Standards in handwriting and presentation are good and standards in spelling at Year 2 are good.

Commentary

1. The school's cohort size is small and this has meant that there have been considerable variations in the national test results from year to year for both seven and eleven year old pupils.
2. The table below shows that by the end of Year 2 pupils have achieved better average point scores than in the previous year, particularly in writing, although the scores for mathematics are lower. The number of pupils attaining level 3 in writing has improved significantly but in mathematics it is lower. The school's trend in the national tests for this age is broadly in line with that of schools nationally.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.5 (14.7)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	14.5 (13.3)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	15.2 (16.0)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 11 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. Inspection evidence shows that pupils achieve well in spellings and handwriting and that standards of presentation are good. Standards in writing are improving because this has been a focus for whole school development. Achievement in this key stage is also improving in reading because pupils benefit from the daily guided reading sessions. Pupils learn about children's authors such as Janet and Alan Ahlberg. They carry out simple book reviews and share their opinions with others. However, the higher attaining pupils in Year 2/3 class are not always sufficiently challenged in mathematics.

4. The table below shows that standards at Year 6 have improved in mathematics, and that standards are close to those for last year in English but have declined sharply in science. Standards in reading and writing are low with less than half the pupils attaining the expected level 4 and above and only one pupil attaining level 5 in writing. However, when taking account of this cohort's performance at Year 2 the value added by the school is above average in English and mathematics and below average in science. The school's trend in the national tests for this age is not as good as that of schools nationally.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.7 (26.8)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	26.4 (25.4)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	26.7 (28.2)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 19 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5. In the 2003 end of Year 6 tests, the school missed its target in English. It exceeded the targets in mathematics but missed its targets for level 5. The school is on course to reach the targets in mathematics and with a concerted effort, is likely to meet its targets in English.
6. Inspection evidence shows that pupils are generally achieving at a satisfactory level although some higher attaining pupils are capable of achieving at a better level. In the mixed age junior classes, activities are not sufficiently varied to provide challenge at an appropriate level for the higher attaining pupils from both of the year groups particularly in the Year 4/5 class and occasionally in the Year 5/6 class. On many occasions activities are not very stimulating and although pupils work diligently, there is a lack of enthusiasm in their approach to work. Where the school has resolved this issue, as in the case of ICT and pupils are provided with exciting work, they get involved enthusiastically, achieve well and standards are high. The recent focus on experimental and investigative science is beginning to present more challenge but it is at an early stage of development. Pupils do not always have opportunities to set up experiments, choose resources and decide to record the findings in individual ways. Too often pupils use worksheets and have few opportunities to explain their work. Overall junior pupils take pride in their work and present it well, taking care with handwriting and spelling.
7. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the effective targeted support they receive. The few pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress and achieve satisfactorily.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The behaviour of pupils is **good** and the unique Catholic ethos of the school promotes **effective** provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They have good attitudes to work and like coming to school. The pupils' attendance rate and punctuality are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and are confident in their approach to work.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good.
- The good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning makes a strong contribution to their personal development.
- Pupils enjoy school; they have good relationships in the school community, which has a positive influence on their learning.
- Attendance is above the national average and punctuality is good.

Commentary

8. Pupils' good attitudes to work make a positive contribution to their learning. The majority of pupils are very interested in what they are doing and take an active part in all parts of lessons. They listen attentively to their teachers and maintain concentration over time. Most pupils take pride in their work, willingly talk about what they are doing and readily explain their ideas to others. Pupils with special educational needs show the same positive attitudes to school as their fellow pupils. Almost all pupils say they enjoy coming to school, and are able to identify favourite subjects. Pupils' attendance is good and they arrive punctually at the start of the day.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.0	School data	0.5
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

9. Good standards of behaviour constitute a marked improvement since the last inspection when behaviour was unsatisfactory. Apart from an occasional lapse in the behaviour of a few pupils in the juniors behaviour is good. Most pupils are aware of what is and is not acceptable behaviour; they are involved in drawing up classroom rules and this helps them understand the need for sensible behaviour. They have a good understanding of the school rules, like the school's merit system and readily accept the principle of sanctions as an appropriate response to the few instances of unacceptable behaviour. Outside of lessons, before and after school, at breaks and lunchtimes pupils socialise and interact very well together.
10. The school is a harmonious and considerate community and relationships between all the members are good. Pupils work and learn in a calm, purposeful learning environment. The unique Catholic ethos of the school promotes good spiritual development. Daily assemblies contribute significantly to developing the pupils' understanding of their faith, and there is time for prayer and thoughtful reflection. In circle time, pupils are encouraged to explore their feelings and emotions and their relationships with friends and family.
11. The provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong. Incidents of bullying and harassment are few, and are dealt with speedily. Staff provides good role models and value pupils' opinions, which promotes pupils' self esteem. Moral development is promoted within the curriculum mostly through religious education and PHSCE and gives pupils opportunities to discuss moral issues and to develop moral values. Provision for pupils' social development is good. Pupils are taught to share, help one another and show consideration for others. They work well together in pairs and small groups. In religious education, Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism are studied along with Christianity, effectively promoting the pupils' cultural development through a greater awareness of the beliefs and traditions of other major world faiths. Teachers provide appropriate images in displays and in their choice of books and stories to help pupils understand the multicultural nature of the society in which they live. Well-planned trips to museums and theatres help to broaden pupils' cultural awareness.
12. The school continues to effectively use exclusions as a sanction to check challenging inappropriate behaviour. The table below shows that it has successfully reduced the number of exclusions to extremely low when compared to 53.5 in the previous inspection.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	92	6	0
White – any other White background	1		
Mixed – any other mixed background	2		
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2		
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	4		

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory** overall. Teachers manage the pupils well, which results in good standards of behaviour in lessons.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Activities are not sufficiently varied to match the learning needs of higher attaining pupils in the junior classes.
- Assessment is not used well enough to inform planning, which builds on what pupils know and can do.
- The management of behaviour is usually good and consequently pupils develop good attitudes and form good relationships.
- Teachers work well with support staff, who contribute well to pupils' learning, and in particular to that of pupils with special educational needs.
- ICT is used well to support learning in other subjects.
- Teaching in the Foundation stage is good.
- Marking celebrates good effort but does not always inform pupils of what they need to do to improve.

Commentary

13. The table below shows that the quality of teaching is generally about the same as it was at the time of the last inspection except that the very good lesson was the one taught by the visiting teacher of French from the secondary school. The incidence of unsatisfactory teaching is also higher, with both of the unsatisfactory lessons occurring in the Year 4/5 class. Most teaching ranges between satisfactory and good and is evenly spread between the three out of the four classes in the school with the best teaching being seen in the reception year. In the fourth, Year 4/5 class, teaching is overall satisfactory with some weaknesses. The decline in standards since the last inspection in the junior years is mostly because teaching although basically very sound is not as inspiring and stimulating as it was during the last inspection. Overall, expectations in the junior classes are not sufficiently high for the more able pupils. In both classes for juniors, teachers set the same activity for the whole class and pitch it at the average level of attainment. Teachers vary the challenge, which takes account of the different abilities within the class to some extent. Consequently, the pupils with special educational

needs and the lower attaining pupils work well and generally make good progress. However, there is not always sufficient challenge in activities for the higher attaining pupils. All the pupils in the class generally do the same work. This provides little opportunity for pupils to exercise independence and valuable time is spent with some working at a leisurely pace or waiting for their turn while others struggle to complete the task.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection In 26 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	1	10	13	2	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons;

14. Assessment of pupils' learning is not always used rigorously to inform planning, particularly in the class for Year 4/5 pupils. Best practice in making assessments and using the information for next steps in learning was seen in the reception class. Assessment records for the reception children are very good and for the youngest two classes are good. However, assessment overall is not sufficiently rigorous in the junior classes and this is evident in the mismatch between the test results and teacher assessments at Year 6. Teachers make good use of praise and encouragement in their marking. In the Year 2/3 class pupils are provided with effective evaluative comments, which help them to know what they have to do to improve their work. However, this practice is not used consistently in the school. In the class for Year 5/6 pupils some comments are helpful but in the Year 4/5 class pupils are provided with few comments about the next steps in learning or guidance on how to revise work to consolidate learning. Junior pupils in discussions indicated that they are not given feedback about their performance in optional national tests. They find out from parents but are not fully aware of their strengths and weaknesses in subjects.
15. There are some positive features in teaching throughout the school. Teachers have a caring attitude towards pupils and always treat them with respect, which fosters good relationships. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' conduct and use effective management strategies in most of the classes. Teachers make good use of the support provided by the support staff. In the good lessons, activities are interesting and a lively approach stimulates pupils' interest and helps them to move forward. Questioning is used effectively to check pupils' understanding and extend their ideas. Pace in the lessons is good and pupils achieve well. In the lessons judged unsatisfactory, behaviour management strategies are generally ineffective, resulting in high noise levels. Imprecise questioning, unclear instructions, slow pace and low levels of challenge result in pupils of all abilities making limited progress.
16. Pupils who have statements of special educational needs are taught well and make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. The effective support they receive from learning support assistants enables the pupils to take part in whole class lessons and to work on individual programmes at planned times each day. Good teamwork between teachers and learning support assistants provides a clear picture of the pupils' achievement enabling new work to be closely matched to need. Teachers know the individual needs of pupils with English as an additional language and skilfully vary their questions and responses to ensure that they understand the activity. Consequently these pupils make satisfactory progress. Teachers make good use of ICT to support learning in other subjects. Work in the computer suite is well linked to other subjects, which generates enthusiasm and sets a clear goal for pupils to practise skills in using computers. As a result they make good progress. Homework is generally used satisfactorily to reinforce and extend learning.

The curriculum

The school provides a **satisfactory** range of activities. There are now schemes of work for all the subjects, which guide teachers' planning adequately. The accommodation and resources for the school are satisfactory and for the Foundation stage they are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improved planning of the curriculum since the last inspection.
- Provision for special educational needs pupils is good.
- English and mathematics lessons are too long.

Commentary

17. The school has worked hard to improve its planning framework. Planning in the reception and Year 1 class is good. Infant classes are provided with interesting and relevant activities that motivate pupils. Reception children work enthusiastically and achieve well. In the junior classes planning is not sufficiently rigorous and on occasions the needs of the higher attaining pupils are not clearly identified. Consequently activities are not always challenging enough for these pupils.
18. The school has adopted national guidance for all the subjects and the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies are implemented well. However, these national guidelines are not as yet tailored to suit the school needs. The school is also using the national guidance on planning for mixed age classes and recognises that more work needs to be done to ensure that all the pupils' needs are effectively met.
19. The school has fully implemented the new requirements for pupils with special educational needs. They are well supported and consequently have access to all aspects of the curriculum. The provision for pupils who are gifted and talented is at an early stage of development.
20. The curriculum is not always as balanced as it might be. A very high percentage of curriculum time is allocated to English in the drive to raise standards. Whilst this has contributed well to raising standards in writing in the infants, it is not always used efficiently and productively. Moreover, lengthy morning sessions of English and mathematics do not always help pupils to maintain concentration and interest or maximise learning.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes **good** provision for pupils' care, welfare and health and safety. It provides a safe and secure environment where pupils feel happy, secure and can learn and develop. Procedures for pupils' support and guidance are **very good** in the pastoral area. Good quality induction procedures enable pupils to settle quickly into the school environment. There are satisfactory arrangements for seeking pupils' views of the school. Arrangements for health and safety and child protection are **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The care and welfare of pupils has a high profile in the school.
- Assessment information is not used sufficiently effectively in providing academic support and guidance.
- There are good procedures for the induction of children into the school.

Commentary

21. Adults in school know the pupils well. All staff is alert to the needs of pupils who may be having difficulties and readily offer them help. Consequently pupils develop confidence and trust their teachers and this is based on mutual respect. The school is committed to providing a safe

working environment for staff and pupils. There are very good procedures in place for the welfare, health and safety of pupils and adults. First aid and accident recording procedures are good. Procedures for risk assessments are in place and safety inspections are carried out on a regular basis. Overall, there are good arrangements for child protection. The headteacher is the designated person for child protection. However, formal whole staff training has not been undertaken for some time and is now in need of being updated.

22. The good standard of individual care, support and guidance provided for pupils' enables them to feel happy, confident and secure. Staff and pupils are well known to each other and interact well both inside and outside the classroom. Pastoral support for pupils is very good. Pupils are confident that they can approach their teachers should any problems of a personal nature arise and that appropriate support and guidance would be forthcoming. The provision for pupils' welfare is further enhanced by the involvement of the Catholic Care Social Worker who supports pupils and families with particular needs and by the 'Rainbows' club. Overall, the school provides pupils with a good level of care and support that enables them to concentrate on their lessons, and this has a positive impact on their learning.
23. The school has good induction procedures. Parents are given a wide range of information and guidance about these procedures and how they can help to prepare their children for school life. Parents and children have opportunities to visit the school and meet with their teachers prior to admission. These procedures enable children to settle quickly into the school environment. The school actively seeks pupils' views of the school mainly through the School Council and discussion time in lessons. The school values pupils' views and where practicable takes them into consideration when reviewing policies and procedures. For example, at the council's suggestion Year 6 pupils enter the dining room early at lunchtime and supervise behaviour and noise levels.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has developed a **good** partnership with parents. The quality and range of information provided for parents is **satisfactory**. Overall parents have positive views of the school and a significant number of parents are actively involved in the life of the school. The school has developed **good** links with the community and with other schools, which influence pupils' learning well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents hold the school in high regard
- The school has established strong links with parents that make a positive contribution to pupils' learning
- Links with the community are good
- There are good links with other schools.

Commentary

24. Parents receive a good range of information through weekly newsletters and letters about specific events to ensure that they are kept up to date about current school activities. Parents are invited to two parents' meetings and an open afternoon in the summer term at which time they can discuss with teachers their children's progress; attendance at these meetings is very good. Overall, pupils' annual reports are of good quality; they give clear guidance on pupils' attainment and progress, but they do not consistently give targets for development in specific subjects. The school actively seeks the views of parents primarily using questionnaires; parents' responses are analysed so that their views may be incorporated into new or revised school policies and procedures. There are good arrangements to involve the parents of pupils with special educational needs in the development and review of their children's individual educational plans.

25. Parents consider that their children like school and that the school helps them to work hard and achieve their best. Virtually all parents are pleased with the progress their children make in their learning, the quality of teaching, the good standard of behaviour and the expectation that their children will work hard. Parents also indicated that their children enjoyed coming to school, that the school is helping their children to become more responsible and mature. Parents feel confident that they could approach the school should they have cause for complaint. Evidence from the inspection confirms these positive views.
26. Parents' involvement in their children's learning is good. A significant number of parents help in the school, listening to pupils read, assisting in classrooms and accompanying pupils on school trips. Parents are encouraged to be involved in a wide range of activities, designed to assist them to be involved in their children's learning, including adult literacy, numeracy and computer courses. Parents say that these activities enable them to make a significant contribution to their children's learning. There is an active Friends Association that organises social and fundraising events; significant amounts of money have been raised to finance additional learning resources, all of which have a positive impact.
27. The school's links with the community are good and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. There is a good range of visitors to the school, including artists, musicians, and theatre companies who enhance pupils' learning in drama, art and music. The school makes good use of the local community; links with local sports clubs provide coaching in football and rugby to support pupils' development in physical education. Local field trips support pupils' learning in history and geography, and links with the local parish church support pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
28. The school's links with other educational establishments are good. Strong links have been established with the local secondary school, to which the majority of pupils transfer. Pupils from the school use the facilities for sport and foreign languages in the secondary school. The school has developed good transitional arrangements including effective liaison between teachers and the transfer of information relating to pupils' academic and social skills. All pupils have a full day's induction at the secondary school, when they meet their form tutor and experience a range of lessons. Higher attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs have an additional half day's induction to ensure their needs are provided for. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are engaged in transitional work, learning modern foreign languages provided by secondary staff, which is continued when they transfer to the secondary school. All of this has a positive impact on the continuity of curriculum provision. There are good links with local colleges and a university, with the school providing placements for trainee teachers. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory**. The governance of the school is sound and work is managed satisfactorily. The headteacher returned to school at the beginning of the summer term in 2003 following over a year's absence due to an injury resulting from an accident. She has still not yet recovered fully but is beginning to regain her full strength and energy.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides sensitive and enthusiastic leadership.
- The management of the school is satisfactory because there are clear procedures that are generally followed which have enabled the school's standards to improve.
- The leadership and management of the Foundation stage are good.
- The governing body fulfils its statutory duties satisfactorily and understands the school's strengths and weaknesses but has allowed the school to operate with a deficit budget.
- The school development plan outlines clear priorities but there are no procedures for evaluating the effectiveness in school improvement.

Commentary

29. The headteacher provides sound leadership. Decisions taken collectively by the staff as well as agreed school policies are each implemented consistently. For example, the decision to identify the objectives of every lesson and to share these with the pupils so they have a clear focus on what they are intended to learn are carried out firmly by all teachers. The school's mission statement, which is centred around the affirmation of pupils' self worth and dignity as well as providing a climate that is respectful and based on justice and trust, is embraced by all the adults who work in the school. The commitment of the staff to these principles has resulted from the lead given by the headteacher. The acting deputy head teacher was appointed at the beginning of the spring term 2003 but his role has not yet been developed sufficiently to be able to provide support to the headteacher in leading the development of the school. In addition, the head and deputy head teacher have not yet identified the best practices in the classrooms within the school so that they can be shared and demonstrated to all teachers to improve its performance. For example, the very good assessment and recording methods in the Foundation stage have not been identified and shared with all staff so that all can improve their work in the classrooms.
30. The management of the school is satisfactory. The school has introduced a number of procedures that help individual pupils to achieve better. Half-termly targets for groups of pupils to aspire towards have been introduced in English and mathematics for pupils in all classes. These have been more successful in infant classes where there is a greater focus on them and a greater degree of celebration when pupils achieve them. At present there is no overall policy about setting targets when pupils achieve them earlier than expected. Pupils' progress is tracked through the results of annual testing and targets involving levels of attainment are set for pupils to aspire towards by the end of Year 6. However, there are no targets for individual pupils in other years to reach and deadlines are too far in the future for many pupils. Pupils' answers in the annual national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6 are analysed to identify weaker areas in their knowledge and understanding and these areas form a focus in classrooms so that improvement can be brought about successfully. Priorities for the present year are identified in the school development plan but criteria for evaluating effective implementation are not always identified. The performance management process for teachers is well managed. The school has realistic plans to include support staff in this process during the current academic year.
31. The Foundation stage leader provides good leadership and management. A good sense of teamwork has been established and classroom procedures have been well thought-out. Children are assessed using an efficient system and the outcomes are used to plan the next step in their learning. The class teacher and nursery nurse work very effectively together and as a result know the children's strengths and weaknesses well.
32. A number of potentially effective systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are operated within the school. The subject co-ordinators and the headteacher monitor lessons in the main subjects frequently. Informal verbal feedback as well as written feedback is provided for teachers and this includes strengths and areas for improvement. However, the areas for improvement, once identified, are not followed up at the next monitoring to ensure that there has been improvement. The headteacher monitors teachers' lesson planning every week to make sure that the content follows closely what is required by the agreed schemes of work. Samples of pupils' work are also monitored but important aspects are not covered. For example, the monitoring does not cover whether pupils with different capabilities are provided with suitable work that extends their knowledge, skills and understanding nor does it cover the quality of a teacher's marking to find out if pupils are being given written advice on how to improve their work.
33. For understandable reasons the school has had much difficulty in managing the sharp fall in finances allocated to the school because of the falling numbers of pupils attending the school. It has been obvious for the last few years that the school could not continue spending at the

same rate as it had done previously. The governing body was reluctant to make members of staff redundant in order to reduce expenditure and, instead, took the decision to wait for staff to leave. It soon became obvious that steps would have to be taken to overcome the difficulties but the measures taken were still not sufficient to overcome the deficit. The governors have now planned reasonable steps to reduce the deficit by applying for 'small school status' so that funding will be awarded on a different and more advantageous basis. The governors support the school well. Governors meet regularly to discuss the work of the school and are kept informed of the progress of the school development plan. Governors question the school about its weaknesses and challenge it about what can be done to effect improvements. The principles of best value are applied well, and governors are strongly committed to ensuring that all funds are wisely spent. They have spent much time discussing the best course of action to enable the school to manage within the budget allocated and have successfully reduced the amount of deficit from the previous year by cutting support staff costs. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	346,813
Total expenditure	330,469
Expenditure per pupil	2,777

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	-42,636
Balance carried forward to the next	-26,292

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

34. The teaching and curriculum for children in the Foundation stage are **good**. The Foundation stage teacher provides effective leadership and management and these ensure children make good progress according to their capabilities. There is a very good sense of teamwork between the class teacher and nursery nurse. When children are first admitted to the reception class their attainments vary but the overall level is below average. There are good induction procedures that involve visits to children's homes and opportunities for them to visit the school before they are actually admitted.
35. Good assessment and recording processes operate in the classroom. The teacher and nursery nurse focus on a different area of learning every few days to check each pupil's individual achievements against the main components of the early learning goals. The information is used to plan activities for each child to help them achieve the next step in their learning. This approach has been very successful in providing a class profile that shows, at a glance the areas that pupils need to work on to meet the related goals.
36. The adults in the classroom know the mathematical vocabulary to reinforce with different children. For instance, they know which children are ready to understand the meanings of more than or less than. They are able to identify children who will be able to cope with simple additions such as 'one more than five' or 'one more than 10' and record these as a sum.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for personal, social and emotional development is **good**. Good teaching helps children to achieve well. Children's attainments in the social and emotional aspects of this area of learning are on course to be average by the time they move into Year 1.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults and children enjoy very good relationships and the example set by the class teacher and nursery nurse results in children working happily together and sharing resources.
- Children concentrate well on the carefully planned activities because they enjoy them.
- Teachers make sure that children understand classroom routines so that they become confident and secure in the classroom.

Commentary

37. Very good relationships between the class teacher, other adults in the classroom and the children ensure that children develop social competence by observing how adults relate to others. They feel secure and work happily together. They show an obvious enjoyment in all the classroom activities and as a result concentrate well. Sharing resources and learning to take turns are developed well through adult intervention during activities such as role-play in the home corner as Santa's helpers. Children are taught well and soon become used to the routines within the classrooms. All children are ensured of an equal opportunity to participate in the activities planned for them.
38. Good teaching involving effective and appropriate use of praise and encouragement when children are polite and well behaved has a positive effect on raising confidence. Adults very effectively work together in planning, working with children and checking what they can and cannot do. Children quickly learn the difference between right and wrong and begin to develop a moral understanding of their actions. They start to build a sense of independence and can fasten and undo buttons on their clothing and dress and undress without adult help before and

after physical education lessons. Children are invariably interested in learning and listen carefully to what others say. The good provision results in most children reaching the goals by the time they move into Year 1 and achieve well. Standards meet the level expected for this age group.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision for this area of learning is **good**. Children achieve well because teaching is **good**. Most children are on course to attain average standards expected for their age.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good attention to letter formation and letter sounds means that children achieve well in reading and writing.
- Children listen carefully to teachers and adults in the classroom
- More able children move forward quickly in reading and writing because good use is made of information about what children can already do when planning their activities.

Commentary

39. The teaching of reading and writing is successful in enabling good achievement amongst the children, especially the more able. These higher attaining children have been encouraged to develop the ability to write simple sentences independently whilst others are at an earlier stage of development. All children are making good progress according to their capabilities and most can write their name independently. There is good emphasis on basic skills in activities such as reading a large poster or writing words connected with simple news captions. The children gain knowledge of the sounds symbolised by different letters and consolidate the connections by remembering actions linked with the sounds. For example, they weave their hands in an 'S' shape, like a snake, and repeatedly say "s s s" or they pretend to puff out candles whilst saying "p p p". Children who learn more slowly benefit from regular sessions with adults who show them how to shape letters correctly and encourage them to remember the sounds they make.
40. Children develop good listening skills through enjoyable stories, songs and rhymes. The adults in the class provide good role models for spoken language but do not always encourage children to speak at greater length and consequently many respond to questions in single words or gestures. The teacher and nursery nurse have a very effective approach to assessing and recording what children can and cannot do. This information enable staff to plan and provide language activities that challenge the children's thinking and enables them to achieve the next appropriate step in their learning.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision in this area of learning is **good**. The quality of teaching and learning is **good**, enabling children to achieve well in their mathematical development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A wide range of activities is provided for children, designed to familiarise them with mathematical ideas.
- More able children in the Foundation stage class make good progress as a result of appropriate challenges that extend their knowledge, skills and understanding.

Commentary

41. A wide variety of activities is planned that provide good opportunities for children to familiarise themselves with new aspects of mathematics and this allows them to achieve well. Skilful questioning by staff, and stimulating activities and resources enable children to develop good mathematical skills. For example, frequent opportunities to count, such as the number of component cubes in a tower, or to put a series of number cards in order using a clothes line and pegs consolidate number recognition well. Children use plastic bricks and other construction equipment to construct columns that are 'taller than' or 'shorter than' another object and to experience comparative language. They measure, with support from an adult, a range of items using books or bricks to see how many times they fit along the length of an object, end to end. Such activities are fun for children and they develop their understanding of measuring well.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision for the development of children's knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**. Teaching and learning is **good** enabling children to achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of first hand experiences successfully extends children's knowledge and understanding of the world.

Commentary

42. Children are excited by their work in this area of learning because the class teacher plans a rich programme of opportunities for children to explore their world at first hand. Through good planning and teaching the children have successfully developed an understanding of changes that have taken place over a period of time by sequencing what people looked like as a baby, a toddler and what they look like now. They also learn how people look at other stages up to and including old age. They use construction kits and join different plastic parts, in a well-practised manner, to assemble, for example, a range of transport vehicles such as cars, lorries, buses and aeroplanes which improves their skills in making products. They use the vehicles to investigate whether they go faster when wheeling down slopes that are gradually made steeper. The children carry out investigations to evaluate a variety of sensations such as a range of different smells or to identify which materials reflect light. They produce a weather chart for five days using symbols to represent different kinds of weather. All of these, and other similar first hand experiences, enable children to develop a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the world.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for children's physical development is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of resources is used effectively in the classroom and in the outdoor play area for physical development.
- Physical activities are used effectively to support children's development in other areas of learning.

Commentary

43. Teaching is satisfactory. Children have regular opportunities to use a wide range of resources in the outdoor play area attached to their classroom. They ride bicycles fitted with stabilisers

confidently and enthusiastically control tricycles with a passenger standing on the back; they can also use scooters to travel with a good sense of balance. The large apparatus in this area is used well to develop children's co-ordination. They climb a ladder to get to the top of a slide and enjoy the sensation of sliding down the slope as well as crawling through a tunnel using hands and feet to propel themselves forward. Children use simple gymnastic equipment satisfactorily to develop their strength of movement. They climb on vaulting stools and lower themselves down carefully in addition to walking and balancing along the top of a bench or pulling themselves along it on their knees. The children develop good awareness of safety and regard for others and arrange the apparatus as required, carrying it as a group to different places in the hall. They meet the physical challenge well.

44. Good attention is given to developing fine manipulative skills. In role-play activities, children bathe dolls in the water tray and with the help of a partner they familiarise themselves with more delicate physical movements. Such experiences are mirrored when they carry out other activities in the outdoor area. They direct the 'traffic' of scooters, bicycles and tricycles using arm signals and carrying the stop signal equipment aloft at the same time as interacting with the 'drivers' in a lively manner.
45. Throughout the children's participation in these physical activities they learn and practise new words to promote their use of vocabulary in practical situations.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are provided with a good range of activities to develop their creative skills.

Commentary

46. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Children are provided with a wide range of creative activities to support their development. Painting easels are always available for children to use for painting activities during the school day. They are encouraged to paint using their own ideas and supported by adults who enable them to gain some of the skills necessary to be able to express themselves. Children explore successfully the use of finger paints, drawing designs with their fingers on large sized paper, and are also encouraged to use felt pens to draw patterns and figures. They use computer programs to produce colourful pictures on the computer screen for subsequent printing. In addition, their creativity is nurtured through other means. They express themselves well through opportunities for dancing and movement and are provided with weekly opportunities to interpret different themes. They sing songs with enthusiasm to the accompaniment of a guitar and participate in a wide variety of role-play activities that are linked with the current theme of work.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of writing is good.
- Standards in handwriting and presentation are good through the school.
- Standards in spellings are good at Year 2.
- There is some lack of challenge for the higher attaining pupils in the Year 4/5 class.
- Library skills are not taught systematically and pupils have few opportunities to gather and sift information.
- Insufficient opportunities are provided for developing speaking and listening through a range of interesting activities such as drama and role-play.

Commentary

47. Teaching overall is satisfactory and makes a sound contribution to pupils' achievement overall. The school's focus on writing has been successful. Teachers provide a range of interesting activities to promote writing in different forms, develop pupils' knowledge of grammar and give particular attention to the standards in presentation and handwriting. Spelling is taught consistently throughout the school and has resulted in good standards at Year 2. In the infants teachers have high expectations, provide activities that are varied to match the wide range of abilities in classes and standards are now rising. Both teachers use daily routines well to consolidate learning and practise skills. For example, in the Year 2/3 class pupils regularly present their written work to the class in plenary sessions and read their own writing confidently, with growing awareness of punctuation. They write plausible spellings in wordbooks and seek corrections from adults in the class. In the Year 5/6 class pupils show good understanding of grammatical terms. They are beginning to use complex sentences and write for different purposes with regard to audience. However, whilst opportunities for practising handwriting are effective in improving the handwriting, too frequently prime learning time in the literacy lessons is used to copy texts in the junior classes. In the Year 4/5 class although teaching is mostly satisfactory, progress is not as good as in other classes because activities are not varied sufficiently to meet the needs of the higher attaining pupils. Work is generally aimed at the middle ability range and over a period this slows the rate of progress of some of the pupils.
48. The school has introduced target setting as a strategy to improve standards and analyses assessment information to pinpoint strengths and weaknesses. All teachers now set group targets based on the weaknesses identified, which are generally linked to the use of punctuation in writing. Overall targets are too general and not specific enough and in some instances show low expectations. The system of reviewing progress against targets at half termly intervals is not rigorous enough and pupils are not always involved in discussing their targets. The criteria for analysing assessment information are too broad and consequently the weaknesses and strengths are not identified with sufficient accuracy. This initiative is at an early stage of development and the co-ordinator is aware that the effect on pupils' achievement is not as significant as it should be. The planned support from the local authority adviser is focused on improving the target setting practice.
49. Standards in reading at Year 2 are average with increasing number of pupils achieving at level 3 but standards at Year 6 are below average. In the school's recent analysis of reading tests it shows that pupils do not always read with understanding and therefore do not respond to

questions with appropriate understanding of the task. Through professional development for staff, teachers' expertise has improved. Teachers choose interesting and challenging texts for introductory sessions which provide good opportunities for pupils to experience new vocabulary and explore subtle meanings. As pupils become more independent, fluent and confident in reading, teachers spend less time evaluating how well they are doing. The introduction of guided reading sessions each day is contributing generally satisfactorily to improving standards. In the junior classes pupils are not guided sufficiently in their choice of books and sometimes pupils choose books with easy texts. Whilst pupils are given free choice to encourage reading for pleasure, what they read is not monitored effectively to ensure that achievement in reading is satisfactory. Throughout the school, pupils are not taught research skills systematically. Junior pupils very rarely use the library and their advanced skills in reading for skimming and scanning text to gain meaning and find key information are underdeveloped. The school has as yet not started setting targets for reading.

50. Standards in speaking and listening are broadly average. As part of the school's emphasis on raising standards teachers now provide opportunities for discussions with partners in lessons which is effective in the sharing of ideas and clarifying understanding with each other. However, few planned opportunities are provided for developing speaking and listening skills and pupils seldom explain their ideas at length. Consequently many pupils at Year 6, for example, are not very familiar with the protocol of discussion and do not use specialist vocabulary.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. The use of language and literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory. Satisfactory use is made of reading and writing in other subjects, for example, pupils recording their ideas and feelings in religious education. Pupils have an appropriate range of opportunities to develop word processing skills. The libraries for both infants and juniors are adequate but are rarely used and consequently library skills are underdeveloped.

Modern foreign language

Provision is **very good**. A specialist teacher from the local secondary school with a language teaching status visits the school regularly to teach French to the older junior pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good quality teaching and learning enables pupils to make very good progress in French
- Very good use of resources for learning and other strategies enables pupils to commit French to memory.

Commentary

52. Lessons begin with a good review of learning in previous French lessons. In addition, the teacher shares the aims of the lesson so that the pupils can focus clearly on what they are expected to learn in the session. Lessons are very lively and move at a brisk pace with a good mixture of consolidating previously learned sentences and vocabulary and learning new material. As a result, pupils have a real sense of accomplishing new skills and a strong feeling of enjoyment. The teacher plans the lessons very thoroughly and has high expectations of the pupils. Consequently, pupils acquire new knowledge, skills and understanding very well. Throughout the lessons behaviour is very good, which enables pupils to hard work with sustained concentration. There is a good emphasis on speaking French but lessons end with pupils recording the sentences they have learned in their exercise books.
53. The teacher uses learning resources very well to facilitate pupils' learning. The theme of weather is taught very well by, for example, using coloured picture illustrations to indicate different weather conditions. Coupled with physical actions that they have to copy, the pupils correctly remember how to say sentences such as "Il fait du vent" or "Il fait froid" to indicate if

the weather is windy or cold. There is frequent copying of the teacher's phrases so that pupils can master accurate pronunciation and develop a good French accent. There are other good strategies for reinforcing what has been learned. For example, pupils are asked to guess what card is on the top of a pile and are given the card if they correctly say the sentence that describes the weather that is illustrated. A map of France and Belgium, with the names of a number of towns, projected on to a screen is also used very effectively. Symbols illustrating different weather conditions are placed next to the names of the towns. Care is taken to ensure that the names of places rhyme with the weather descriptor. Pupils are required to say sentences such as "Liege il neige" or "Pau il fait chaud" Such activities are fun for pupils and provide them with useful cues to help them gain confidence in speaking French.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall but it is better in the infant classes.
- Average and lower attaining pupils achieve satisfactorily but higher attaining pupils are not always extended sufficiently.
- Assessment of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding is good in infants but not sufficiently rigorous in the juniors to enable the outcomes to be used to plan the next steps in pupils' learning.
- Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory but monitoring is sometimes not rigorous enough and does not involve subsequent checking to ensure that issues have been addressed.

Commentary

54. The teaching and learning have a number of positive features. These include teachers' good management of pupils' behaviour, the effective use of classroom teaching assistants and good use of learning resources to support pupils' learning, particularly in the infant classes. Teachers have good relationships with the pupils in their class and this has led to good behaviour and hard work during lessons. Classroom assistants assist the learning of lower attaining pupils well and enable them to make good progress in understanding mathematics. For example, the classroom assistant for the older junior class enabled less able pupils to begin to understand algebra by working on an appropriate ICT program and by using small sticks to help build up an understanding of arithmetical sequence. The specific aims of some mathematics lessons in the junior classes are not always clear to the teacher. As a result, the teacher does not focus clearly on what pupils are expected to learn during the lesson and consequently pupils make insufficient progress. Year 1 pupils' benefit from useful and interesting resources used to enhance their learning. They work with enjoyment, particularly when the class teacher uses a glove puppet to orchestrate counting accurately backwards and forwards to 30, as well as developing counting in tens. They use structured mathematical equipment effectively for building knowledge and understanding of adding and subtraction processes.
55. Mathematics lessons cater satisfactorily for average pupils, lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs but not as effectively for the higher attaining pupils. Work is carefully planned for the lower attaining pupils, individual education plans are matched to pupils' needs and additional support is targeted well.
56. The work planned for average attaining junior pupils is also appropriate and as a result they make satisfactory progress. The school's results in the national mathematics tests for eleven year olds have been getting closer to the national average for the last three years but the percentage of pupils attaining level 5 has been consistently well below average. The findings of the inspection show that fewer pupils are on course to achieve at level 5. A careful scrutiny of junior pupils' recent work in mathematics shows clearly that higher and average attaining pupils

are too often provided with exactly the same work which is aimed at the average level of ability in the class. There is little evidence of more able pupils being provided with sufficient challenge to extend their mathematical skills. In addition, the class teacher's assessment records of pupils in the older junior class are not rigorous enough to be able to plan work that enables higher attaining pupils to make the progress of which they are capable. Work planned for the mixed Year 2 class does not extend the higher attaining seven year olds sufficiently. Although work is planned for the more able pupils in the class, it is not sufficiently varied to meet the needs of different age groups in the class.

57. Assessment records for the youngest two classes are good. They show very clearly what the mathematical activities for each attainment group were in each lesson and which pupils did not attain them. Further records are compiled according to a list of statements relating to the skills pupils are expected to have attained. Helpful comments are included together with notes on what the next steps in each pupil's learning should be. Examples of pupils' work illustrating what they are able to do are kept as a useful record. Assessment records for the older pupils are not as rigorous as this. Pupils' scores in mental mathematics tests are recorded but there is no identification of where the individual strengths and weaknesses of pupils lie so that the information can be used for planning future activities that will help them overcome difficulties. The school has recently compiled a list of the attainment levels reached at the end of each school year together with a target level for each Year 6 pupil to aim at as a step towards tracking pupils' progress. However, this system is at too early a stage to have an effect on improving pupils' performance.
58. The mathematics co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership but procedures for monitoring teaching and learning are underdeveloped. There is a renewed focus to drive standards higher in mathematics. Regular monitoring of teaching and learning takes place through lesson observations, scrutiny of teachers' plans and analysis of pupils' work in books. However, these procedures are ineffective in driving standards forward because the information that emanates from the various forms of monitoring is not used effectively. The criteria used to evaluate pupils' work in monitoring exercises, for example, are too narrow and opportunities to pinpoint a lack of challenge for the higher attaining pupils are missed. Although the co-ordinator analyses pupils' performance at Years 2 and 6 national tests to identify strengths and weaknesses, the analysis is not rigorous enough and not all the areas of the subject are covered in sufficient depth. Consequently the action plan for mathematics is weak.

Mathematics across the curriculum

59. Pupils represent simple statistical information arising from science investigations and geography in graphical form and practise measuring accurately during design and technology lessons. In general, mathematics is not used often enough across the curriculum for pupils to be able to practise and use the skills they have learned in mathematics lessons.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of Year 6 are below average and some pupils do not as yet achieve well enough.
- Regular opportunities for investigative and experimental work contribute effectively to learning and are beginning to improve achievement.
- Recent on-going support by the local authority adviser is having a positive effect on improving the co-ordinator's expertise in subject management and the overall development in science.
- Work is not always varied to match the wide range of pupils' learning needs, particularly in the Year 4/5 class.

- There is not enough emphasis on the use of technical language and pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to explain their work.
- There is an over-use of worksheets, which hinders pupils from recording their work in different forms.

Commentary

60. Two lessons were seen, one in each key stage because of the timetable arrangements. Judgements about pupils' attainment are made based on a scrutiny of pupils' completed work and discussions with pupils and teachers. Achievement in science is satisfactory throughout the school. Inspection evidence shows that standards at Year 2 have been maintained and continue to be average. However, standards at Year 6 have declined to below average. In the 2003 test results at Year 6 a low percentage of pupils attained the above average level 5 and the percentage of pupils attaining level 3 was high. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and achieve well. The needs of pupils with English as an additional language are taken into account and peer support is used well to ensure they understand the task. No differences were observed in the achievement of girls and boys. Progress through the junior years is slow in the Year 4/5 class because lessons do not always move at a brisk pace and much time has been spent on copying texts in workbooks. This slows the pace in learning over the two years that pupils stay in this class, and whilst in the Year 5/6 class appropriate attention is given to providing for the wide ability range, higher attaining pupils generally do not work at a level they are capable of.
61. Following an unsettled period in the leadership at the school, the subject is now a priority for development. The recent support from the local authority specialist adviser has renewed the focus on raising standards. The co-ordinator is working closely with the adviser to improve the provision for science, which contributes to improving his subject knowledge and management skills. The provision for experimental and investigative science is a recent development and while the average ability pupils have benefited, this has not had the same influence for other groups of pupils as yet. Moreover, pupils' skills are not sufficiently developed in using their own initiative to devise and carry out investigations with increasing independence at their own level. Whilst the school is beginning to address the issue of planning for mixed age classes, teachers plan the same activity for the whole class and too often do not vary the challenge for the higher attaining pupils in the two year groups in the class. Consequently on occasions some pupils do not achieve as well as they could.
62. In the infant classes and in particular in the reception and Year 1 class pupils are provided with a good range of interesting and high quality resources in stimulating interactive displays which arouse their curiosity and motivate them to ask questions. Routines in the two classes are used well to consolidate learning. Discussions with pupils and scrutiny of work in books show that teaching is satisfactory overall. In the two lessons seen, teaching was satisfactory in the Year 2/3 lesson and unsatisfactory in the Year 4/5 lesson. Teachers in both lessons provided appropriate opportunities for pupils to investigate how materials can change and which materials are good conductors and insulators. Demonstration was used well and pupils developed good understanding of the safety issues. In the unsatisfactory lesson, behaviour management strategies were ineffective which slowed the pace. Opportunities to clarify key science concepts were missed and not enough learning took place. Throughout the school, too often pupils are given worksheets to record their findings, or when teachers check pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers provide few opportunities for pupils to explain their work and consequently many pupils struggle for words when talking about science topics.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**. The quality of teaching and learning is good enabling pupils to achieve well, particularly in the juniors. Standards at Year 6 are above average and those at Year 2 are close to the average. Year 2 pupils do not have as much

independence as their older counterparts because the teacher performs many of the operations for them.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching in the Year 5/6 class enables pupils' to achieve above average standards and to develop independence in the use of a range of computer programs.
- Pupils reinforce ICT skills in history and geography lessons.
- Many pupils do not reach their potential because class teachers do not yet keep records of what individuals can and cannot do in order to use the information to ensure lessons meet their learning needs.

Commentary

63. Teaching at Year 6 is good because there is a good command of the subject matter. There are high expectations of what pupils can do and once an ICT skill has been taught pupils are expected to repeat the process independently. Pupils thoroughly enjoy ICT lessons and quickly acquire new skills and further knowledge. When pupils are hesitant or apprehensive the teacher supports their learning sensitively and with much encouragement. As a result, the teacher ensures that all pupils in the class gain new skills as they are introduced. The computer suite is very useful in this respect because pupils are able to work in pairs with each having opportunities for extensive and useful hands-on experience. There is good use of repetition with different challenges that subtly re-use the same skills enabling pupils plenty of opportunity to consolidate their previous learning. This good consolidation of skills is well illustrated by four Year 6 pupils who, after a period of nine months, were able to recall clearly how to frame a set of instructions to draw a geometric shape on the computer using the *Logo* program. Year 2 pupils use word processing skills to write a series of sentences, use the capital letter facility and the space bar and also delete in both forward and backward directions. However, they cannot switch on computers and 'log on' independently nor can they download graphics because their teacher does this for them. As a consequence pupils in this year do not make as much progress as they might.
64. Pupils are taught a range of ICT skills and use them during history and geography lessons. They learn to use the Internet to search for specific information and are given related tasks during geography lessons. For example, during a geography lesson on mountains pupils learned about appropriate clothing for cold weather and regard for safety when walking on the mountains. Groups of pupils successfully searched for information about Mountain Rescue Organisations in different mountain ranges of the world. Pupils, in pairs, built a *PowerPoint* presentation, involving a range of audio and visual ICT skills, containing information such as how mountains were formed, what to wear on the mountains and what to do in case of an accident. To link with a series of history lessons, pupils used their word processing skills to write an imaginary account of the siege of Pontefract Castle, using the characters and situations involved in the real siege. Providing a real context for using the skills they have learned in ICT lessons makes these more meaningful so that pupils can understand the practical use of what they have been learning.
65. As yet, class teachers do not record the ICT attainments of pupils in their class. As a result they are not able to plan activities designed to meet the needs of pupils.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

66. The use of ICT across the curriculum supports learning well. In addition to the use of ICT in geography and history lessons, pupils also use it in a number of other areas of the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs, and those who have lower attainments than most other pupils in the class, use computers to assist their understanding of mathematics. For example, groups of pupils use ICT to help with their recognition of number patterns and are supported well in this by classroom assistants. They write stories as part of their English lessons using

word processing to draft and amend as they work. However, ICT facilities are not always used to the best advantage because pupils in some classes miss opportunities to experience quick and simple methods to edit and redraft their writing. Pupils also use data handling programs to draw graphs in mathematics and science lessons.

HUMANITIES

Provision in history and geography is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils reach the expected standards in history but very few attain above average standards.
- Visits to historical places and other places of interest and first hand experiences enhance the curriculum for history and geography.

Commentary

67. A lesson was seen in geography and one in history. Judgements about pupils' standards in history are based on a scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils and teachers. There was very little work available for geography so no judgements are made on standards in geography.
68. The school has adopted national guidance for both subjects and devised an appropriate rolling programme for mixed age classes. This enables teachers to plan work, which shows clearly what pupils will learn in each class. Teachers plan a range of activities in history and geography that promote skills of historical and geographical enquiry. For example, Year 5/6 pupils investigate the differences and similarities in Pontefract at present and in Victorian times, and Year 2/3 pupils find out about how children lived during World War II.
69. Teaching in both lessons was good. Pupils pretended to be the evacuated children during the war period and wrote letters to their parents giving them the news that they were returning home. These experiences brought the subject alive; pupils enjoyed their work and recalled enthusiastically the experiences shared by a visitor who was an evacuee during World War II. In the geography lesson, pupils searched for information on the Internet about the Mountain Rescue in different parts of the world. The good relationships established between the teacher and the class ensured pupils worked hard and behaved well. Effective concluding sessions enabled pupils to reflect on the lessons, consolidating their learning.
70. A range of visits to interesting places supports and enriches pupils' learning. Visits to places such as Conisborough Castle, Leeds Armouries and the national mining museum provide valuable experiences that extend pupils' learning. Year 6 pupils also undertake a residential visit to Hornsea, learn key features of the area and engage in orienteering exercises.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

71. Only two lessons were seen in **design and technology**, one lesson in **music** and no lessons were seen in **art and design**. It is therefore not possible to make a firm judgement about provision. In addition to observing lessons, inspectors spoke to co-ordinators about their work and looked at a very small sample of work in art and design and design and technology.
72. In **art and design** sketchbooks have been introduced but they are not used consistently. Work on display showed good skill in colour mixing. Year 1 pupils create shades of a colour by mixing measured quantities of paints. Year 2/3 pupils paint in the style of Lowry and show a good standard of observational skills. Art is used well to illustrate work in other subjects and particularly in religious education and English. Pupils' work is celebrated well in interesting and well-presented displays. In the two lessons seen in **design and technology**, teaching was

satisfactory. Pupils showed satisfactory understanding of designing and making products and beginning to develop an awareness of evaluating their products to test fitness for purpose, but this aspect was not as well developed as the 'design' and 'make' aspects.

73. Resources for both subjects are satisfactory. Pupils are provided with a good range of media for artwork. The school is aware that pupils need to focus more on three dimensional work.
74. In **music**, discussions with pupils indicated clearly that they enjoyed composing music using un-tuned percussion instruments on themes such as 'storm', 'icicles', 'wind' or 'rain'. The learning of music is enhanced by activities involving recorder groups that serve to provide pupils with first hand experience of music. There is also instrumental tuition provided for pupils to learn to play the violin, keyboard or clarinet. The school provides large-scale musical experiences for the participation of pupils in music making. Christmas productions, involving all pupils in the school, usually involve musical activities. Visitors to the school provide good one-off presentations to demonstrate the music provided by different musical instruments such as percussion, wind and stringed instruments.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in the gymnastics aspect of physical education is **satisfactory**. It was possible to observe one gymnastics lesson in the infants and juniors respectively and no lessons were seen in games, dance, athletics or swimming due to the arrangement of the timetable.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Junior pupils try hard but lack finesse and good presentation in gymnastics

Commentary

75. Eleven year old pupils are keen to attempt simple gymnastic movements or sequences but their performances generally lack the presentation and finishing techniques required to achieve high quality in performance. Pupils were unaware of the need to incorporate pointed fingers and toes into the movements and to stand to attention with outstretched arms at the finish. Pupils jump on to vaulting boxes; jump off the top and then move into a forward roll with varying degrees of success. Other pupils co-operate well in pairs to develop simple sequences of movements on mats. They make good attempts to synchronise movements in the sequences but, again, the finesse in the performance is lacking.
76. Teachers encourage pupils frequently but, in the juniors, this generally consists of praise that is over-used. This results in pupils not knowing what was good and what was bad in the performances because insufficient advice was provided to make them aware of what they needed to do to improve. The introductory part of the lesson that incorporated pupils practising movements on the floor of the hall linked well with the main part of the lesson using gymnastic apparatus. The floor work covered balancing and jumping and these connected closely with pupils' work on the apparatus where they were instructed to include balancing and jumping in their sequences of movements. Pupils in infant classes are imaginative and enthusiastic about what they attempt in lessons. They travel round the hall using a good variety of methods including skipping, hopping and jumping. They are constantly moving during the lesson and follow the curved paths of skipping ropes laid out on the floor by the class teacher. The teacher is polite in her dealings with the class and this provides a good model for pupils and has a positive impact on their personal development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

77. There was not enough evidence to report on the individual components of this aspect of provision. Discussions with the co-ordinator and the pupils were held and one lesson was

seen. The school sees pupils' personal development as an important part of its work. Circle time sessions are provided regularly in all classes to develop interpersonal skills. However, in the lesson seen whilst teaching was overall satisfactory the main focus of the lesson on developing listening skills showed that the school is at an early stage of development in this approach. The school council meets regularly and pupils take great pride in their involvement in the work and life of the school. There is an appropriate programme of activities including work on diet, health, sex, drugs and alcohol and personal safety, which is taught through the science curriculum. Through this programme pupils are supported to develop a healthy lifestyle, gain in confidence and practise their social skills.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).