

INSPECTION REPORT

KIRK SANDALL INFANT SCHOOL

Kirk Sandall, Doncaster

LEA area: Doncaster

Unique reference number: 106704

Headteacher: Mrs Janet Foster

Lead inspector: Mrs Barbara E Doughty

Dates of inspection: 15th – 17th March 2004

Inspection number: 256640

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school: | Infant School |
| School category: | Community |
| Age range of pupils: | 3 to 7 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| Number on roll: | 246 |
| School address: | Queen Mary Crescent Kirk Sandall Doncaster South Yorkshire |
| Postcode: | DN3 1JT |
| Telephone number: | 01302 882221 |
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| Appropriate authority: | Governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Cllr L Jeffress |
| Date of previous inspection: | 27 th April 1998 |

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a large infant school with 246 pupils on roll, including 78 children attending the Nursery class part-time. Most of the pupils come from favourable backgrounds. Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery class is above that expected for three year olds nationally. There is a below average percentage of pupils with special educational needs, mostly moderate learning difficulties. Very few, less than one per cent, have statements of specific need; these are for autism and general learning difficulties. All of the pupils are from white, English-speaking families and there are none with English as an additional language. An increase in roll was caused by a higher than usual number of pupils joining the school part-way through last year, which the school is coping with well. However, it is bringing about larger than ideal class sizes in some years. The school gained the Investors in People award in 2001 and the government's School Achievement Award for three consecutive years from 2001 to 2003. The previous head teacher left in July 2003, and the deputy head teacher became acting head teacher for a term. The current head teacher took up post in January 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|---|
| 22261 | Mrs Barbara E Doughty | Lead inspector | The Foundation Stage curriculum Science |
| 14141 | Mr Ernie Marshall | Lay inspector | |
| 18703 | Mrs Christine Canniff | Team inspector | Special educational needs English Geography History Religious education |
| 33225 | Mrs Liz Greensides | Team inspector | Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very effective** school, which gives very good value for money. Very good leadership and management give it ambition and there is a relentless pursuit of high standards. Teaching is very effective and pupils' learning is rapid so that pupils achieve highly and progress at a very good rate to reach well above average standards by the end of Year 2.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils learn in an atmosphere of high expectation; work is tailored to their needs and consequently their achievement is very good and standards are high.
- Pupils' enthusiasm for school is reflected in their very good attendance, very positive attitudes to learning, and hard work. Relationships are excellent.
- Teaching is lively and exciting and prepares pupils very well for the next stage of schooling.
- Very effective leadership and management mean that this school is focused well on improvement.
- The school does not identify those pupils who show a particular gift or talent in a subject or area of learning and cannot be sure that it meets their needs well enough.
- Pupils' awareness of different cultural traditions is not good enough.

The school has made very good progress since its last inspection. Very effective leadership and management have taken the school forward and raised standards at a faster rate than nationally. Except for the issue about pupils' cultural development, all of the key issues from the last inspection have been dealt with. Teaching is better than it was and the curriculum is more varied and vibrant. Attendance rates have increased significantly. However, whilst pupils' understanding of different religious faiths is more secure, their understanding of other cultures remains weak.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

| Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with: | all schools | | | similar schools |
|---|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2003 |
| Reading | A | A | A* | A |
| Writing | A | A* | A | A |
| Mathematics | A | A* | A* | A |

Key: A - very high; A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average*

Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals

Achievement is **very good**. Test results are very high and for the last two years, this school has been in the top five per cent of the highest scoring schools in the country; pupils do very well compared with those in similar schools. Children do very well in the Nursery and well in the Reception class to exceed the goals they are expected to reach, in all areas of learning, by the end of the Reception year. Pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 is very good and pupils reach well above average standards in reading, writing, mathematics, science, and art and design. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are above average and in religious education they are in line with what is expected for pupils of this age. The school meets the needs of nearly all of the pupils very well. However, it does not identify accurately enough those who are gifted or talented. This means that when pupils show a commitment to, or promise in, a particular subject such as writing, music, or painting their learning is not extended if relevant because their opportunities are no different from those of the most able.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are **very good**. Behaviour and attendance are very good, reflecting pupils' very positive attitudes towards school and work. Whilst pupils' cultural development is satisfactory, there is too little emphasis on exploring aspects of other cultures and this limits pupils' awareness of multicultural Britain.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **very good**. Teaching is **very effective** and pupils' learning is rapid so that their acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding is very good. Pupils work very hard because they see purpose in what they do and understand what they will gain from it. Teachers choose carefully what to teach and how to teach it in order to hold pupils' interest. They tailor the work very well to most pupils' needs and push pupils to do just that little bit more than could reasonably be expected. In the Nursery and Reception classes, teachers' very good knowledge and understanding of how young children learn through observation and exploration mean that children learn well. In all classrooms, there are excellent relationships and the well-deployed nursery nurses and support assistants help pupils of all abilities to do the work.

Exciting learning opportunities mean that pupils apply themselves well to their work because they enjoy it. The care the school takes of them is very good and because of this pupils are secure and confident learners. The school keeps parents well informed about what their children are doing and this results in them helping them well with their work at home. Links with other schools are very good, making transition from one to the other smooth and trouble free.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good**. Governance is good; the governing body carries out its statutory duties fully. Governors take an interest in what is going on and are well aware of what is and is not working. The head teacher, deputy head teacher, senior managers and subject leaders know the school very well and because of this they clearly and accurately identify what needs improving and set about bringing about improvement. High aspirations, a clear vision and a shared sense of purpose mean that everyone is pulling in the same direction; morale is high, and the school's relentless pursuit of raising standards is working.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Pupils are very pleased with this school and enjoy coming. They like learning new things and know that there is always someone to whom they can go if worried about something. Parents are generally pleased with most of the work the school does. They are critical of the recent increase in class sizes, although this does not appear to be adversely affecting pupils' performance. Other concerns of theirs, such as how well they are kept informed about how their children are doing, how the school responds to their suggestions and the organisation of homework, are unsubstantiated by inspection findings.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the identification of, and provision for, those pupils who show signs of being gifted and talented.
- Raise pupils' awareness and appreciation of different cultures.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is very good and pupils do very well to reach well above average standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science and they do well to reach above average standards in ICT. Achievement in the Nursery class and Years 1 and 2 is very good, and for children in the Reception classes it is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved at a greater rate than nationally, with an increasing number of pupils reaching the higher level each year.
- The exceptionally high standard pupils achieve in writing helps them to do well in other subjects.
- Children in the Reception classes are prepared very well for their National Curriculum work in Year 1, and those in Year 2 for their work in the junior school.
- The school is not clear about how to pick out pupils who show signs of being gifted and talented, and because of this does not provide well enough for these pupils.

Commentary

- 1 Standards have risen over time at a greater rate than the national upward trend, with an increase in the number of pupils reaching the higher level and a decrease in those failing to reach the expected level. This is because the school focuses on improvement, resulting in it being among the top five per cent of the highest scoring schools in the country for the last two years.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| Reading | 18.6 (18.1) | 15.7 (15.8) |
| Writing | 17.2 (17.3) | 14.6 (14.4) |
| Mathematics | 18.9 (19.1) | 16.3 (16.5) |

There were 60 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- 2 The very good test results shown in the table above are reflected in the standards seen now. Over half of the pupils in Years 1 and 2 are currently working at above the level expected for their age and there are very few pupils who do not reach at least the expected level. Work is very demanding and because of this standards in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics, and science are well above average by the time the pupils leave the school at the end of Year 2.
- 3 Overall, children in the Foundation Stage achieve well. They do very well in the Nursery because their learning, which is based on exploration and observation, excites them. They work hard and not a moment is lost as they move from activity to activity, all of which have purpose and are tailored well to their needs. Here, the foundations are laid for their future learning and this is one of the reasons why pupils do so well later on. Children learn well in the Reception classes and are very well prepared for their National Curriculum work in Year 1. For example, they learnt early mapping skills when they drew their route from the classroom around the school grounds to the pond, and about the passage of time when they looked at how they have changed from when they were babies.

- 4 Likewise, pupils in Years 1 and 2 are very well prepared for their work in the junior years. They are confident talkers and listeners, using subject language correctly and effectively. Their writing is of an exceptionally high standard, which helps them to attain high standards in other subjects too, such as when writing up scientific investigations using the correct terminology and reporting with precision on historical events. They use their reading skills to work out how authors make sentences interesting and link words to make them more powerful. They then use this information to influence their own writing. Pupils do exceptionally well in mathematics. They enjoy working with numbers and because teachers ask them to think carefully and explain how they have worked out a calculation, they have a good sense of pattern and logic.
- 5 Scientific skills are equally well developed. Year 2 pupils have a good idea about how to make tests fair and their recording of investigation results are clear and accurate and because of this their conclusions are usually valid and based on reliable information. Standards in ICT are above average and improving; there have been recent purchases of new equipment and this is bringing about better learning and having a positive impact on raising standards. Standards in art and design are high because pupils build up their pictures over time, putting to good use all of the skills and techniques they have been taught. For example, they use colour well to capture mood and their observational artwork is an accurate representation of what they see because they look for detail and recreate it precisely.
- 6 Whilst all pupils do very well from starting school to leaving, with over half of them reaching the higher level, the few who show signs of being gifted and talented have not been identified. For example, during the inspection some children showed more interest and commitment to some activities than others and chose to go to them whenever they had the chance. When there, they made unusually good achievement, for example, when a Nursery child repeated three musical notes perfectly, and two Reception class children recorded symbols to represent notes on a musical staff to make up a musical pattern. However, the school does not pick up on these early signs of a possible gift or talent, because it does not know what to look for. Nor does it keep a check on older pupils who show unusual immense enjoyment and particular talent in subjects such as writing or artwork. Although these pupils are seen as being able, the provision for them is no different from that for other able pupils in each class.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attitudes and behaviour are very good. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good, but their cultural awareness is under-developed. Attendance is well above the national rate.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very keen to work and improve because personal and group targets in literacy and numeracy mean that they know what they need to work on next.
- Pupils throughout the school behave very well and get on excellently with each other, but their appreciation of the different cultural traditions represented in Britain is weaker than other aspects of their personal development.

Commentary

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| Authorised absence | | Unauthorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data | 3.8 | School data | 0.0 |
| National data | 5.4 | National data | 0.4 |

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

- 7 Attendance is very good. Most pupils are keen to come to school because they feel secure and valued and find learning exciting and relevant. Pupils work hard and involve themselves well in lessons and other school activities. This is because they take pride in what they can already do and know what they need to learn next. Personal and group learning targets, stuck in the front of their books or displayed on classroom walls, give them a good grasp of what they need to work on. These targets give purpose to what pupils do in lessons and help them to understand why they need to work hard and what they can do to achieve more. Pupils of all ages rise well to this challenge, enjoy learning new things, and have very positive attitudes to work.
- 8 Behaviour is very good; there have been no exclusions in the last year. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong and have a good idea about how to behave in different situations. They rise to teachers' high expectations and show very good respect for the views of others, value justice and fair play, and get along excellently together. They develop quickly into mature and likeable youngsters, who are confident and self-assured because of the way adults show them trust and treat them with respect. Pupils learn to work with others, such as when investigating in science or working on the class computers. They know that there are different religious faiths in society from their work in religious education, but do not understand the different cultural traditions. This is because too little is done to make pupils aware, in this all-white school, of how people choose to live differently and to follow different cultural rules.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Exciting learning opportunities that are well matched to pupils' needs promote high standards. Pupils enjoy coming to school and learn very well because they see the relevance of what they are asked to do.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good overall, they are good in the Foundation Stage classes and very good in Years 1 to 2; they are most effective in the Nursery class and Year 2. The quality of assessment is very good; information is detailed and a thorough check is kept on what pupils know, understand and can do, so that teachers can tailor the work effectively to nearly all pupils' needs.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are taught within an atmosphere of high expectation.
- Teachers' very good subject knowledge means that explanations are crisp and questions are demanding; consequently, pupils know what to do.
- Lessons are well organised and planned, and activities build learning well over time.
- Teaching tailors the work very well to pupils' needs because of the very good use made of assessment information, but it could do more to identify and meet the needs of those showing signs of having a particular gift or talent in a subject.
- Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage and a very good start in the Nursery class because work is based on learning through doing.
- Praise raises pupils' self-esteem and builds pride very well.
- Subject language is promoted very well so pupils explain clearly what they know.

Commentary

- 9 This school is ambitious and aims high; the head teacher and subject leaders challenge colleagues and pupils to do better. Pupils of all ages work hard and over time make considerably better progress than could reasonably be expected because teachers, in response to these high demands, push them to achieve just that little bit more.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 27 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 1 | 12 | 10 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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

- 10 Nearly all of the lessons seen were either good or very good; consistently very good teaching was seen in the Nursery class and Year 2. Children get off to a very good start in the Nursery class, which is exciting and vibrant and a hive of activity. Similarly, in Year 2, lively teaching holds pupils' attention and makes them want to do well. Throughout the school children learn through exploration and observation, making their learning more meaningful and relevant.
- 11 Teachers in all classes organise and prepare lessons very well and their planning is meticulous so lessons run smoothly and little time is lost. At the start of each lesson, teachers tell pupils what it is they are going to learn, which gives purpose to the work and direction to the teaching. Teachers' expert knowledge and understanding of what pupils of different ages should be taught means that they match learning opportunities well to pupils' ages. Also, using what they know pupils can already do, they adapt the work well for the differently attaining pupils in the class. This means that learning is enhanced because the work is relevant and builds systematically on what pupils already know. However, those pupils who show signs of being gifted or talented in a particular subject are not picked up on and their work is no different from the more able in the class.
- 12 Demanding questions probe pupils' understanding and make them think. For example, in a Year 1 literacy lesson the teacher asked pupils, "Why does the zebra want his stripes?" This made pupils think about the hidden messages in the text they were reading before responding, "Because he wants to look handsome and cool". Similarly in a Year 2 science lesson when pupils checked their pulse rate before and after exercise, the teacher's question, "What else has happened to your body?" took pupils on further to think about how their limbs ached and they felt sweaty.
- 13 Teachers use praise very well to build pupils' confidence in their own ability. Consequently, pupils show pride in what they do and achieve by setting out their work neatly and legibly. They concentrate hard in lessons because teachers make the work interesting and relevant, such as when Year 1 pupils looked at different vegetables and talked about which parts of the different plants are usually eaten by humans. Pupils explain with good precision what they are doing and have done because teachers use subject terminology when talking to them and expect them in turn to use the same words in their responses and explanations.

The curriculum

The very good curriculum enables pupils to achieve very well. Opportunities for enrichment are good. The school is well resourced and the accommodation is very good, and these are used effectively to support pupils' learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is well planned with a very good range of interesting activities.
- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils are prepared very well for the later stages of their education.
- The curriculum is enriched through a good range of role-play activities, visits and visitors, but these do not include many that help to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures.
- The accommodation is very well organised and maintained.

Commentary

- 14 The school provides a very good range of worthwhile learning experiences, which cover all subjects. The broad range of learning opportunities, particularly in English, mathematics, science and art and design, enables all pupils to make very good progress. The very well managed literacy and numeracy strategies, and the strong emphasis on learning through investigative science, have been an important factor in raising the previously good standards to an even higher level. The skills that pupils acquire ensure that all have full opportunity to access the remainder of the curriculum. The high standards achieved in English, mathematics, science and art and design demonstrate the school's commitment to the provision of a challenging curriculum. As a result pupils are very well prepared for the demands of the next stage of their learning.
- 15 All subjects are planned well and teachers develop effective links between some subjects, particularly the very good opportunities for pupils to use their writing and art and design skills, and this results in high quality work. Being an infant school, there are few after-school clubs or interschool sporting events, but role-play activities, visitors, and visits to places of interest, such as in Year 1 pupils' study of the Victorians, do much to develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in different subjects. However, few of these are designed to promote pupils' awareness and understanding of multicultural Britain.
- 16 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and this is why these pupils make such good progress. Their difficulties are identified early in their school life, and teachers produce very detailed individual plans to support their learning and ensure they take a full part in all school activities. Work in lessons, and in sessions taught by the special needs teacher, is well matched to the targets in pupils' individual education plans. Learning support assistants are well trained to support pupils with special educational needs in lessons and give very good support to individual pupils as well as groups within the class.
- 17 The accommodation is spacious and well kept. There is plenty of space for pupils to move around and high quality displays celebrate pupils' achievements and efforts well, inspiring them to work even harder.

Care, guidance and support

There are very effective arrangements in place for ensuring pupils' care, welfare and safety. Pupils are given very good support and guidance based on teachers' monitoring of their academic and personal development. The school seeks to involve pupils well in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The guidance and support pupils get are very good.
- The systematic and well-organised approach to pupils' care and staff's attention to safety means that pupils' welfare is safeguarded and the environment is conducive to learning.
- Excellent relationships between the staff and pupils ensure pupils can confidently approach an adult in school when worried or concerned.
- Well-planned and implemented induction arrangements ensure children in the Nursery and Reception class settle quickly into school to become secure and confident learners

Commentary

- 18 The level of care provided is very good due to the school's carefully planned and implemented approach to welfare matters. The staff and governing body work very well together to ensure all statutory requirements are met. For example, annual testing of equipment takes place, fire drills are properly organised and evaluated, and first aid and medicine control procedures are good. Child protection arrangements, including Internet security, are fully implemented and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities. Pupils are well supervised throughout the day and arrangements for them leaving school at the end of the day are carefully planned.

- 19 Staff monitor pupils' work carefully and regularly to determine the extent and nature of any additional support pupils may need to ensure they can all make progress. When necessary, the school arranges for outside specialists and experts to help determine and monitor the precise nature of support some individual pupils require.
- 20 Pupils do not hesitate to approach staff when worried or concerned and in need of advice; they know who to turn to if they need help. In turn, staff seek pupils' views through talking with them and asking them how they feel, in, for example, conversation with individuals, general class discussions and circle times. This means that pupils throughout the school develop excellent and trusting relationships with staff.
- 21 Induction into the Nursery class is well planned and implemented through home visits by the nursery staff followed by a meeting in school of all prospective parents. Parents are shown around the Nursery and outdoor play areas and given comprehensive induction packs detailing the activities provided and how parents will be able to help at home. As children approach the time to move into the Reception class, they pay regular visits to school to become familiar with their new surroundings and classmates. Nursery staff help in the Reception class for the first few days to give children extra reassurance. This extension of care ensures children quickly form trusting relationships with the adults and settle in happily.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good links with parents and the local community. Links with other schools and colleges are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very effective links with other local schools and colleges contribute positively to pupils' learning.
- Links with the community are good and the school draws upon them to provide extra interest and stimulus for learning.
- Links with parents are good and the school is planning further ways to provide more opportunities for parents to play more part in their children's education.
- Effective transfer arrangements ensure good continuity for Year 2 pupils moving up to the junior school.

Commentary

- 22 The school has close liaison with the junior school and staff have met together for training sessions. Membership of the local schools group provides opportunities for further shared training and close co-operation between the head teachers and senior staff. Examples of innovation and good practice are discussed and shared, to the benefit of all schools. Links with the local secondary school provide additional support in the classroom when students take up annual offers of placements for work experience, and links with the local colleges provide reciprocal opportunities for training nursery nurses and classroom assistants. The school also secures training opportunities through its contact with the local learning and skills council and provides placements for student teachers. The broader knowledge and experience gained by the staff, coupled with the greater number of adults in the classrooms, directly contribute to pupils' learning and they make better progress because of this.
- 23 The close link with the junior school ensures the smooth transfer of the Year 2 pupils. Commencing early in the year, groups of Year 2 pupils have lunchtime with Year 6 pupils in the junior school and different small groups of Year 6 pupils come back to the infants to share lunch-breaks. Both schools share music and concert activities. Year 2 leavers enjoy a half-day session in the junior school to meet the staff and join in lessons. This regular contact ensures the leavers are very familiar with the junior school and are well prepared for Year 3.

- 24 The school enjoys good links with the community. Local businesses help at, and also sponsor, the pupils' annual fund-raising activities. The school supports the local hospital and ex-servicemen's charities, teaching pupils that there are those less fortunate than themselves. Local police and fire service personnel visit the school and talk to pupils about personal and home safety. Theatre groups perform in school and the school makes good use of the local environment for activities to illustrate and broaden classroom learning.
- 25 The school has good links with parents and carers. It regularly consults parents and acts upon the requests and suggestions offered; issues relating to homework, behaviour and parent liaison have been recent matters for consultation. Staff are seen by parents as being friendly, and responding sympathetically to complaints or concerns. Parents are informed about what is to be taught each half term and are given information on how to help at home and school. Many have responded by providing support in the classroom and giving practical demonstrations of art and cookery.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are very good; leadership by the head teacher is very good, management is very good and governance is good. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new head teacher has recognised the strengths of the school, and she and the staff are building on these extremely well.
- Leadership at all levels has identified relevant areas for further improvement and there are very good plans for future development.
- There is an established culture of leadership throughout school shared by all, which means that everyone is pulling in the same direction.
- Governors have a good grasp of what is going on so that they can make informed and effective decisions.

Commentary

- 26 Since the last inspection continual evaluation and review of how well the school is doing and what needs improving means that the school is very effective in raising attainment and pursuing high standards. The new head teacher has high expectations and is dedicated to ensuring that the current high standards are raised further and the achievement in the school continues to improve. This is because her audit of the school, carried out early in her appointment, recognised its strengths, and how to build on these, as well as identified areas where the school can improve still further. This means that the school improvement plan provides very good direction because it is precise about what is being worked on and how the intended improvements will be achieved.
- 27 The head teacher gets very good support from the very able deputy head teacher, senior managers and subject leaders, because she involves them in all aspects of leadership and management. They share a clear vision about what needs doing and this gives them and the rest of the staff a sense of purpose and direction. Consequently, morale is high because everyone knows what is going on and is pulling in the same direction.
- 28 Teaching and learning are rigorously monitored through a variety of methods and there is very good use of the monitoring information by key staff to further drive forward the already high standards in teaching. For example, staff performance management procedures have effectively brought about improvements to teaching since the last inspection of the school, and support staff are now being offered the same opportunities for performance review and in-service training as teaching staff in order to improve quality further. There are very good pupil tracking systems in place throughout the school, and the way that this information is used by

teams and individual teachers is very effective. For example, they identify where the most and least progress is made by pupils, analyse why, and put in effective measures to remedy the weaknesses. In addition, subject leaders use what they know about what is happening in their subjects well to produce action plans that outline what needs improving. They then regularly and rigorously evaluate the progress they are making towards meeting their improvement targets so that they are clear when something has been achieved and they can move on to the next stage of improvement.

- 29 Governance of the school is good and the governing body effectively fulfils its statutory duties. The governors know the school well, and are well aware of the priorities for development. They regularly attend training to ensure that they keep up to date with procedures. They support the head teacher well and discussions at governors' meetings ensure that there is both support and challenge of reports and suggested innovations. Governors have a good grasp of the school's performance through good communication and keeping an eye on what is going on. Their involvement in school improvement planning, which continues to drive the school forward, ensures that they keep abreast of developments and make informed decisions about, for example, how to spend the school funds. They ensure that their approach to financial management helps the school to achieve its educational priorities and have clear plans, linked to the overall school development, for the use of surplus funds.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

| Income and expenditure (£) | |
|----------------------------|--------|
| Total income | 452570 |
| Total expenditure | 464558 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2490 |

| Balances (£) | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Balance from previous year | 36909 |
| Balance carried forward to the next | 24921 |

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Improved since the last inspection, the provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good overall. It is very good in the Nursery class and good in the two Reception classes. This difference is due to the pace of learning sometimes slowing in the Reception classes, which in turn slows children's learning unnecessarily. Very successful in both years, however, is the fact that children's work is based effectively on learning through observation and exploration and this makes it meaningful and enjoyable. All three classrooms are usually busy, with children working productively and striving to consolidate existing skills or acquire new ones. Homework is just as enjoyable as the work in school, with guidance for parents about how to make everyday experiences such as bath-time educational as well as fun. In all classrooms, teachers and nursery nurses work together very well, all with clearly defined roles, impacting very effectively on children's learning.

In all classes, teachers make good use of what they know children can already do to tailor the work to meet children's differing needs. However, some children regularly choose activities that they particularly enjoy and show a particular talent for, such as writing, music and painting, but adults do not pick up on this as well as they might to provide additional or different learning opportunities for these children if relevant.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use of praise makes children proud of their achievements and motivates them to do more.
- Children sustain very good concentration because the work is relevant and enjoyable.
- Children enjoy excellent relationships with each other and the adults and because of this are confident and secure learners.
- Discussion times give children the opportunity for reflecting on how they feel and should behave.

Commentary

- 30 Children achieve very well to exceed the early learning goals they are expected to reach by the end of the Reception class because of very good teaching. Children are excited by what teachers ask them to do and, because they enjoy the activities, they work and try hard. Constant praise from the adults makes children feel special and by asking children to work together, such as on the computers or when building bridges for the Three Billy Goats Gruff to get over the river, teachers and nursery nurses promote sharing and co-operation well.
- 31 Excellent relationships mean that children get on well together and are very secure learners. Through discussions about how they help each other such as by 'Sharing my toys' and 'Helping my friend to put their coat on' children learn to enjoy the pleasures of living harmoniously with others. They learn what special personal talents they have and how they can use them to help others in their group. They talk about what makes them happy and sad and listen attentively to each other's comments, showing courtesy and respect for the views of their classmates. In all classrooms, children maintain very good concentration and persevere at the activities very well, for example when Nursery class children planted seeds in the garden tubs and when Reception children found things around the room that were magnetic.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children with special educational needs are supported very effectively.
- Children enjoy reading and writing and speak confidently in well-structured sentences, explaining with precision what they are doing.
- Writing for a range of purposes gives children a sense of how to communicate through writing.
- Sometimes the pace of teaching in the Reception classes slows and this means that children's rate of learning is not as rapid as it could be.

Commentary

- 32 Good teaching means that nearly all of the children do well in this area of learning to exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the Reception class. Most of the Reception class children can already write in sentences, form letters correctly and make good attempts to spell unknown words, such as 'tunl' for 'tunnel' and 'uglee' for 'ugly'. They read accurately and with developing fluency and know some words on sight, such as 'can', 'the' and 'saw'. Their speaking skills are good; they talk excitedly about and give a clear picture of what they have done and are doing.
- 33 Nursery class children are taught from an early age to recognise letters and Reception class children are taught how to use their good awareness of letter sounds to read and spell unknown words and how to make their writing well proportioned, clear and neat. By asking children to write for different purposes, such as letters, labels and lists, teachers successfully show children that writing, like speaking, is an effective way to communicate with others.
- 34 Children with special educational needs do exceptionally well because activities directly address their learning needs. The learning of these children is very good because the special educational need support teacher explains to them what to do and how to do it. For example, two children working with her outside the classroom on letter formation had such good guidance that they quickly learnt the sequence of strokes to form different letters and then went on to name them, a weakness highlighted in their previous learning. Similarly for other children, teachers and nursery nurses make very good use of what they know children can already do to adapt the work to suit the most and least able so that all children make equally good progress. Attractive book areas stimulate in children a desire to read, and reading books together with the teacher adds to their enjoyment because the teachers' infectious enthusiasm adds to the excitement. However, in the Reception classes, sometimes discussions at the start of lessons go on too long and the pace of the lesson is slowed because of this.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A wide range of learning opportunities develops children's understanding of all aspects of mathematics well.
- Mental mathematics sessions in the Reception classes give challenge to which all children rise well, and very effective support for children with special educational needs makes sure that these children are able to join in.
- Some slowing of lesson pace in the Reception classes, and pedestrian teaching, slow learning.

Commentary

35 Effective teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes means that most children exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the Reception class. The work is different for different attaining children and this means that children work at a relevant pace and make good progress. Many opportunities for children to learn about mathematics through play mean that children in both years do well in this area of learning. For example, children in the Nursery class learn how to recognise numbers when they dial 999 on the telephone in the class fire station and children in the Reception class practise writing numbers when they record how many blocks were in the towers they had built. Learning in class and small group teaching is good and, consequently, many of the Reception class children can already add and take away up to 20 and the most able count in twos up to 40. The good focus, not just on number work but on other mathematical learning, means that other aspects of mathematics are taught equally as well. Children's understanding of positional language, for example, is good and their recognition of different shapes is secure. There are times, however, when the pace of teaching in the Reception classes is not as quick as it could be and children's learning is slowed unnecessarily.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes have very good computer skills.
- Learning through observation and exploration encourages children to ask 'why' and 'how'.
- A very good range of learning opportunities means that children are very well prepared for their National Curriculum work in Year 1, particularly in science, design and technology, and history.

Commentary

- 36 This area of learning is taught very well and because of this many children do very well to exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the Reception class. Children are particularly adept at using the computers. Their learning is enhanced considerably by the large interactive computer wall screens, which they and the teachers make very good use of. Teachers' demonstrations can be seen by all children, and children's access to them and the classroom computers throughout the day means that children can practise the skills they have been taught. The range of computer programs they use is very good, and this means that children make very good use of the computers to, for example, draw, make music, practise add and take away sums, and write. They work quickly and confidently and produce work of exceptional quality.
- 37 Other learning opportunities are equally as good. For example, Reception class children learn early map-making skills when they draw bird's-eye views of their journeys around school and they learn about the passage of time when they talk about how they have changed over time. Their designing skills are developing well. For example, they design houses on computer and design and make musical instruments. Teachers give learning purpose when they ask children to do something for a purpose, such as 'make a stretcher to carry a play person'. Play in the water tray develops children's concept of floating and sinking and their observations of plants growing develop their understanding of 'new life'.
- 38 In both classes, children are given many opportunities to observe and explore things, and are encouraged to ask why and how, such as when they played with winding toys in the Nursery class and made music in the Reception class music playhouse. During the inspection there was one particularly special moment when a group of four Nursery children were watering plants in the Nursery garden. One of them noticed the new water feature in the corner and slowly he moved over to look at it. One by one, the nursery nurse let his classmates follow him. Fascinated by how the water seemingly came from nowhere, trickle round the stones in the top

of the pot and then cascade over the side to gather in the bottom, they put their fingers into the stream of water and, encouraged then by the nursery nurse, pondered about how it worked and chatted about how it felt.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children move confidently and with good control and co-ordination; they use paintbrushes and pencils masterfully.
- During free choice times, teaching does not encourage children to sometimes choose activities that will enable them to acquire skills they do not already have in order to make best use of this time.

Commentary

39 Learning is good because teaching is effective; most children exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the Reception class. Hall times are used well in both the Nursery and Reception classes. Children learn to throw and catch balls, for example, and their control is developing well. This is because teachers' instructions to children about keeping their eye on the ball and holding out their hands ready to catch it are very helpful and children listen to and take notice of their guidance. Teaching builds children's physical skills skilfully over time and, consequently, Reception class children are already working at a level not expected until the end of the year. They balance along beams, manoeuvre wheeled toys around the outdoor learning area, and balance things on their head. Their pencil control is equally as good, which helps them considerably with their drawing and writing. There are times, however, when children can choose the activities they want to do. Whilst this develops their independent learning skills well, and children often show signs of being particularly gifted or talented at a particular activity by constantly choosing that activity - which needs noting and building on by the teaching - children are not encouraged to sometimes work on skills they need to acquire next.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good role-play opportunities in the Nursery and Reception classes enable children to use their imagination very well.
- Children are taught to look carefully and to notice detail; their observational drawings are very good.
- Children confidently mix colours, and draw and paint accurately what they see.
- Music making skills are exceptional.
- Those who show a commitment and talent for music and art in particular are not always picked up on and their interest heightened further.

Commentary

40 Achievement in this area of learning is very good. Observational artwork is of an exceptional quality in both years. This is because effective teaching encourages children to look carefully at and draw precisely the shapes and colours they see. Colour mixing shows precision and children work hard at getting the shade just right. For example, when Reception class children painted snails, the spiral shape of the shell and different shades of brown added depth to their

pictures. Their music making skills are just as good. Children understand that music is made up of patterns; they record their tunes on paper so that they can remember them and others can play them too. Their imagination is stimulated further through very good role-play opportunities and creative dance sessions. For example, two children playing in the Nursery fire station marched behind one another around the classroom with their torches shining first on the floor and then on the ceiling as they searched the building, whilst another climbed a step ladder to 'hose' water onto the flames.

- 41 However, several times during the inspection children in both the Nursery and Reception classes showed a commitment to and talent for music and art, constantly choosing activities involving these two subjects and achieving extremely well in them. However, this often went unnoticed by staff and when it was noticed it was not picked up as being an indication of these children possibly being gifted or talented. Hence, they received no extra support or attention and their skills were not developed any differently from their able classmates.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The high expectations of all pupils and very good teaching lead to very good achievement and high standards.
- The school provides well for pupils of differing abilities, but does not identify those who show a particular talent for writing to see if they need further encouragement or different work.
- The very good leadership and management have brought about very good improvement since the last inspection.
- Pupils use their writing skills well to support work in other subjects.

Commentary

- 42 Pupils reach standards that are well above average in reading and writing because teaching and, in particular, the monitoring of pupils' progress to tailor the work to meet their needs are very good. Teachers have very good knowledge and are confident teaching the subject. Lesson planning is very good so that pupils practise and use their skills. Teaching makes very effective use of a wide range of well-chosen, interesting texts to arouse pupils' interest in books and to develop their understanding of how language is structured. This, and pupils' eagerness to learn, results in very good achievement and by the time they leave the school, most pupils are confident writers. They talk clearly, using well-chosen vocabulary, and show a good grasp of grammar and punctuation. More able pupils write at length drawing on a wide vocabulary and range of expression, which helps to hold the reader's attention. However, there are some pupils who particularly enjoy reading and writing and will do so at every opportunity. These pupils are not kept an eye on to check that they are given every opportunity to develop their particular talents through additional activities or work.
- 43 Lessons proceed at a very good pace and teachers consistently and sensitively challenge pupils through their very effective use of questions. They probe pupils' ideas and encourage them to use their imagination and apply their wide vocabulary to bring their writing to life. They use sentences such as "The creature had teeth sharper than knives". Most pupils read very well for their age. They read fluently and accurately and with good understanding because teachers ensure that they know how to read unfamiliar words; questions encourage pupils to consider and explain the actions and feelings of characters. When discussing their work pupils speak clearly and accurately, adapting their language well to the requirements of the subject and situation.

- 44 The school's methods to assess the quality of pupils' work and the progress that they make are very thorough. The regular checks on how well they are doing and the successful tracking system give teachers a clear idea of individual pupils' strengths and enable them to identify any slippage in progress at an early stage. In addition to the support systems put in place to rectify any weakness, teachers accurately target pupils' individual learning needs with challenging work. This enables pupils of differing abilities to progress well in lessons. Classroom support assistants ably support pupils with special educational needs by checking that they understand the tasks and giving effective guidance as needed. Teachers clearly explain what will be learned at the beginning of lessons, and revisit and reinforce it at the end, so that pupils know how well they are doing.
- 45 The leadership and management of the subject are very good. Leadership inspires colleagues to do well and very good teamwork means that everyone is pulling in the same direction. This is because standards of teaching and learning are monitored and evaluated well, and because of this teachers are clear about what they do well and not so well. As well as remedying the weaknesses, the sharing of expertise by staff has strengthened the quality of teaching since the last inspection. The rigorous analysis of national test results and monitoring of pupils' work inform targets for raising standards. This evaluation is an important reason for the much higher standards found in this inspection compared with last time.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

- 46 Pupils use language, especially writing, consistently well across the curriculum, because teachers enable them to write at length, for example to narrate historical events, retell stories in religious education or describe investigations. In many lessons, pupils use word processing to record their writing. Teaching provides pupils with many opportunities to extend their spoken language through answering questions, and asks them to clarify their ideas and put forward an opinion. These opportunities reflect the school's well-organised planning for English and the effectiveness of subject leadership in co-ordinating teachers' pursuit of high standards.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching leads to very high standards, which are well above nationally expected levels. Pupils' problem-solving skills are particularly well developed.
- Teachers and subject leaders make very good use of what they know pupils can already do to tailor the work to their needs, but they do not look out for those pupils who show a particular talent for mathematics to consider whether they may be gifted or talented in the subject.
- Leadership and management of mathematics are very good.

Commentary

- 47 Standards in Year 2 are well above average and pupils achieve very well. Standards have improved very well since the time of the last inspection, when they were in line with expectations for children at the age of seven. A strength in standards is the very good number skills that pupils have; they have learned a wide variety of strategies to solve number problems, and in both Year 1 and Year 2 are encouraged not only to use these strategies, but to choose the most appropriate one for each problem. Throughout the school, most pupils are quick and confident about carrying out mental calculations and can clearly explain how they arrived at their answers. For example, a Year 2 child was able to mentally add three numbers that had a total of more than 100 and could explain how he had used 'partitioning' to do this. Precise mathematical vocabulary such as this is a feature of all mathematics lessons. However, although many pupils reach high standards in the subject and some show a particular interest

and enthusiasm for, in particular, the logic and pattern in number, teaching does not look out for those who may be gifted or talented in the subject in order to provide especially for them.

- 48 The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers are very secure and confident in their knowledge of mathematics, which enables them to teach clearly and accurately, and their questioning of pupils to extend learning is very good. Pupils know what is expected of them during lessons because teachers have shared the focus with them, and activities and tasks within lessons are designed to ensure good understanding and development of skills within this focus. As a result, different strategies such as mathematical games and puzzles and a wide variety of interesting resources are used. Pupils work hard, show enthusiasm, and have a good sense of purpose throughout the lessons.
- 49 Work is very carefully planned for the range of abilities within the classes. Teachers use their very good assessment of pupils' abilities to ensure that the work is tailored to their needs and all achieve as well as they can. Assessment procedures are clear and effective within lessons, at the end of lessons, and every few weeks within units of work. They are refined very well to be able to identify even the smallest steps in progress made for all groups of pupils, but especially by lower attaining pupils or those having problems with specific areas of mathematics. Targets are set for groups of pupils, and they are keen to achieve these.
- 50 Mathematics is very well led and managed. There is very good knowledge about strengths of teaching, through a good system of monitoring and observation and rigorous identification of areas for further improvement, such as the provision for those pupils who are unlikely to reach their identified targets, and the use of this information to organise support for these pupils within lessons and throughout the week.

Mathematics across the curriculum

- 51 Mathematics is used very well to support learning in other subjects. Pupils' very good mathematical skills enable them to make good progress in other areas of the curriculum, such as science, when they are able to record their results using tables, graphs and charts. They can interpret and analyse simple charts from books using these skills and this supports their learning well.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well to reach well above average standards by the end of Year 2.
- Teaching is very effective and pupils learn in an atmosphere of high expectation.
- Pupils enjoy learning because they are excited by the investigations. However, although pupils draw valid conclusions from reliable evidence the few who show particular interest in and talent for science are not encouraged to go just that little bit further.
- Very good literacy and numeracy skills support learning in science well, but limited access to computers in Years 1 and 2 means that not all pupils use them to record the information they collect and to organise the results of their investigations.

Commentary

- 52 Very good improvements to the teaching and learning of science since the last inspection have brought about higher standards. Pupils do very well in science mostly because of the school's emphasis on learning through investigation, which makes the work interesting and exciting and because of this pupils' learning is long lasting and their knowledge and understanding secure. Pupils enjoy their work in science and enthusiastically offer ideas and suggestions, for example

about how to make sure that their Year 2 class investigation about which is the most effective way to keep food fresh was fair.

- 53 Usually about half of the pupils in Year 2 reach the higher level because very good teaching pushes them to do just that little bit more than they could reasonably be expected to do. This is because teachers aim high and use work from the next year up to tailor learning well to pupils' needs. In addition, the very good range of learning opportunities covers all aspects of science so that there are no gaps in pupils' learning. Because they do work from each aspect each year, pupils' recollection of what they learnt the previous year, for example in electricity, is good and teaching builds quickly on this next time because little time is lost on revision.
- 54 Teachers' explanations are clear and because of this pupils know what they are doing and why. Teachers use subject language well so that pupils, in turn, explain their work clearly. Questions teachers ask pupils such as, "Can people with bigger feet jump further?" prompt pupils to plan and carry out investigations. In this particular case they used information they already had from their mathematics work on measurement, and recorded their results so that they could draw the valid conclusion, "If you have big feet, it doesn't mean that you can jump the furthest". However, teaching does not push those pupils who show a particular talent for science to go even further by asking them, for example, "If it isn't the size of feet that make a difference, then what is it?"
- 55 Very good skills learnt in literacy mean that pupils' recording of their investigations is very well presented and it makes sense to them. Diagrams are well labelled and explanations of experiments are clear and precise. However, limited use is made of the computers because the pupils cannot access them quickly enough and by the time they can, it is too late and they have moved on to new learning.
- 56 The subject is led and managed very well. There is a very clear grasp of how well pupils learn and the standards they reach, because these are checked in lessons and pupils' work is looked at. There is clarity about what is going on and a clear plan of action to bring about further improvement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of ICT is good and because of this pupils do well to reach above average standards because.
- The subject is led and managed well.
- Pupils have insufficient opportunities to practise and use their ICT skills in other subjects and different situations.

Commentary

- 57 There has been good improvement in provision for ICT since the last inspection. By the end of Year 2 pupils do well to reach standards that are above expectations; they have particularly good skills in word processing and graphics. They are developing good skills in using the mouse to click on objects and drag them across the screen, and by Year 2 they can enhance text by changing the style, colour and size of the print, and can explain how this is done using appropriate ICT vocabulary, such as 'menus' and 'icons'. By deleting, moving and inserting text, they skilfully edit their work and then save it to work on later. Good understanding of the Internet and how it works means that pupils use it effectively to support learning in other subjects. From an early age pupils learn how to program the floor robot to make it move in different directions to get to a given point in the room.

- 58 Teaching of ICT is good, and there is a very structured approach to the teaching of key skills. Pupils' achievement as yet is not as high as it could be due to limitations in opportunity in the past, but it is improving since the introduction and development of new resources, which are used well by all teaching staff. The interactive whiteboards allow some pupils to develop their skills on a regular basis, but this is not yet extended throughout school. As a result, pupils in some classes do not get sufficient opportunity to practise their skills and not all have the same opportunities to use them in different situations and to support work in other subjects. Younger pupils using the whiteboards are developing enthusiasm and skill in programs which are interesting and exciting and which develop skills and knowledge in other areas of the curriculum.
- 59 There is a wide knowledge of ICT, and its use within school and leadership provides very good support for teaching. Lessons are observed throughout the school, and examples of good practice in the use of ICT in other subjects identified and discussed so that other staff can use them. Resources have been improved throughout school, and each class now has at least three computers, with sufficient and appropriate software to allow the full range of ICT to be taught. Each classroom has an Internet connection, and the school has recently purchased three interactive whiteboards, which are used by staff and pupils with enthusiasm and increasing confidence. However, leadership has identified weaknesses in resourcing, which limits opportunities for pupils to practise and use sufficiently the ICT skills they have been taught, and is developing good plans to eliminate these gaps in provision.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

- 60 ICT is used satisfactorily to support learning in other areas of curriculum, and teachers plan opportunities for its use in many ways. However, limitations in resources mean that only a few pupils have time to use computers in this way in each lesson, and these opportunities are insufficient to develop their skills further. For example, good opportunities to use ICT to develop pupils' understanding of the artist Lowry were identified in planning, but only a handful of pupils in each class had the chance to use the computers in this way.

HUMANITIES

One complete lesson was observed in geography and none in history, but inspectors looked at samples of work and school documentation. Evidence from this shows that pupils are achieving satisfactorily and reach the expected standards for their age. Pupils develop their writing skills well in both subjects. Too few lessons were seen for secure judgements on the quality of teaching to be made.

Pupils' work in **geography** shows appropriate coverage of the curriculum. Through the travels of 'Barnaby Bear', pupils are introduced to countries in different parts of the world. Planning for the development of pupils' mapping skills is good. Effective use is made of the local area to identify man-made and natural features and create simple maps. In the Year 1 lesson pupils discussed what they had seen on their walk, explaining clearly why they considered some features more useful than others and what improvements they might make. In Year 2 pupils pose their own questions to find out about life on the island of Struay. Their comparisons of life on the island with life in Doncaster show careful observation.

Pupils' work in **history** indicates satisfactory coverage. It shows that teachers plan effectively so that pupils in Years 1 and 2 gain suitable factual knowledge, understanding and practice in the skills relating to the subject. The school enhances the Year 1 pupils' learning in history well with an interesting and enjoyable visit to Cannon Hall. Photographs show how pupils dressed up in Victorian costumes to re-enact life in the past. The quality of pupils' writing about this event demonstrates how valuable it is in using and promoting pupils' writing skills. In Year 2, pupils write detailed accounts of the lives of famous people in history, including those associated with the arts, such as Beethoven and Van Gogh. They also make very effective use of their good art skills to illustrate their work, as in their drawings of castles.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have a secure understanding of different world faiths, but their knowledge of other cultures is weak.
- Leadership of religious education is good and has brought about good improvement since the last inspection.
- Pupils make very good use of their writing skills to support their work in religious education.

Commentary

- 61 Although standards are similar to what they were at the time of the last inspection, the new locally agreed syllabus for religious education makes different demands from the previous one and has different expectations about what pupils should know and understand by the end of each year. Therefore, although some good improvements have been brought about, particularly to pupils' knowledge of other faiths, there is some catching up to do and standards remain in line with the expectations of the agreed syllabus and pupils achieve satisfactorily.
- 62 By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good understanding of Christianity and Judaism, the celebrations of these faiths, and what they are about. They understand the reasons why Jesus told parables to give messages and how these messages are about everyday life and can be considered when deciding how they should behave. Their writing about their favourite parables, such as 'The Good Samaritan' and 'The Prodigal Son', includes comments about how they could help others, for example, "We could help someone up in the playground when they have fallen down." However, they do not have sufficient opportunities to visit places of worship or talk to visitors of different faiths and beliefs in order to bring the subject alive. This also means that their knowledge of how people from different cultures choose to live and the values they live by are too vague.
- 63 The quality of teaching is sound. Lessons build on pupils' earlier learning and work is relevant to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding further. Teachers stimulate pupils' interest, for example in a Year 1 discussion about the miracles performed by Jesus when pupils' role-play showed that they understood how they could help each other, and when they concluded in a class discussion why Jesus was special. Pupils enjoy the lessons and willingly answer and pose questions of their own. Pupils use their very good literacy skills to support their work in religious education. For example, Years 2 pupils' writing about the Jewish festival of Sukkoth showed good understanding when pupils gave accurate reasons for the celebration. They communicate their ideas well, when, for example, Year 2 pupils wrote at length stories from the Old and New Testaments.
- 64 The subject is well led and managed. Action has been taken to address the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. The subject guidelines for religious education have been rewritten, which now clearly sets out how pupils will be able to achieve the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus each term. Consequently, the subject is poised for further improvement.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

No lessons were observed in either **art and design** or **design and technology** and so these subjects were sampled and no overall judgement is made about the quality provision. The school invests a good proportion of time to the provision of art and design, and this has had a considerable impact on the results of pupils' work as they have had the time to produce work of high quality. For example, in a Year 1 lesson sampled, pupils showed good use of line and form in their underwater pictures. Their pencil sketches of objects used in Victorian times show good use of shading to create depth. Paintings done in the style of Lowry in Year 2 are of an exceptionally high

standard and some pupils also used the computer very well to recreate his style. Artwork is displayed well throughout school so that all classrooms and shared areas look bright and colourful and enhance the environment for all. However, although some pupils show signs of being particularly gifted at art in particular, the school does not keep a check on them to make sure that they have every possible opportunity to develop their talent further.

Very little work was seen in design and technology, but pupils' work around school and in the subject portfolios is of an extremely high standard and it is evident that pupils have developed a very good range of skills in designing and making and in using a very wide variety of media. In both art and design and design and technology, pupils are used to sketching and then evaluating their ideas.

No lessons were observed in **music**, and there is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about standards, achievement, teaching and learning. A commercial subject guide is used effectively to enable non-specialists to teach more confidently and lessons are supported by the use of compact discs and other good resources. All pupils in Year 2 have the opportunity to learn the recorder, and these lessons are effectively used to further develop musical understanding. Singing heard in sampled lessons was enthusiastic and energetic, and pupils are developing a good understanding of pitch and dynamics.

No overall judgement is made about the quality of provision for **physical education**. Sampling of some lessons and, in particular, dance lessons showed that pupils work well and with enthusiasm, and are used to practising sequences of movements, watching each other work, and appraising the performances of their classmates. They work with good control, and have some very good and imaginative ideas and there are high expectations of the results by teachers.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

No specific lessons were seen but this subject is embedded in all aspects of the school's work and what was seen was very good. Pupils are taught, for example, from an early age to take on responsibilities and participate in school activities. Through talking about their own feelings, they learn to handle them in a positive way. Pupils of all ages learn why they need to follow rules in order to live harmoniously with others and because adults show them respect and courtesy, they know that other people care for them. From their work in science, they know about a healthy lifestyle and that food and exercise play an important part in them growing up healthy and strong. Pupils' very good behaviour reflects their understanding about right and wrong and the absence of bullying shows how they care for and about each other.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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