

INSPECTION REPORT

NORTHOWRAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

Northowram, Halifax

LEA area: Calderdale

Unique reference number: 107486

Headteacher: Mrs K Brierley

Lead inspector: Dr J N Thorp

Dates of inspection: 7th – 10th June 2004

Inspection number: 257056

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	418
School address:	Baxter Lane Northowram Halifax West Yorkshire
Postcode:	HX3 7EF
Telephone number:	01422 202704
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Earle
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school serves the village of Northowram, about three miles from the centre of Halifax. It is located on a large and attractive site, with an already fairly large school building. Numbers on roll are rising and there is some major building work underway to provide additional classrooms. Most children come from the village or the immediate surrounding area, although a small number are brought to the school from some distance away. There are currently 418 pupils on roll, the majority of whom are white. The school is much larger in size than others of this type, with its pupils organised into 13 classes. The area around the school is relatively advantaged in socio-economic terms, with around 8 per cent of children entitled to a free school meal, which is well below average. Attainment on entry is generally above average. There are 31 pupils (8 per cent) on the school's register of special educational needs, which is below average compared with schools nationally. Most of these pupils have learning difficulties. Seven pupils have statements of special educational need, which is above average.

The school was awarded *Investor in People* status in 1999. It won a Department for Education and Skills (DfES) achievement award in 2000 and 2001, and achieved *Healthy School* status in 2003. The school achieved the *Basic Skills Quality Mark* in 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
6327	J N Thorp	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage; art; music
32661	P Hopkins	Lay inspector	
4676	M Griffiths	Team inspector	Mathematics; physical education; religious education; citizenship
16971	R W Hardaker	Team inspector	English; information and communication technology;
17681	R Sharples	Team inspector	Science; design and technology; geography; history

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school. The excellent leadership of the headteacher and very good management are ensuring that the school continues to develop and improve. There is very effective teamwork among a strong team of teaching and other staff who are fully committed to further improvement. Teaching is good overall, with some lessons of very high quality. This ensures that learning is good and that pupils achieve standards which are generally above average by the time they leave the school. **The school provides very good value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher's excellent leadership is ensuring that the school continues to improve
- Standards among pupils in Year 6 are above average in English and information and communication technology (ICT) and well above average in science
- There is insufficient challenge provided for higher attaining pupils in mathematics
- Teaching is consistently good; some lessons are of very high quality
- Pupils' very good behaviour and their positive attitudes to learning contribute effectively to the progress they make
- Provision for pupils' care and welfare is excellent
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs

There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. Substantial further training has improved teachers' skills and confidence in ICT, and the required curriculum is now fully in place, both of which have contributed to improving standards. A skilled ICT assistant also supports teaching and learning very effectively. The new agreed syllabus for religious education has also been introduced and guidelines produced which support teachers' planning effectively. These have both contributed positively to improving standards. Teaching is now even better overall, because the small amount of unsatisfactory teaching seen in the previous inspection has been eradicated.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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 good overall. Children's personal, social and emotional development and communication and language skills are generally better than average when they start school. In other areas of learning their prior attainment is broadly average. They achieve well, with most reaching the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception.

Achievement is good in science and ICT in Years 1 and 2, with pupils reaching above average standards by the end of Year 2. Standards are currently in line with those expected in reading, writing and mathematics at this stage however, which represents satisfactory achievement. Pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6 in English, mathematics, science and ICT and in these subjects standards are above average by the end of Year 6.

Results of recent statutory assessment indicate that standards appear to have fallen, but this is explained by the higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs in these year groups. Standards among those pupils currently in Year 6 are higher.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good throughout the school. Relationships and behaviour are very good. Attendance is very good and pupils are generally punctual to school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching is good overall and consistent across the school, with some lessons of high quality. Teachers are very successful in ensuring there are high standards of behaviour; they have very good relationships with their pupils and this helps them promote positive and mature attitudes to learning. At times, however, insufficient challenge is provided for higher attaining pupils, particularly in mathematics. The curriculum is very good and very good opportunities are taken to enrich it. Opportunities for pupils to be involved in some very good extra-curricular activities at times enable them to produce work of high quality. Excellent provision for care and welfare ensures that pupils' varied personal needs are identified and met. Pupils receive very good support and guidance, which contributes positively to the progress they make. Pupils are fully involved in the school; they are keen to take on appropriate responsibilities and the school council makes a significant contribution to school life. The school has very good links with parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall **leadership and management are very good.** The headteacher provides excellent leadership. She communicates a strong sense of purpose and high expectations, which is ensuring there is a firm commitment to inclusion and that the school continues to develop and improve. Management is very good, with the headteacher very well supported by a skilful and highly effective team. Major changes in staffing since the previous inspection have been very well managed. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities well and makes a good contribution to the management of the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The majority of parents have a very positive view of the school. They are pleased with the progress their children make, and that there is a good balance between academic learning and the development of social skills. A very small minority of parents thought there was a problem with bullying, although no evidence was found to support this view during the inspection. Most parents value the approachability of teachers and believe that the school is well run.

Pupils have very positive views about school. The vast majority think other pupils behave well, they enjoy coming to school, like their teachers and want to learn. Pupils take their work on the school council very seriously.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that higher attaining pupils are sufficiently challenged, especially in mathematics

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' achievement is good overall. Standards are higher than those found in most schools. Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage, with most children on course to attain the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 but good overall by the time they reach Year 6. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in the nursery and reception classes;
- Results of national tests indicate that standards have been consistently above average in mathematics and science since 2000;
- Inspection evidence indicates that standards in speaking and listening, and in reading are well above average by the time pupils leave the school;
- By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standards in science are well above average;
- A lack of challenge in learning activities in mathematics means that higher attaining pupils do not achieve the standards of which they are capable;
- There have been good improvements in standards in ICT since the last inspection;
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and this enables them to make good progress and to achieve well;
- Gifted and talented pupils achieve very high standards in gymnastics and football.

Commentary

1. Children enter the school with wide ranging levels of attainment, but generally they are above average, particularly in personal development and their ability to communicate and use language. This is similar to the situation reported in the previous inspection. Children settle into the nursery quickly and smoothly, make a good start to their learning and achieve well. By the time they enter Year 1, the majority have achieved the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception in each of the six areas of learning; a significant proportion exceed them. The very good provision made for these children contributes most positively to this good start.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.2 (16.7)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	14.9 (16.4)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	16.8 (17.9)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 52 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. This table shows that the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2003 were above average in reading but in line with those expected in writing and mathematics. Fewer pupils reached the higher levels in mathematics and writing, however. This represents satisfactory achievement. The school has taken positive steps to improve standards in writing but in mathematics higher attaining pupils lack appropriate challenge in the learning activities provided for them.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.2 (28.2)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	28.7 (27.9)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.9 (30.2)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 55 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. The results of statutory assessment in 2003 reported in this table indicate that standards were well above average in mathematics, above average in science and average in English. However, current inspection evidence points to well above average standards in reading and above average standards in writing by Year 6. Standards in speaking and listening are also well above average among these pupils. In science standards in Year 6 are currently well above average, which is the result of the very good teaching in this subject. Pupils are challenged by the well-organised practical investigations in lessons which provide good opportunities for them to apply their skills to solve scientific problems. While overall standards are above average in mathematics, the lack of sufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils means that standards could be even higher in this subject.
4. Although standards overall have remained good over the past four years there have been some fluctuations in standards. In some year groups this has resulted from the higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs, but the apparent deterioration in standards in mathematics has resulted from the lack of challenge provided for higher attaining pupils. However, very good management has resulted in a much more stable situation and the high quality of teaching now delivered by an enthusiastic, well-deployed and skilful team of teachers is ensuring that standards continue to improve in all subjects. This has been the case in ICT, in particular, where recent developments have helped ensure that by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 pupils achieve above average standards of work. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection.
5. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set for them. Occasionally, pupils with physical disability or who display dyslexic tendencies make very good progress. This is due to good teaching combined with high quality support and effective remedial programmes. Booster classes are used effectively to support learning by targeting areas of weakness. Pupils work hard and achieve well.
6. Because of the limited inspection evidence in subjects other than English, mathematics, science, religious education and ICT, it was not possible to make informed judgements on the standards achieved in these subjects. However, in physical education pupils with specific talents in gymnastics and football achieve outstanding levels of performance because of the high quality specialist coaching they receive in after-school activities.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are very well developed at the school. Attendance is very good and pupils are punctual to school. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school effectively promotes and achieves high levels of attendance;
- Pupils behave well throughout the school to adults and each other;
- Staff promote good behaviour throughout all aspects of the school;
- Pupils have a positive attitude and act in a mature and confident manner.

Commentary

7. Pupils behave very well throughout the school. Their positive behaviour in the classroom aids teaching and learning and in the playground leads to a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. It is common to see pupils congratulate others for doing well and occasionally clap pupils that have done particularly well. Pupils relate very well to adults. They are polite and articulate in their conversations. Many older pupils act as 'buddies' for the younger children in the school, which is valuable in supporting their personal development.
8. The staff act as positive role models for pupils and reinforce good behaviour effectively throughout the school. Teachers make lessons interesting. A member of staff has particular responsibility for behaviour and works closely with the mid-day supervisors. This is effective in ensuring there are good standards of behaviour across the whole school day.
9. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibilities and to consider others, which contributes positively to their personal development. Pupils work collaboratively to organise fundraising activities to support a child in Vietnam, for example. Assemblies and circle time are also used well to reinforce care and respect for others.
10. The pupils have a positive attitude and demonstrate their maturity and responsibility. The school council is developing into an effective group. They have identified a number of issues of concern to pupils, such as storage for bicycles and a buddy bench, for which they are currently seeking funding. Members of the council are organising an Afro-Caribbean Art Event with the school council of another school that has pupils from a range of ethnic backgrounds. Pupils from both schools are working together closely in leading the preparations for this event. Since it does not have pupils from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, the school judges it important to provide more opportunities for them to appreciate other cultural traditions, and this event is a positive step. Many of the older pupils support younger ones by acting as buddies, by helping in the nursery and by serving guests at the top table at lunchtime. In lessons, pupils are very keen to learn and appreciate the opportunities that teachers give them to develop their own ideas.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.2	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.

11. The school achieves levels of attendance well above the national average and this has been consistent overall over a number of years. The headteacher informs the parents clearly of the significance of good attendance and reinforces the importance of not taking holidays in term time, although this does happen at times. The governors have also made good attendance a focus of a governor/parent meeting.

Exclusions

12. There have been no exclusions during the most recent school year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a very good quality of education, which enables pupils to learn well. The curriculum meets pupils' needs very effectively and there are very good opportunities provided for pupils to learn outside of lessons. Teaching is good and the care and welfare of pupils are excellent.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is good overall, although some lessons are of very high quality. Pupils' learning is good, so they achieve well and attain standards which are better than average by the time they leave the school. Teachers make satisfactory use of assessment to enable them to plan learning activities matched to pupils' capabilities and needs, other than in mathematics in which some pupils are insufficiently extended.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now a significant strength of the school;
- All staff in the Foundation Stage make very good use of the rich variety of resources to extend children's learning both in the classrooms and outside;
- Teachers manage behaviour well so classrooms are orderly and pupils are able to learn;
- Planning is good overall, but in mathematics teachers make insufficient use of assessment information to inform their planning for higher attaining pupils;
- There is a lack of consistency in the effectiveness of teachers' marking.

Commentary

13. The consistent good quality of teaching in the school is a real strength. The strong teamwork among highly skilled and hard-working individual teachers and their commitment to improve even further are very significant features that make teaching so successful here. Overall teaching has improved since the previous inspection, with all unsatisfactory teaching eradicated. Very nearly all lessons seen during this inspection were good, very good or excellent; there were no unsatisfactory lessons. Such effective teaching has a considerable impact on pupils' attitudes to work, their enjoyment of lessons and to the effectiveness of their learning throughout the school.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 55 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (2%)	16 (29%)	35 (64%)	3 (5%)	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

14. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. There is a clear focus on extending children's learning, while at the same time identifying and meeting their specific individual needs. This ensures that both their personal development and their acquisition of appropriate skills and knowledge are good. Throughout the Foundation Stage teachers are consistent in reinforcing their expectations in terms of how children should behave and respond in lessons. This ensures that children are all sure about classroom routines and how to access and use the resources and equipment provided, which in turn enables teachers, nursery nurses and classroom assistants to focus on extending learning. In both the nursery and reception classes teachers provide a rich variety of activities which they are very good at exploiting to extend children's learning. In the nursery in particular, both the teacher and nursery nurse make very effective use of the available resources, both in the classroom and outside, to ensure that children have very good opportunities to learn through practical activity and play. They intervene

productively in what children choose to do and engage individuals and small groups very effectively in the various areas they have set up. Such effective interaction enables them to extend the activity, provide further challenge or assess children's understanding very well. This contributes most effectively to children's good learning.

15. Throughout the school teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. They are consistent and very positive in reinforcing what they expect and pupils respond very well. This ensures that classrooms are orderly and that lessons proceed without interruptions, which enables pupils to learn. Teachers are very good role models and have very good relationships with their pupils, which helps promote their very positive attitudes to learning.
16. Teachers plan the good range of learning activities they provide thoroughly and carefully. The engagement of pupils in discussion is a key feature of the start of many lessons and this is effective in extending pupils' speaking and listening skills. Teachers clearly identify specific learning objectives for each lesson and communicate these effectively so pupils understand exactly how their learning will develop. The use of targets in some subjects is also effective in providing pupils with information about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. While assessment is satisfactory overall, there is significant development work underway to improve, simplify and make more consistent procedures across the school. In some subjects teachers make good use of assessment information to help them plan to meet pupils' learning needs. In mathematics this has been less successful, which has resulted in some higher attaining pupils being insufficiently stretched and so limited the progress they have made.
17. Teachers use a good variety of teaching techniques and approaches which are successful in engaging pupils' interest and in extending their understanding. This contributes towards the firm focus on learning. As a result pupils not only enjoy their lessons, but they also make good progress. Pupils think that teachers explain things clearly and help them improve what they do. Teachers' monitoring and assessment of learning in lessons are good; some teachers maintain exceptionally detailed records, although there is valuable work underway to simplify systems and procedures across the school to ensure greater consistency. The use of targets is developing well and where used they contribute effectively to the progress pupils make. The marking of pupils' work is more inconsistent. Where it is good it provides pupils with a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve, develop or extend their work, but this is not always the case. In places, teachers' handwriting is a poor model for pupils trying to improve their own.

The curriculum

The breadth of curricular opportunities is very good. The school provides very good opportunities for enrichment. Accommodation and learning resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good equality of access and opportunity for all pupils;
- The school does not always maximise the use of time during the mornings;
- There is very good curriculum development, including innovation;
- Preparation for later stages of education is very good;
- Support for learning outside the school day and participation in extra-curricular sport is very good;
- There is a very good match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum.

Commentary

18. The quality and range of learning opportunities throughout the school are very good. The curriculum fully meets statutory requirements in all subjects and the agreed syllabus for religious education. Strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are effective, particularly in

relation to opportunities for improving writing across the curriculum. There has been very good improvement in those areas of weakness identified in the previous inspection. The significant improvement in provision for ICT ensures this now meets statutory requirements. The school has adopted the new and more relevant locally agreed syllabus for religious education, which has led to a better understanding among teachers, and more focused teaching and better challenge for pupils. While the school generally provides sufficient time for programmes of study to be delivered, the distribution of time is not always as effective and efficient as it could be. In the mornings, in particular, timings on the timetable result in literacy and numeracy lessons that often extend beyond the time normally allocated for these subjects, resulting in very long lessons.

19. The school fulfils its aims to provide an educational environment where all pupils feel included, secure and valued. It achieves this through a curriculum that is sufficiently broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of all pupils. Policies are in place for all subjects and are regularly updated. Evaluation of planning and its outcomes is encouraged. The curriculum and its impact upon pupils' achievements are now closely monitored. This is having a positive impact on pupils' attitudes towards their learning and on their behaviour. There is appropriate written guidance for sex education and the personal, social, health and citizenship education programme successfully incorporates citizenship. It closely reflects the themes for religious education, healthy eating and circle time. There is very good equality of access and opportunity and the school effectively implements its strong inclusion philosophy.
20. Curriculum development is very good, including some innovative practice. The school has worked hard and successfully to establish multi-sensory methods and dyslexia-friendly classroom practice throughout the school, which is related to the adoption of particular learning styles. A clear and agreed policy supports this work and a structured programme has been implemented to cater for those pupils whose need is greatest. Two specially trained staff provide good support as they work alongside pupils and teachers on a regular basis. A very good focus on cross-curricular links is having a positive impact on standards, particularly in ICT where opportunities to support and enhance pupils' learning are improving all the time. The ICT technician makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and supports teachers and pupils very well. There are also good links with history, for example through drama, art, music and mathematics.
21. All teachers have access to further training and development and this contributes effectively to improving standards. It is a measure of the value placed on support staff that the school fully supports their further training. The practice of employing consultants ensures that specialist input and good practice are shared for the mutual benefit of teachers and pupils.
22. Preparation for later stages of education is very good, particularly in relation to the transition from the Foundation Stage. An experienced teacher has moved into Year 1 taking with her the best early years practice. This includes some elements of room layout, and is effective in giving pupils a clear understanding that learning is a continuous process. Lessons remain stimulating and exciting and yet are structured to encourage pupils to be responsible for their own learning. The success of this venture has been recognised by the local education authority, which has asked the school to share this good practice. Similar successful arrangements are made at the end of Year 6, prior to pupils transferring to secondary education, when pupils engage in projects begun in the primary school and continued in secondary school, the impact of which can clearly be seen in English and mathematics.
23. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to a wide range of curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities that are relevant to their needs. Teachers have high expectations of meeting their individual needs. Most of the curriculum is delivered within the mainstream classroom, although pupils are also withdrawn for specific corrective teaching. Pupils are well catered for as a result of teachers taking their specific needs into account when they plan their work. There is also a very strong commitment to inclusion. A wide range of intervention

strategies is used effectively to raise standards and to give pupils additional literacy and numeracy support.

24. Support for learning outside the school day is very good. The curriculum is enhanced through a wide range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors to the school. Very good sporting provision attracts many pupils along with some teachers and parents. Pupils achieve particularly high standards and enjoy considerable success in area and national competitions. There is a very good range of additional activities, which includes art workshops, a young musician's competition, a poetry festival, drama workshops, music for the deaf, dance workshops as part of oriental arts and story telling with music.
25. There are sufficient well-qualified teachers and support assistants to cater for a wide range of needs. They form a very effective and efficient team, very committed to the inclusion of all pupils. Resources are very good and there has been an improvement in the quality and quantity of ICT software to support learning. Satisfactory accommodation is currently in the process of being extended. At the moment it is barely satisfactory for pupils with special educational needs, because space is at a premium for the withdrawal of individuals and small groups requiring specific help.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides very good care, guidance and support for pupils. Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is excellent. The provision of support, advice and guidance for pupils based on the monitoring of their achievements and personal development is good. Pupils' involvement in the work and the development of the school is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' safety is safeguarded through clear and thorough procedures for child protection and health and safety;
- Arrangements for induction into the school are very supportive to children and parents;
- The staff know the pupils very well and have developed trusting relationships with them;
- Good assessment and detailed records enable teachers to provide clear guidance to pupils;
- The Healthy Schools Initiative is well embedded in the life of the school and supports the welfare of the pupils effectively.

Commentary

26. The school has thorough procedures for the care and safety of pupils. They are easily understood and responsibilities are clear. Health and safety is given a high priority with provision regularly audited. Governors play a valuable active role in this. The buildings manager keeps appropriate detailed records of all elements of the building that need checks or maintenance and this ensures action is taken promptly. A member of staff has the responsibility for acting as health and safety co-ordinator and both he and the building manager are constantly aware of the need to check for health and safety issues. This proactive approach is reflected in the way surveys are conducted, for example the investigation into asbestos materials present and action taken based on the results, regular checking of water tanks, and the plan to install additional fencing around the playground area. The standard of cleanliness throughout the school is very high. Clear risk assessments are carried out for activities both within the school and on visits. Record systems are comprehensive. The arrangements for child protection are thorough and clear. The headteacher uses meetings with both teaching and support staff effectively to ensure that everyone in the school is fully briefed and any issues of concern are discussed.
27. The school has put in place effective induction procedures to enable children to gradually join and to settle in at the nursery, so that both the children and their parents are well supported in the new environment. Parents are provided with good information, and they are also invited to

contribute, by providing details of any illnesses or dietary needs in order that the school can keep appropriate medication and ensure that each child has the best care. Nursery staff visit the children in their homes in order to familiarise themselves with the family and to engage the child in play activities, so that the child knows the member of staff when they arrive at the nursery. There are close links with parents, particularly those of children with special educational needs. There are valuable informal parents' evenings, and regular newsletters as well as opportunities for daily informal discussions. As a result of good communications, parents and teachers agree development targets and these contribute effectively to the progress pupils make.

28. The staff, throughout the school, know the children well and have a good relationship with them. The children respond very well to their teachers and have a trusting relationship with them. The school ethos puts the children at the heart of the school. Relationships within the classroom reflect this, with teachers demonstrating a caring and supportive approach and pupils responding positively to this. Teachers' good assessment and detailed records enable them to provide clear and effective guidance to pupils, on both their academic and their personal development. Some teachers are developing the use of targets well to promote progress. The quality of teachers' marking is not consistent, however, and at times it is ineffective in providing guidance on how pupils might improve or develop or extend their work. Being visible and approachable is an integral part of the headteacher's leadership and management style. She is regularly in classrooms, runs clubs and is very visible in all areas of the school. Pupils like the school and feel that there is an adult they can approach if they are at all worried.
29. The Healthy School Initiative is well imbedded into the life of the school. Children and kitchen staff have become increasingly aware of the benefits of healthy food. There has been an increase in the amount and types of fresh fruit and healthy food in the dining room and the nursery. Useful displays are evident, showing different types of food, their make-up and their relative health value. Drinks of water are freely available to children. The school recognises the link between exercise and healthy living. Physical education and sport are well supported. Parents are encouraged to join in the planning and delivery of health education, including sex education. Year 5 and 6 pupils are taught about the dangers of drug abuse. Pupils receive regular visits and valuable talks from a range of experts, for example the school nurse, road safety officers, and the fire brigade.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has very good partnerships with parents, other schools and the community. The school has very effective links with parents. The links with the local community are good. The extended services and educational support programmes and the links with other schools are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school encourages parents to contribute and play a positive role in school life;
- The transfer arrangements to the secondary school effectively support pupils' development and continuity of learning;
- The partnership with the local sports college provides a good range of opportunities for pupils;
- The information from school and the accessibility of teachers provide parents with many ways of supporting children's learning.

Commentary

30. The school consults parents effectively, both informally and formally. The prospectus clearly states the school's commitment to developing partnerships with parents. Questionnaires are used well to determine the views of parents and then action is taken. Parents are effectively consulted on key issues, such as the anti-bullying policy. The school operates an 'open door' policy, which parents value and ensures they have good opportunities to discuss any issues they may have with the headteacher and teachers at the school.

31. Parents are encouraged to help at the school. A 'Helping in School Course' provides very good support to parents who wish to become involved. As a result many parents support class reading or generally help in classes. Many of the support staff in the school, such as mid-day supervisors and teaching assistants, are parents. The Parents, Teachers and Friends Association provides good financial support to the school, while also helping to develop the links between the school, parents and the community. It holds events, which regularly attract many family members into the school.
32. The arrangements for pupils transferring to the local secondary school are well developed. There are very good curriculum links; for example, mathematics teachers from the secondary school come and give lessons in the school. Folders of pupils' work are sent to the secondary school, which effectively supports continuity in learning. Prior to transfer, pupils also visit the secondary school to participate in some lessons in their new school. This joint work between the schools has a positive impact on achievement and helps pupils to see the connection between primary and secondary school. The local secondary school is a designated sports college. It arranges good links with feeder primary schools, which helps familiarise pupils with their new school. Annually they organise an 'Egg Race', for example, which involves pupils in developing innovative ways to propel an egg the furthest distance. This effectively engages both the pupils and their families in an interesting project, which culminates in an event held at the secondary school.
33. The sports college has provided good opportunities to develop sports in the school, organising valuable sports coaching and competitions in football, rugby and basketball in the feeder primary schools. The college has adopted an inclusive approach, providing a good range of activities in which primary school pupils may take part. Northowram Primary School has fully embraced the opportunities this has provided, which have created great interest for many pupils and contributed positively to improving standards in sport. The school has very active and successful sports teams.
34. Parents receive very good information and guidance from both the school and the governing body. In addition to regular reports and formal meetings, the school has a good website, which provides information about school activities and policies. This website provides good links to resources for mathematics, English and science, with examples of pupils' work. This is effective in enabling parents to support their children's learning at home.
35. Parents receive class newsletters, which provide valuable information about the current term's curriculum. In the foyer there is a notice board for parents, which provides good information. In addition to the more formal methods of communication, the 'open door' policy throughout the nursery and the school provides parents with easy access to information, through informal discussion with staff.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. The effectiveness of management is very good. Governance of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides excellent leadership; she is a very good role model, enthusing all who work under her with her clear vision and dynamism;
- All adults in the school work together as a very caring team being fully committed to the interests of all pupils;
- The headteacher has initiated very good curriculum change and development with the result that there has been good improvement since the previous inspection;
- The governors have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses which enables them to play an effective role in shaping the direction of the school;

- The school plans very well for the future;
- Financial management is strong.

Commentary

36. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. She has a very clear vision and high aspirations which she communicates very well to others. She has the full confidence of pupils, parents, teachers, other staff and governors. She strives hard to ensure that all pupils fully enjoy the benefits the school offers. Since taking up post three years ago, she has initiated significant changes in the school, which have contributed positively to its recent good improvement. She has taken swift and effective action to establish a strong sense of purpose and a determination to succeed. She has led from the front, setting a fast pace but still managing to develop a very good sense of teamwork and commitment. As a result morale within the school is high, all staff are part of this strong team and all contribute effectively in their several ways to promoting pupils' learning well. The bursar and the administrative assistant very efficiently attend to the smooth day-to-day running of the school, and the site manager maintains the school most effectively ensuring that classrooms and other parts of the building are maintained to a very high standard. The kitchen staff not only provide meals and service to a high standard but also support learning, for example when supporting pupils' learning about food technology.
37. There have been considerable improvements made in the past three years. Very effective monitoring of teaching has enabled the headteacher to identify clear priorities for development and improvement. One area where improvement has been particularly good has been in provision for ICT. This has resulted from the expertise, co-operation and co-ordination of the headteacher and the subject manager, working together to both enthuse and support other teachers effectively, which has had a positive impact on pupils' achievement. The outcomes of monitoring have also enabled the headteacher to identify the need to improve pupils' writing. As a result she has initiated a number of useful developments in this area, especially introducing new approaches to developing writing skills among the youngest children. She has successfully encouraged teachers to broaden pupils' writing experiences by giving them opportunities to express their own ideas in writing in several curriculum areas. This has also improved pupils' achievement. The school, along with several other schools in the locality, benefits from the headteacher's personal interest in problems some pupils face when learning. With colleagues she has identified some pupils in the school who have difficulty correctly recognising symbols in print and is providing expert help to enable them to read text effectively in order that they can enjoy and benefit from reading. This support is proving to be successful.
38. Governance of the school is good. Governors are well informed and this enables them to make strategic decisions. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They concern themselves with standards and they keep themselves updated with curriculum developments. Governors are actively involved in shaping the future of the school.
39. Strategic planning is very good. Projects and proposed developments are carefully costed and the implementation of planning is monitored. Most importantly, things that are planned get done. Senior managers meet regularly as a team and play an important role in the strategic management of the school. The recently appointed deputy headteacher has settled into the school well and is already making a significant contribution to leadership and management. He has quickly started to further develop assessment, for example, to ensure greater consistency across the school. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage, English, science, ICT and design and technology by the respective co-ordinators are good or very good.
40. Leadership and management of special educational needs are good. A newly appointed co-ordinator is working closely with the headteacher and an identified governor to establish effective procedures for the support of these pupils throughout the school. Pupils' records are well kept, up to date and informative. The Code of Practice is fully implemented and procedures for the identification and support of pupils are well established and understood. Very good links

are maintained with receiving secondary schools and a range of outside agencies. Funding for special educational needs is used appropriately to provide additional staffing and resources to support pupils' learning.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,030,370
Total expenditure	1,001,415
Expenditure per pupil	2548

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	26,680
Balance carried forward to the next	55,635

41. Financial planning and management are very good. The governors and the headteacher have a very good grasp of finances and funding issues. Governors consider support in classrooms to be one of the priorities in spending. This support is making a significant contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. It also makes a significant contribution to the way all pupils are included and able to benefit from the learning activities the school provides. The principles of best value are clearly understood and well applied and all spending is effectively monitored and controlled. The school is an effective school that gives a very good quality of education and provides very good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

42. The good features reported in the previous inspection remain strengths. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator provides very effective leadership, which is ensuring that provision continues to improve, particularly in the approach to teaching and learning. There is strong teamwork in both the nursery and reception classes. Carefully co-ordinated planning ensures consistency across the whole Foundation Stage.
43. There is a firm focus on children's learning. In the nursery, staff work together very effectively to provide a very good range of appropriate activities. There is a clear emphasis on enabling children to make decisions about what they do, initiate activities for themselves and to develop them in ways in which they choose. This enables children to develop independence and the ability to manage resources for themselves. The teacher and nursery nurse are very good at intervening in children's chosen activities or in their play, in which they are able to extend children's learning very effectively. In the reception classes there is a natural progression to more structured and teacher-led activities, which provides good preparation for the move into Year 1. At this stage children also still have good opportunities to make choices for themselves, however, and the flexibility of the organisation enables them to continue to develop independence.
44. Throughout the Foundation Stage the organisation of teaching and learning is very flexible, which enables teachers, nursery nurses and classroom assistants to address the needs of individuals and small groups very well. In both the nursery and reception classes the very good range of resources stimulates, supports and extends children's learning effectively. There is a firm commitment to the use of the outdoor areas to promote learning, for which the continuous provision in the nursery especially is very good indeed.
45. The quality of teaching is consistently good throughout the Foundation Stage. Teachers, nursery nurses and classroom assistants all work very effectively as a team. Planning and assessment are very good. Teachers are skilful in observing and recording in detail aspects of children's learning, and this underpins planning effectively. They use a good range of teaching strategies, which are entirely appropriate for children this age, usually working intensively with individual children or small groups, but sometimes in direct teaching of the whole class. They skilfully exploit the opportunities to extend children's learning through the variety of practical activities they set up. This ensures that children's learning is good. Although children generally enter nursery with better than average prior attainment, the focus on learning, the high quality of the teaching and the rich environment provided ensure that they achieve well.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress and achieve well;
- Teaching is consistently good and children enjoy learning;
- Relationships are very good and children behave very well.

Commentary

46. This area of learning has a high priority when children start in the nursery, because they arrive having had a range of pre-school experiences. Although standards are generally above average when they start, children nevertheless make good progress in learning to share, to co-operate

with others and to play together, while also developing independence. By the time they enter Year 1 very nearly all children achieve the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception and some exceed them. This is because teaching is consistently good, with a very well planned range of activities ensuring that children quickly settle into routines and feel secure. Staff are very good role models and they easily forge very good relationships with the children. There is very good interaction between adults and children, which ensures the children feel secure and so they engage readily and confidently with the learning activities set up for them. Staff make sure activities are fun, so children enjoy learning. Children are very well behaved and able to share resources fairly and take turns effectively. They play well co-operatively, in developing their ideas in role-play, for example, or in working with the sand or water. Such activities have a positive impact on their social development.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress in developing their language skills and standards are above average by the end of reception;
- Children enjoy discussions and are confident speakers;
- Children use language well to develop aspects of their play and teachers are good at joining in to extend their learning;
- The approach to developing children's writing skills is good;
- Children enjoy stories and concentrate well as they listen.

Commentary

47. The very good range of activities provided in both the nursery and reception classes enables children to develop and extend their language and communication skills effectively. Standards of speaking are above average when children start in the nursery, but learning is good and they achieve well. Good routines for speaking and listening are established right from the start and these are effectively and consistently reinforced throughout the Foundation Stage. Children generally speak confidently and enjoy discussions with teachers and other adults. They interact with each other well in the various activities, including role-play, in which they readily communicate and share their ideas about how their play could develop. Teachers are good at intervening or joining in with their play to extend their learning and this contributes positively to the progress they make. There are very good opportunities for whole-class discussions, such as when the teacher or nursery nurse reads from Tiny Ted's diary and children report on what they have done with him when they have taken him home for the evening.
48. Substantial work on revising the approach to writing in the Foundation Stage has been successful in enhancing the progress children make towards developing their skills. In the nursery children make marks in various free writing activities and begin to write their own names unaided. By the end of reception many children are developing a cursive style of handwriting. Teachers model writing very effectively for the children and this contributes to their good learning. There is a good approach to developing children's understanding of phonics and this is successful in helping children learn letter sounds and some simple words. Children enjoy listening to stories, either in a large group or in sharing books with an adult, and they do so with good concentration. Towards the end of the reception year there is a more specific and appropriate focus on literacy, which is effective in preparation for work in Year 1.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching ensures that children's learning is good and standards are above average by the end of reception;
- There is good emphasis on extending children mathematical vocabulary;
- Teachers exploit the good range of practical activities they set up to reinforce children's understanding effectively.

Commentary

49. Teachers, nursery nurses and classroom assistants make good use of the variety of practical activities which they set up in the nursery or classrooms. Teaching is good and this ensures that children's learning is also good. As a result most children reach the goals they are expected to achieve by the end of reception and many exceed them. In the nursery large displays reinforce children's understanding of number, like *Six little ducks*, and large posters support their number recognition and counting effectively. All staff are good at reinforcing children's understanding of appropriate mathematical language, whether this is in activities with a specific mathematical focus or in other activities such as the role-play, for example. They pose questions continually, not only orally but also on their displays, like '*How long is your hair?*' In the different areas teachers have set up, they work well to extend children's learning, participating in their play and intervening effectively to teach, reinforce or add further challenge.
50. In reception, children are aware of their specific numeracy targets. They count accurately to 20 and beyond; they understand 'pair', as they work on problems such as "How many socks and how many pairs?" and they are beginning to tackle simple addition sums. Children have ready access to mathematical equipment, the displays of which are used well to stimulate interest or provide challenge, with questions such as "Can you weigh the objects?" and "Which is heaviest?" Teachers are good at posing questions that make children think about number, order, position or shape for instance, as they try to solve problems in their play. In one good formal taught session, the teacher made good use of a number stick to enable children to count on from seven and back from 15 accurately. They recognise numbers to 20. As children reach the end of reception they understand symmetry, and are able to sort out symmetrical and non-symmetrical shapes. Such mathematical concepts and the use of specific mathematical terms are also effectively reinforced in other activities when children paint their own symmetrical butterflies.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good provision ensures children's learning is very good;
- Teachers intervene skilfully in the activities they set up to extend children's learning.

Commentary

51. Teaching and learning are very good, ensuring that children make good progress and achieve well in this area of learning. Most children reach the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception and many exceed them. In the nursery the wide range of resources and equipment is used very effectively to extend children's understanding. In the role-play, for example, the very good resources provided enable the children and teacher to prepare for a camping trip, with

rucksacks, barbecue, torches and tent. Such activities provide excellent opportunities for teachers to engage children in thinking and planning and in talking about the experience. In the activity observed the teacher made very good use of the opportunity to extend children's vocabulary, engaging them in discussion and decision making very effectively, and extending their thinking with maps as they made plans for their 'expedition'. The skilful and close involvement of the teacher or nursery nurse in such activities has a most positive impact on children's learning.

52. In both the nursery and reception classes children have good access to the computers and they use them confidently. They are developing good mouse control. In reception children know how to open a program, draw a picture on the screen and access the colour wheel to change the colour of their lines and shapes. Most can change the tools they use. At times teachers make good use of the computers to extend children's understanding of their work in other areas. In one session observed, for example, the teacher's careful explanation of how to use the symmetry tool enabled children to create their own symmetrical patterns, reinforcing what they had done in their numeracy work.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good range of opportunities to work with a variety of tools and equipment contributes effectively to their physical development;
- The outdoor areas are very well used to promote children's learning;
- The high quality of teaching in some lessons enables children to achieve high standards in their work.

Commentary

53. Children have very good opportunities to develop their skills in manipulating equipment such as scissors, writing and drawing pencils, paint brushes and other tools. They handle these tools well, when making models, or when cutting materials to add to a collage, for example. They manipulate small models very carefully in the sand as they develop their play with them. Good teaching and the variety of activities provided enable children to make good progress in this area of learning and there is a clear emphasis on them learning to use the equipment safely and developing the skills well. As a result the majority of children achieve the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception and many exceed them.
54. Particularly good use is made of the outside areas for both nursery and reception children. When working outside they have very good opportunities to move, climb, slide and balance. There is a very good range of equipment to help children develop an appropriate awareness of space and to enable them to learn to control their own bodies in various situations. They play with various wheeled vehicles, controlling them round a track, and they climb freely and confidently on the frame. At this stage reception children also have more formal physical education lessons in preparation for their work in Year 1. In the lesson observed very good teaching enabled children to reflect on and improve their own movements, as they worked with different pieces of simple apparatus. Children had very good control over their bodies as they walked, stretched, slid or tiptoed along the benches and as they showed they could do a tuck, star or twisting jump off them. The very high quality of the teaching in this session enabled children to achieve very high standards in their work.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enjoy the range of activities provided for them and they achieve well.

Commentary

55. Teachers plan a good range of interesting activities, which stimulates children's imagination. Teaching is good and this ensures that most children achieve the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception. Children enjoy these well-planned art play activities, such as when they created textures in paint directly on a table and then made large scale prints of them. Children concentrate well as they make pictures, collages and models with a variety of materials, paint or construction equipment. Children enjoy exploring the water and sand, especially when they have opportunities to develop their ideas in playing co-operatively with others. On these occasions children relate well to each other, showing they can adapt their ideas to those of others. Various opportunities for role-play are used well to develop children's imagination and teachers are skilful in exploiting these, encouraging children to share their ideas, like when they plan to go on holiday, for example. When they have opportunities, children sing with obvious enjoyment.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the time pupils leave school they are articulate, read very well and write well;
- Teaching is lively and challenging, and much is expected of pupils;
- Teachers give pupils good opportunities to write at length in several areas of the curriculum;
- The subject is led and managed well.

Commentary

56. Pupils currently in Year 2 are attaining standards that are above average in reading, and in speaking and listening. Standards are average in writing. In Year 6 standards in speaking and listening, and in reading are well above average; in writing they are above average. Pupils in Year 6 are articulate, speak confidently to adults and clearly express their ideas and opinions. They are keen to answer questions and they are also eager to ask them. Most write at length for a wide range of purposes, generally spelling words correctly and presenting work neatly. They enjoy reading and discuss books knowledgeably, expressing preferences for authors and styles and types of text. Some write good book reviews. Most Year 2 pupils read independently and write imaginatively. Most talk confidently and listen intently. All pupils are achieving well.

57. Pupils display good attitudes to learning in lessons. They are responsive, listen intently and concentrate well. They benefit from strong teachers who have high expectations and who give out challenging work. In Year 6 this is well structured. These pupils are given opportunities to write at length, they maintain quality reading journals and these give a good focus to reading. Pupils are introduced to appropriate good literature. They compare and contrast the writing styles of different authors, they analyse text and they compare and contrast characters. They study excerpts from some books in depth, sharing their views and opinions with one another and the teacher. This is developing in a significant number of pupils a real appreciation of

literature. Similarly, a whole-school focus on poetry is also developing in some pupils an appreciation of poetry. Handwriting is taught regularly and there is an appropriate emphasis placed on teaching spelling. As a result pupils generally are making good learning gains.

58. The subject is led and managed well. Some time ago the school identified a concern about standards in writing. Several things have been done to address this concern. Pupils are given much more opportunity to write independently in most curriculum areas. For example, Year 2 pupils compose and write their own prayers in religious education, they write about the life cycle of butterflies in science, they write about what hospital life was like for wounded soldiers during the Crimean War and they write poems about the Great Fire of London. Considerable attention is paid to the way writing is initially taught and care is taken to ensure that the enthusiasm pupils show for writing in the nursery and reception classes continues to be nurtured in Year 1. There is a strong focus on ensuring that higher attaining pupils are effectively challenged in lessons. As a result, standards of these pupils have recently risen. Pupils who are identified as not making appropriate progress are given additional support and this is proving to be effective in getting them back on track as far as their rate of learning is concerned. Year 1 pupils receive a good grounding in being able to associate letter symbols with sounds. They apply this knowledge well when trying to identify unfamiliar words when reading, and in sounding out words when trying to spell them. Handwriting is now being taught consistently throughout the school to an adopted style and this is effectively improving the appearance of work in books as letters are being better formed and older children are joining letters in words in a more consistent fashion. However, teachers' handwriting is not always a good model for pupils. Nevertheless, by Year 6 the overall standard of pupils' handwriting is good.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

59. The promotion of literacy skills across the curriculum is a strong feature, enabling pupils to develop, extend and reinforce these effectively. Pupils are encouraged to express their thoughts and ideas in writing in a range of different subjects. They do this well. A feature of many lessons is a strategy used by teachers to help pupils organise and develop their ideas and thinking. Pupils are encouraged to discuss a range of topics with a partner and there are frequent opportunities for pupils to participate in group or class discussions. These give them valuable practice in expressing their views clearly and concisely and provide good preparation for them to transfer their opinions and thoughts to their writing.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is consistently good throughout the school and teachers' subject knowledge is very secure;
- Work is planned in detail and takes into account the needs of most pupils;
- Higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged;
- Pupils' attitudes to work are generally very good;
- Support assistants are used very effectively;
- Inconsistent marking does not always indicate to pupils what they need to do to improve;
- Mathematics workshops for parents are effective in helping them support their children's learning.

Commentary

60. Results of national tests in 2003 show that by the end of Year 2 standards in mathematics were below average when compared with similar schools. By the end of Year 6 standards were broadly average for pupils achieving the expected level 4 and above, but below average for

pupils achieving level 5, when compared with those in similar schools. There was no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

61. The downward trend in the results of statutory assessment over the past four years can be attributed both to a degree of complacency because standards have been good and to a lack of sufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils. Pupils away on annual holiday at the time of the tests undoubtedly had an impact on overall results in the most recent tests, as did the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in last year's cohort. Results of tests show that there is room for improvement in the proportion of pupils which achieve the higher level 5. Lessons observed indicate that this improvement is already underway.
62. Evidence from the inspection indicates that standards among pupils currently in Year 2 are in line with those expected for their age. Pupils can clearly identify the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes and they can specifically identify which shapes have right angles. When working with numbers they can count forwards and backwards to and from 100 and beyond in twos, fives and tens. Most pupils have very good understanding of working with remainders. Successful learning of tables equips pupils well to understand number patterns. From an early age pupils become confident at learning to solve number problems using mental calculations. Their use and understanding of mathematical vocabulary are sometimes impressive. Pupils' enthusiasm for the subject is a product of the teachers' own interest and enthusiasm.

Example of outstanding practice

Context: In this lesson a class of pupils in Year 1 were learning to solve number problems.

You can sense the urgency with which Year 1 pupils rush to their classroom to take part in what, for many, is regarded as a special treat. This time they do not have to be asked twice or take any persuading. They are immediately immersed in a game to test the agility of their minds. "Use a working partner". "How many ways can you find?" "How do you know you are right?" "You've only got another 30 seconds." Yes, it's mathematics – and they can't wait to show how competent they are at using all four operations to make their target number for the day. Then begins the whole-class activity of counting on and counting back in threes to 30. The majority show they are capable of working out their number problems in their heads using their three times table. As for using the correct mathematical vocabulary, well, that is always a strong feature of lessons. They may not always spell it right but they certainly know what it means.

Such enthusiasm does not simply materialise. It is the product of inspirational work by a knowledgeable teacher whose enthusiasm for mathematics is reflected in the fun that all pupils experience. Work is planned carefully to take account of the wide range of individual needs. No need to struggle, but in any case nobody is going to mind. A classroom assistant is on hand to help. Can she and the teacher keep up the pace? No waiting around either if you finish within the time. A number of independent numeracy tasks are waiting. You can choose any one, but try to complete it on your own. At the end of all this pupils come together to tell the teacher what they have managed to achieve today. "This was easy, but that was harder." Thumbs up means they have understood well. Thumbs horizontal means that more work is needed. Not many thumbs down! "Is that the time already?" Amazing how it flies when you are enjoying yourself.

63. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are above average among pupils currently in Year 6. They competently identify prime numbers. The majority make good attempts at solving mathematical problems and can identify and explain number patterns. An aspect of their work that initially causes difficulty is the identification of the number of faces on three-dimensional shapes. Lower attaining pupils do not clearly understand how to calculate perimeters. Reducing a fraction to its lowest form is an aspect that most pupils are comfortable with. They multiply and divide accurately and are able to extract information from tables to support their findings. Calculators are used effectively to check pupils' working out.

64. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. Work is appropriately planned to take into account their individual needs. Booster classes are in place to target level 4 pupils with a view to them reaching level 5. However, although extension activities are available for higher attaining pupils they are often simply more of the same examples of what they already know. This does not sufficiently develop their capabilities. The school has identified this as a priority for improvement. Pupils work very well together, supporting each other amicably, whatever their level of capability.
65. The quality of teaching is at least good throughout the school. There are also some examples of very good and excellent teaching. Teachers have very good working relationships with pupils and are able to transfer their own enthusiasm for the subject, helping them to appreciate that mathematics can be fun. ICT is well used to support pupils' learning, particularly of pupils with special educational needs. In order to develop pupils' confidence in their own ability teachers encourage them to think through their problems, supplying them with a range of strategies for working out and checking their answers. Occasionally they are encouraged to make predictions and test out their theories. Support staff are used very effectively to improve pupils' confidence and to enable them to access the curriculum. Teachers value their contributions. Although teachers assess pupils' work well, and this supports their planning effectively for all but the higher attaining pupils, the quality of marking is inconsistent and does not sufficiently inform pupils of what needs to be done to improve.
66. Joint leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Having recognised the need to improve standards the co-ordinator has successfully introduced a programme of mathematics workshops for parents. These sessions are held after school and are part of an overall plan to improve parental involvement in pupils' learning. While assessment information enables teachers to track pupils' progress, it is not yet used effectively to help them provide sufficient challenge to extend higher attaining pupils. Co-ordinators have recognised this and are taking steps to remedy the situation. Resources are good and continue to be well managed. Since the last inspection there has been good progress in teaching, and improvement in the level of resourcing, but overall progress has been satisfactory.

Mathematics across the curriculum

67. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to use and develop their numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum. In history, for example, they use time-lines and are familiar with sequencing events. Tally charts and graphs are used effectively in geography as part of a traffic survey within the local area. In science, information is classified into groups and data handling is linked to a project on forces with cars and slopes. Calculating distances in terms of light years is of particular interest to some pupils when they study the solar system. In physical education, pupils score, measure and time, as well as counting beats and sequencing actions in dance. The use of ICT to support learning in mathematics has greatly improved since the previous inspection.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils consistently achieve high standards throughout the school. Standards are particularly high in Year 6;
- Teaching overall is very good and teachers have high expectations of pupils' work;
- There is very good leadership and management of the subject;
- The procedures used for monitoring pupils' achievements and progress are under-developed;
- Pupils have too few opportunities to use computers in lessons.

Commentary

68. Pupils consistently achieve high standards in science because the teaching overall is very good. Any slight variations in standards achieved in national tests at Year 6 and in the teacher assessments at Year 2 are caused by the changing numbers of more able or less able pupils in those classes at that particular time. The level of Year 6 work observed in books, in lessons and in discussions with pupils confirms the very high standards achieved in these classes.
69. Because of the high quality of teaching, pupils are constantly challenged by a wide range of well-prepared practical investigations. The main feature of these lessons is the impressive collaborative work that occurs between the pupils. Teachers encourage groups of pupils to predict the outcome of investigations and to arrive at a consensus of opinion on how the practical activity can be carried out. Teachers have high expectations of the explanations that pupils give and constantly ask searching questions to extend their thinking and their learning. Pupils respond in a positive manner to this challenge and provide well-structured and thought-out answers. In two parallel Year 6 lessons the pupils displayed enthusiasm and initiative when asked to devise a practical test to discover how the 'fizziness' of soft drinks varies with a change in temperature. The teachers showed ingenuity in the presentation of the problem as a 'real life' situation.
70. Leadership and management are very good. The enthusiastic subject manager has supported the very effective development and application of practical investigations to stimulate pupils' interest in scientific enquiries in all classes. Her leadership has ensured that the ways that teachers ask pupils to record their findings, with a focus on opportunities for predictions and the reasons for the outcomes of an investigation, are consistent across the school. This contributes effectively to the progress that pupils make.
71. The subject manager has a good understanding of the need to develop a more consistent approach to how teachers assess pupils' achievements and progress in all the classes throughout the school, with a specific emphasis on teacher assessment procedures in Year 2.
72. Although there was effective use made of a computer and interactive whiteboard to teach the classification of animals in a very good Year 2 lesson, generally pupils' use of computers to record and research information in science lessons is under-developed. The subject leader is aware of the need to develop more extensive use of computers in science lessons.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils achieve well;
- The subject is very well led and managed;
- Teachers are confident using new technology;
- Pupils work enthusiastically in the computer suite;
- Provision has improved considerably since the previous inspection.

Commentary

73. Provision in the subject has improved significantly recently with the result that all pupils are achieving well. Pupils are taught computer skills in a well-appointed computer suite containing sufficient workstations for classes to use whilst pupils work together in pairs. Pupils receive a good programme for the teaching of ICT skills and this is reflected in the above average standards they attain by the end of Years 2 and 6.

74. There is very good leadership and management of the subject by a very knowledgeable and effective subject manager. She supports her colleagues very effectively, leading an effective programme of staff training for example, which has ensured that staff confidence and competence in teaching ICT have been significantly improved. She has been largely instrumental in the design and production of a school website, which is good, providing news, examples of work, information and useful links for parents and pupils. Pupils often refer to the site when searching for information. Along with the technician, she also organises a well-supported computer club which gives those pupils who choose to attend further opportunities to develop their computer skills.
75. Teaching is consistently good and some lessons are very good. This is making a significant contribution to the good progress most pupils make in developing their understanding and skills. For example, in one lesson Year 6 pupils made good progress learning how to link together pages of pictures and text on screen in a way that would make them more interesting and the information more accessible to readers. By the end of the lesson a significant number had mastered the technique and applied it effectively to enhance previously produced pages of text and pictures. Benefiting from very good guidance they applied themselves very enthusiastically and enjoyed a considerable measure of success. In another lesson, following very clear instructions from the teacher, Year 2 pupils displayed considerable confidence working with computers, using them to produce interesting pictures to add to previously prepared text in constructing attractive posters. The ICT technician gives very effective support to pupils working in the suite and she makes a significant contribution to their learning. Teachers carefully support those pupils with special educational needs, with the result that they achieve as well as the others. All pupils' learning benefits from the well-planned and focused sessions which ensure there is good progression in the development of their skills across all aspects of the subject.
76. A strong and positive feature of lessons in the computer suite is the high level of co-operation shown by pupils working together in pairs. This and their enthusiasm and very good working attitudes make a significant contribution to their good learning.
77. Improvement since the last inspection has been considerable. Standards are much improved and pupils now spend sufficient time learning relevant skills. Teachers are much more confident and have good knowledge. Leadership and management of the subject are both now very good.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

78. There are good ICT resources available in classrooms to support learning across the curriculum. Teachers use these to enhance pupils' learning in several subjects, including mathematics, English, art and science. For example, in a science lesson, the teacher supported Year 2 pupils in using a computer and a large projected image to help classify a wide range of animals according to specific criteria. This successfully helped develop pupils' understanding of several different types of animals. In other lessons, however, especially in science, pupils have insufficient opportunities to work with the computers themselves.

HUMANITIES

79. It was possible to observe only one lesson in history and one in geography during the inspection. Consequently there is insufficient evidence to support a judgement about provision in these subjects. Religious education was inspected in full and is reported on below.
80. In **geography**, teaching in the lesson seen was good. Pupils in Year 1 were able to make good suggestions on how the roads could be made safer based on the study of photographs of the local environment. Scrutiny of pupils' earlier work indicates that the curriculum is appropriately broad, with good use made of visits outside the school to reinforce pupils' learning. An

extension of the use of fieldwork has been identified as a priority for further development. Pupils speak enthusiastically of their work in geography.

81. In **history**, teaching in the lesson seen was again good and pupils were fascinated by the activity of transcribing their names into hieroglyphs. Scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' earlier work indicates that pupils are taught an appropriate and balanced range of topics from the required curriculum. Pupils' completed work and that on display around the school indicate that history is well integrated into study in other subjects. In Year 1, for example, pupils' work on the Victorians was enhanced in design and technology as they built a model of a kitchen range. Pupils were able to discuss aspects of their work in history in detail and with enthusiasm. Pupils in Year 6, for example, talked extensively about their work on Britain since 1930 and the Victorians. Pupils have good opportunities to extend their historical skills with the use of computers.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning is consistently good;
- Standards have improved since the last inspection and achievement is good.

Commentary

82. Although only two lessons were observed, evidence has also been taken from circle time and lessons in personal, social, health and citizenship education, which are closely linked to the themes in religious education and collective worship. Standards are broadly in line with those expected throughout the school, but they are improving, and pupils achieve well. Whilst the larger part of teaching reflects Christian traditions, the school aims to prepare pupils for life in a multicultural society. Core values of mutual respect, understanding and tolerance form the basis of teaching. Daily acts of worship reinforce these values.
83. By the end of Year 2 pupils understand about their development as individuals within a community, together with an acceptance of others' beliefs and values. The focus religions at this stage are Christianity and Islam, with pupils helped to understand how others worship. Pupils are able to talk and write about places that are special to them. They are familiar with Christian festivals such as Christmas and Easter. Teaching from the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin successfully establishes the overall meaning of some of the stories of Jesus.
84. By the end of Year 6 pupils are aware that more than one religion teaches that God created the world. Pupils have a good understanding of the consequences of pollution on the environment. They know that tree felling, graffiti, and dropping litter all have a detrimental impact. Taking account of some of these issues they can identify what they would like and dislike in an ideal world, producing good quality independent writing. The study of other religions focuses on Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Islam and Judaism. Visits to a mosque and synagogue are very valuable in providing a greater insight into the practices and beliefs of those who follow other religions. However, some parents have been reluctant to allow their children to take part. Pupils show a willingness to express their ideas, which they can do maturely, and they enjoy discussing their work on best friends and pilgrimages to Mecca. They have adequate time to reflect on their personal responsibilities.
85. The quality of teaching is good, effectively supported with the introduction of the new agreed syllabus. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers already have a good working knowledge of the new syllabus, which is more relevant to the needs of pupils and is compatible with the thematic approach that the school adopts. Teachers challenge pupils' thinking appropriately and they involve pupils with special educational needs very effectively in

discussions and other purposeful activities. Lessons are well planned, because teachers' subject knowledge is now very secure, which also enables them to make good cross-curricular links.

86. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Considerable efforts have been made to ensure that teachers have a more secure understanding of the purpose and content of the subject curriculum. Having received good training, the subject manager has been able to share this with her colleagues. The subject manager is effectively building a comprehensive bank of resources to support teaching and learning. Very good links have been established with two local churches and the school is now a member of the Bradford Interfaith Centre, which gives access to further resources and visiting speakers.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

87. It was possible to observe only a very small number of lessons in art and design, in design and technology, in music and in physical education during the inspection. Consequently there was insufficient evidence to support a judgement about provision in these subjects.
88. In **art and design**, pupils' work on display around the school indicates that they have good opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding and to extend their skills. The high quality of the work on display and that of pupils' other completed work indicates that overall standards are higher than those expected of pupils their age throughout the school. Pupils enjoy a rich variety of opportunities to develop a range of skills and this contributes to their good learning and the progress they make.
89. Right from the start very good opportunities are provided for pupils to find out about and work in the style of other artists. In reception, for example, the work of Kandinsky had provided the stimulus for work on colour, with children finger painting their own concentric circles showing how cleanly they could use paint. The range of pupils' skills is effectively extended, in the cut paper collage style of Henri Matisse for example, and work becomes more analytical, as pupils identify the features of Picasso's portraits and use them in their own portraits. At times very good use of ICT extends pupils skills, as when they had worked in the style of Andy Warhol using *Dazzle*. Skills are practised and so develop well. Good use is made of sketchbooks, for example, and from basic colour mixing to their studies of skin tones, the opportunities for pupils to investigate and explore possibilities enhance the development of their understanding and skills. By Year 6 pupils have developed their skills very well indeed. Their work on fruit, for example, shows how intently they observe, and how effectively they can simplify their drawings and then derive abstract shapes, which in turn inspires their relief sculptures on clay tiles.
90. Very good use is made of art to enhance pupils' work in other subjects. In history, collage and relief pictures extend pupils' work on the Great Fire of London, for example, and very high quality observational drawings of mini-beasts in Year 5 enhance pupils' work in science. The school promotes the development of pupils' skills very effectively and celebrates their achievements in the high quality of displays around the school.
91. In **design and technology** pupils' completed work shows that they work carefully with a variety of materials and equipment. They design and draw plans for the things they are going to make, and then decide what they are going to use. Observations of their work and discussions with pupils in Year 6 indicate that the school provides an appropriate variety of learning activities in this subject.
92. The subject manager has devised a very good series of design booklets to support the pupils' study of different topics and this enhances their learning effectively. The provision for the study of food technology has been enhanced by the input of the cook in charge of the school kitchen. Under supervision, pupils are taught to prepare simple healthy snacks and learn about the need for hygiene. There are good examples of design being used to support learning in other subjects. In history, for example, pupils design and make models of Tudor-style houses from

clay and Viking longboats from paper and cardboard. During the inspection the school was presented with an award as winners of *The Great Egg Race* competition. The criterion for this competition between local schools was to design a method of transporting an egg the longest distance using a rubber band.

93. In **music** the range of activities provided, both in lessons and as extra-curricular activities, plays an important part in contributing to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to sing in large key stage groups and they do so tunefully and enthusiastically. Teaching is good on these occasions, with the teacher leading the sessions effectively, providing appropriate indications of how pupils can improve by ensuring that diction is clear and that singing is tuneful. Pupils enjoy singing very much and join in with the actions enthusiastically.
94. Good opportunities are created for pupils to listen to music as they enter and leave the hall for collective worship. Music is chosen to reflect the chosen theme and at times pieces chosen are adventurous, such as the Chinese flute music played to accompany the story of *The Beautiful Valley*, and the piece by Peter Maxwell Davies, *Farewell to Stromness*.
95. In the lessons seen with pupils in Years 5 and 6 teaching was very good and in those with pupils in Years 1 and 2 it was satisfactory. The very good teaching was characterised by teachers who were sensitive to the needs of the pupils, who were very encouraging, but who continually focused on evaluating and improving what their pupils did. In the lesson with Year 6, for example, the teacher made very good use of a video camera to record his pupils' performance and used this to help them consider ways to improve. Such evaluation was a constant feature of these lessons and had a major impact on pupils' learning. Where teaching was satisfactory, learning was good, but at times teachers moved their pupils on too quickly to other activities without providing sufficient time for them to reinforce their understanding or practise their skills. Nevertheless in both these lessons there were good opportunities for pupils to compose their own music.
96. In **physical education** it was not possible to observe a sufficient number of lessons to support a judgement about overall provision. However, the school rightly has a very good reputation for its sporting success and the range of extra-curricular sporting activities is very good. Standards of work in some areas are very high, as is borne out by the record of successes that pupils achieve both in and beyond school. Activities include football, ballet, swimming, athletics and gymnastics. Pupils are able to display their skills in town, county and national competitions, enjoying considerable success in football, netball, tag rugby, and gymnastics for both boys and girls. The school is currently seeking to achieve the *Activemark* award for excellence in physical education.
97. The school is well supported by the local sports college. Community links with local football, rugby, athletics and leisure clubs are also very productive. Specialist involvement enables teachers to continually build upon their skills of Kwik Cricket, rugby, gymnastics and dance, including Asian dance.
98. A wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities complements an appropriate scheme of work, which has been adapted to suit the needs of the school. Activities take place each day and are very well attended. Five teaching staff, three teaching assistants, one student and three parents currently coach or assist with coaching in out-of-hours' activities. All pupils are able to swim at least 25 metres by the time they leave school. All have an opportunity during their time in school to go on a residential visit.
99. Leadership and management of the two subject co-ordinators are very strong. They continue to influence both staff and pupils with their enthusiasm and high level of subject knowledge. Resources for physical education are very good. They are of very good quality, well used by pupils and are maintained on a regular basis.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

100. Close links with religious education, daily acts of worship and circle time all enhance overall provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. The subject manager is developing this area well. The school now has a more interactive curriculum for personal, social, health and citizenship education, which is linked to issues identified in pupils' home/school diaries.

101. Although insufficient lessons were observed to support an overall judgement of teaching, in the two lessons seen both teaching and learning were good. Pupils achieve well and are able to speak at length about their own personal thoughts. By Year 6 pupils have strong opinions on some issues, which they are able to support with good evidence. Teachers are good at developing pupils' confidence; some are particularly good at drawing on their own experiences to inform their teaching. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is generally secure, which is significantly improved since the previous inspection. Circle time is well prepared and it was evident in the sessions seen that teachers knew their pupils well.

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	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
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	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	1
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
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	1
The leadership of other key staff	3
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).