

INSPECTION REPORT

PICKHILL CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

THIRSK

LEA area: NORTH YORKSHIRE

Unique reference number: 121510

Headteacher: Mrs R Hayes

Lead inspector: Mike Warman

Dates of inspection: 8th – 9th March 2004

Inspection number: 257192

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	52
School address:	The Green Pickhill Thirsk North Yorkshire
Postcode:	YO7 4JL
Telephone number:	01845 567339
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Peter Brunt
Date of previous inspection:	22 June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a very small primary school. There are 52 pupils on roll organised into 3 classes catering for pupils in Reception/Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6. There are three full time teachers, including the headteacher, and one 0.2 to cover the headteacher's administration time. The school serves the village of Pickhill, which is not far from Thirsk, and nearby villages. The attainment of children on entry to Reception is broadly average. No pupils are entitled to free school meals. All pupils are from white British backgrounds and none speak English as an additional language. A few pupils (4) are identified as having special educational needs which require the school to take appropriate action. The school received an Achievement Award in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1516	Mike Warman	Lead inspector	Mathematics, art and design, geography, history, music, religious education, special educational needs
19431	John Holmes	Lay inspector	
1718	Kay Charlton	Team inspector	English, science, information and communication technology, design and technology, physical education, Foundation Stage curriculum, English as an additional language

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school. Standards in Year 2 and in Year 6 are well above average in English, mathematics and science, and pupils have made very good progress since they started in Reception. The quality of teaching and learning is very good, and overall standards of leadership and management are very good. The school gives very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Overall academic standards are very high.
- The quality of teaching is very good, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils make very good progress. They work hard and want to learn.
- Pupils behave very well and have very positive attitudes. Relationships are excellent.
- The headteacher is an excellent leader.
- Parents are very supportive of the school and are active partners in helping their children to make progress.
- The school's procedures for checking its performance are too informal.

Improvement has been very good since the school was previously inspected in 1998. Standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) are now much higher. The quality of teaching has improved significantly. The quality of leadership and management has been strengthened. There is an improved and effective whole school approach to curriculum planning so that all subjects now receive sufficient time and there is detailed guidance to support teachers in their planning.

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	A*	A	A
Mathematics	C	A*	A*	A*
Science	A	A	A*	A*

*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. Caution is needed in interpreting this data as numbers of pupils in each of the year groups are small*

Pupils achieve very well. Current standards in Year 2 are well above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Standards in Year 6 are well above average in English, mathematics and science. Boys and girls do equally well. Overall standards in the 2003 national tests in mathematics and science were in the top 5 per cent in the country. In English, although results were well above average they were slightly lower because pupils' writing was not quite as good. The Year 6 pupils who sat the tests in 2003 did very well indeed in comparison with the standards they had reached four years earlier when they were in Year 2. The children who started in Reception in September 2003 have made very good progress, and are on course to exceed the goals expected by the time they enter Year 1. Current standards in ICT and the other subjects inspected in Year 2 and in Year 6 are above the expected levels. Standards in religious education exceed the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus in Year 2 and in Year 6. Overall, the school has maintained high standards over recent years. Challenging targets have been set for the pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 6 for the test results in 2004 which, evidence indicates, they are on track to reach.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. They behave very well and have very positive attitudes to school and to learning. Relationships are excellent. Pupils have a very clear understanding of right and wrong, and an increasing awareness of life in a culturally diverse society. Levels of attendance are very high and punctuality is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education provided by the school is **very good**.

Teaching is very good overall, with particular strengths in the teaching of English, mathematics and science. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subjects, which gives the pupils confidence as learners. Work is planned thoroughly and is carefully matched to the different ages and abilities within the classes so that all pupils can make very good progress. Teachers have a high expectation of what pupils can achieve and detailed supportive dialogue indicates how they can improve; consequently, pupils learn very effectively. They are very well behaved, work hard and happily to meet the many intellectual challenges they are given. They respond very well to the very good teaching observed in many lessons.

The curriculum is very good. It is enriched by many challenging opportunities, including French and other extra-curricular activities. The current provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good for all the areas inspected in full. Provision for the care and welfare of all pupils is very good. There is a very strong partnership with parents, who support the school's work very effectively, and the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, **leadership and management are very good**. The headteacher is an excellent leader. She is strongly supported by the governing body and a committed staff team. There is full compliance with all statutory requirements. The role of subject leaders has been strengthened, and they are having an increasing impact on standards and levels of achievement. Management is good but the way the school checks on its performance is too informal to ensure it maintains its present high standards.

PARENTS AND PUPILS VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very pleased with the school and the very good progress their children make. They feel their children are achieving very well and are happy. They are very positive about all aspects of its work and are pleased with the help they receive. The pupils are proud of and like their school and feel it helps them to achieve high standards.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to maintain the high standards are:

- Formalise the arrangements for checking on the school's performance.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

Standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Achievement for all pupils is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment in the current Year 2 is well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. It is also well above average in English, mathematics and science in Year 6.
- Pupils in Years 1 to 6 make very good progress in English, mathematics and science as they move through the school. They make better than expected progress in ICT and other subjects of the curriculum.
- Children in Reception are on course to exceed the early learning goals for communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and for personal and social education.

Commentary

1. The results of the reading, writing and mathematics tests for pupils in Year 2 in the summer of 2003 were very good and were in the top 5 per cent when compared to schools across the country. All five pupils reached the higher level 3 in reading and mathematics and a high proportion did so in writing. Girls and boys did equally well. The results were very high in comparison with schools containing pupils from similar backgrounds. Although with small numbers of pupils in year groups, it is expected that results will fluctuate from year to year, the 2003 results are the best that have been achieved for four years.
2. The results of the English, mathematics and science tests for pupils in Year 6 were also very high in comparison with other schools nationally. In mathematics and science they were in the top 5 per cent in the country. The percentage of pupils who attained the higher level 5 was above the national average for English, and well above average for mathematics and science. Boys and girls did equally well in all three subjects. Crucially, the year group achieved very high results when compared with their own previous attainment in Year 2. Again, although with small numbers of pupils in year groups results tend to fluctuate, standards have mostly been at a similarly high level for three years.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.0 [31.8]	26.8 [27.0]
Mathematics	30.0 [30.6]	26.8 [26.7]
Science	32.5 [30.6]	28.6 [28.3]

There were 12 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. The school has set challenging targets for pupils in the current Year 2 and Year 6 to reach by the summer of 2004. Pupils are well on course to achieve them.
4. Standards in religious education exceed the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus in Year 2 and in Year 6. Standards in ICT, below expected levels at the time of the previous inspection, are now above expected levels. Standards in all other subjects inspected are above the expected levels. There was insufficient evidence to judge standards in design and

technology, music and physical education. Standards in all areas of the curriculum have improved significantly since the school was last inspected.

5. Achievement is very good in English, mathematics and science. Achievement in all other subjects is good. Very good progress can be seen in the many lessons when the high quality of teaching inspires pupils to great effort. Pupils with special educational needs and those of higher ability achieve equally as well as all other pupils as their needs are very well met.
6. Although some children in Reception start school with higher skill levels than is expected nationally, overall standards are broadly average. Children develop very well in all aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum and are on course to exceed the early learning goals expected for their age by the end of the summer term. They make very good progress overall.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal qualities are very good. Attendance rates are very high and pupils' behaviour is very good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. These areas continue to be a strength as at the time of the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships are excellent.
- The staff team make learning interesting so that very positive attitudes are established.
- Pupils are confident, friendly and thoughtful.
- Attendance rates reflect the pupils' desire to attend school.

Commentary

7. Pupils are proud of their school. They are happy and eager to learn. Every effort is made by the school to make learning purposeful and interesting and pupils are keen to get on with their tasks. Parents confirm that their children enjoy coming to school. Staff value each pupil as an individual and they have built up a climate that successfully develops pupils' confidence, independence and self-esteem. Pupils respond very positively to their high expectations and develop very good levels of personal responsibility. A noticeable example was when the pupils in the oldest class very effectively set up a range of science investigations almost entirely on their own.
8. Relationships are excellent and founded on mutual respect. Older and younger pupils work and play together very well in a family atmosphere. In lessons, pupils work together very effectively in pairs and groups, and their level of co-operation is very high. Support for pupils who are new to the school is very good. The school's behaviour policy is operated consistently by all staff and pupils' behaviour is very good. The school is a harmonious community, and pupils indicate, free from bullying.
9. Pupils' spiritual and moral development are very good. The school provides many rich opportunities for them to develop their spiritual awareness and reflect on their own values and beliefs, as well as those of others. Times for quiet reflection and prayer occur at different times during the school day. These are handled very sensitively and pupils respond very well. Pupils' moral development is very good. They learn to be responsible members of the school community and readily follow the school's rules. They are self-disciplined, thoughtful and sensitive to the needs of others.
10. Social development is very good. Adults know the pupils well and the strong rapport is evident in the maturity of the pupils. They accept responsibility and from an early age, listen to one another. They enjoy the many occasions where pupils from age four to eleven operate as a whole group. Pupils' cultural awareness is extended very well. Pupils show very good

levels of respect for the feelings and beliefs of others. They benefit from the wide range of activities, including visits out of school that help them to understand about different cultures and they are well prepared for life in a diverse multi-cultural society.

Attendance

Attendance rates are very high in comparison with all schools. Pupils come to school on time. The very high attendance reflects parents' commitment to the school and that the pupils enjoy coming to school. Parents are very good at notifying the school about absence. The school has very good systems in place to monitor and promote good attendance.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002/3

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.0	School data	0.0
National data	4.1	National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

There were no exclusions in the last school year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Provision is very good. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good. Curricular provision is very good. The school makes very good provision for the care and welfare of all its pupils. Teachers know pupils very well and provide very good support and guidance. The school has developed strong links with parents and values the support that it receives in return.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good, with particular strengths in the teaching of English, mathematics and science in all classes.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Work is matched very carefully to pupils' ability and they are able to make very good progress
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, and detailed, supportive dialogue indicates how they can improve
- Pupils learn very effectively. They are very well behaved, and work hard to meet the many intellectual challenges they are given.
- Teachers use ICT very well to support pupils' learning.
- The arrangements for assessing pupils' work are very good.

Commentary

11. All teaching seen during the inspection was at least good, a high proportion of lessons were very good and two were outstanding. The quality of teaching has risen significantly since the previous inspection.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 14 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	8	4	0	0	0	0

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

12. Teachers plan very carefully, and will adjust their lessons if they find that pupils need more time to understand a particular point or are ready for more challenging work. This increases the progress pupils make. Teachers have a very good understanding of the subjects they teach and expect the pupils to work hard. Pupils respond positively because they respect their teachers' knowledge and ask questions confidently so that they can understand more clearly. They use 'new' vocabulary in their own answers, knowing what it means. For example, in a lesson observed a child in Reception said that 'gravity makes it go down'. In a Year 5/6 science lesson pupils confidently talked about how they were going to ensure their results were 'reliable' during an investigation on forces. Most lessons include a range of activities that is very well matched to pupils' different abilities, enabling everyone to be fully involved in the 'main' teaching and consequently to be successful in their work in groups. Teachers make very effective use of their knowledge of pupils' progress to set work at correct levels of difficulty and to adjust the pace of learning. The key to the very good teaching is the careful explanation and attention to detail so that all pupils understand the concept and achieve very well. In this way pupils of all abilities achieve as well as they can. For example, in one very good lesson on rivers and the water cycle, the teacher took great care to explain the difference between the way people in different parts of the world collect water so that one pupil understood what a reservoir is. The teaching assistant plays a very important part in supporting individual pupils or groups within the classroom or in a quiet area where they can work uninterrupted.
13. Pupils learn effectively because they are very well taught. Lessons move forward briskly, but with sufficient time for each activity to be completed in sufficient depth. Pupils find the resources teachers use very stimulating and particularly enjoy using the internet to find out information for their topics. All teachers use ICT very well to support pupils' learning and make lessons interesting. Pupils are very well behaved, want to learn and work hard to meet the many challenges they are given. During discussion pupils said they are expected to work hard and know how the school helps them do well.
14. Homework is set on a regular basis, and in accordance with the school's published policy. Parents at the meeting felt that homework played an important part in their child's learning and high standards. The level is similar to that found in many schools, and many of the tasks are opportunities for research or individual investigation, and play an important part in consolidating class learning and giving pupils opportunities to extend their knowledge.
15. The results of regular assessments are used effectively to set targets and measure pupils' progress towards them. Books are marked carefully, and contain comments that show the pupils how they can improve. Pupils have individual targets in English and mathematics and know that they need to work hard to achieve them. Pupils with special educational needs have clear individual education plans which set out the steps they need to take to improve. These are shared with parents as well as pupils, and are reviewed on a regular basis.

The curriculum

The curriculum provided by the school is very good. It is fully inclusive and is enriched by many challenging opportunities and activities. The accommodation is satisfactory overall and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The breadth of the curriculum is very good for pupils of all abilities
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good
- The curriculum is enriched by visits and visitors
- There is a good range of extra-curricular activities

Commentary

16. The range of learning opportunities is very good and meets statutory requirements. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Schemes of work ensure that the teaching of skills and knowledge in all subjects is planned clearly at an appropriate level for pupils of all abilities, including those with particular gifts or talents. Provision for pupils with special needs is very good and they are well supported.
17. The school provides pupils with a very good range of interesting and stimulating activities including French and visits to places of interest such as Eden Camp, Darlington Railway Museum and an art day at Fountains Abbey. Visitors, such as professional musicians and local clergy, add depth and immediacy to the curriculum. Parents make an active contribution by providing resources and supporting the work in classrooms and on school outings. The curriculum prepares pupils very well for their move to secondary school, a fact remarked on by parents at the meeting.
18. Pupils receive very good support for their personal development. There is an effective drugs' awareness programme and other activities successfully promote pupils' personal, social and health education. Provision for extra-curricular learning is very good. For a small school a good number of clubs are organised, including computers, games club and cycling awareness. Pupils' participation in the arts and sport is good. Many pupils have the opportunity to learn an instrument and teams from the school have achieved good success in local sporting fixtures in football, cricket, swimming and athletics.
19. There is a good match of teachers and other staff to the needs of the curriculum. The level of accommodation is satisfactory although there are limitations on the curriculum and standards due to lack of indoor space for physical education. However, the school uses the outside very well, whenever possible, and provides swimming lessons for all pupils weekly. The school grounds and the immediate area beyond provide a valuable resource for play and learning.
20. Resources for learning are generally good. The range and variety of books available in the school library are good. Resources for ICT are good and have played their part in improving standards and also the good use made of ICT by teachers and pupils across the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good. The school pays very good attention to the care, safety and well being of all its pupils. They are well guided, advised and supported throughout their time in school. The school involves pupils very effectively in its continued development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The induction arrangements for children starting school are very effective in helping them to settle in quickly
- All staff support pupils very well so that they are able to learn quickly and do their best

- Pupils are provided with many opportunities to say what they think about their school.

Commentary

21. The school has very good procedures to ensure the safety and well being of all its pupils. Child protection procedures meet requirements fully. Very close attention is paid to health and safety both in lessons and through regular checks. Pupils feel safe in school and particularly value the fact that there is always an adult to turn to in time of need. They like being part of a small school because 'we all look after each other'.
22. Induction arrangements for children starting school are very good. Children have the opportunity to visit the school several times before they start in their Reception Year. This helps them to develop very good, trusting relationships with staff and to feel secure.
23. Pupils' personal and academic development is well monitored. All staff know the pupils very well as individuals. Staff are skilled at analysing the outcomes of tests and use the results to set challenging individual targets. Teachers use marking and discussion successfully to help pupils to understand how well they are doing and how to achieve their targets and improve their work. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs have a tight focus so that pupils are able to learn effectively in small steps. The pupils and their parents are fully included in setting new targets and reviewing progress towards those previously agreed. Pupils are willing to seek support and guidance when they have concerns, confident that they will be readily available.
24. Pupils take a real pride in their school because they know their views matter. In discussion they expressed their views confidently because they know that they will contribute to positive changes in school life.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The parents enjoy a very good partnership with the school. The school has very good links with both the community and with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents think very highly of the school.
- Very good links with other schools and the community exist.
- Very good information is provided for parents.

Commentary

25. Parents say the school is welcoming and friendly with approachable staff. Parents support the school very well and those attending the parents' meeting were very positive about its work and showed that they were very well informed about what goes on in the school. Parents feel the school works very closely with them and that teachers know pupils and parents well enabling them to help. The questionnaire return was very good with an overwhelming level of support for the school. The very good relationship parents have with the school helps them to have a significant impact on their children's learning.
26. There are only a few parents who help in school on a regular basis but, if needed to assist on visits and trips, the school has many volunteers. The school has a thriving 'Friends of Pickhill School Association', which is not only a fund raising organisation but is also used very effectively to canvas opinions of parents. The school takes seriously, and deals very effectively with, any concerns from parents. The school informs parents of the need for their children to attend regularly and not to take holidays in term time unless unavoidable; parents are very good at getting their children to attend regularly.

27. The teachers are all available to talk to parents at the end of the day and the consultation evenings held each term enable them to be well informed about their child's progress. The reports to parents are good and contain targets for improvement but these are not always sufficiently precise in the core subjects to inform parents of what their child needs to do next in each subject. The school has a very informative prospectus and annual report to parents, which provide very good information and both fully meet the statutory requirements. The school also provides very good information for parents in the form of regular newsletters, some of which are produced by pupils demonstrating very good ICT skills as they reproduce photographs taken with the digital camera to illustrate the articles.
28. The school has very good links with the community and is a central part of the village life. The Parish Council and History Society use the school and a Photographic Group is starting in the near future. The villagers attend school events such as the Strawberry Fair and the Bonfire, they also support functions like fashions shows and craft fairs. The school enjoys close links with the church and is redeveloping its links with the local playgroup. The school has students from the local college normally on a two-year cycle although this year they have taken additional students.
29. The transition arrangements are very good with the secondary schools that Pickhill Primary feeds. Teachers from the two main schools that receive pupils come into school and talk to pupils and show a video of what the school is like. The pupils then spend two days in the secondary school prior to transfer. The school takes part in inter-school events at the secondary schools, for example the swimming gala and the science and technology day.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is very good. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and that of other key staff is very good. Governance of the school is good, as is the effectiveness of management.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is determined that all pupils in the school will achieve of their best.
- The working arrangements of staff with particular responsibilities are very effective.
- The systems used by governors to check on the overall performance of the school are too informal.
- All pupils are valued and included very well.
- All staff are valued for their contributions to the school.

Commentary

30. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. She shows a keen determination to ensure the highest possible standards in all areas of the school's work and sets very high expectations for all. She has a sense of pride in the school's achievements and is continually striving for improvement. She provides a clear vision for the work of the school. Staff are valued and individual strengths are used to advantage. All are making a significant contribution to school improvement. The school has a deservedly high reputation.
31. Staff with specific responsibilities work together very well. Thorough planning and assessment ensure a good focus to the development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in each subject and that the wide range of pupils' needs in each class is met. The school improvement plan is a meaningful document to which all staff and governors have made an active contribution. The school has undertaken a careful analysis of the its results and initiated a very useful system to target improvement for each pupil. This is playing a vital part in informing future whole school planning.
32. The headteacher and all staff ensure that the aims and values of the school are reflected very well in its work. It is a very inclusive school. There is a strong commitment to ensuring

equality of opportunity, particularly to ensure that all pupils are included in the curriculum, and this is evident in practice. There is a good focus on ensuring that pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into the school community

33. Governance of the school is good. The headteacher, staff and governors work together well. The governing body, with its valuable range of expertise, is committed to ensuring the best possible standard of education for all pupils and works closely with everyone in the school to help shape its direction. Governors understand their role clearly and ensure that all statutory responsibilities are met. Working with the headteacher, they have recently started to introduce a more formalised procedure for monitoring the overall performance of the school. However, at present this procedure is not sufficiently systematic to ensure that the school's current very high standards are maintained.
34. The management of the school is good. The performance management policy for staff has been introduced effectively. It is focussed on improving standards and is successful in developing a culture of reflection amongst staff. It ensures a good level of support for staff in their professional development but is not linked into a systematic programme of whole school monitoring. There is very good financial planning and the school makes effective use of its available resources. The school works appropriately to the principles of best value, for example comparisons are made with other schools in terms of standards and a good level of consultation and comparison of price takes place before major decisions are made. Spending decisions are linked closely to educational priorities and overall the school is well resourced. Specific grants are used effectively, for example recent grant aid to support the development of ICT has been used very well to raise standards. There is very good financial control and administration and the recommendations of the latest auditor's report have been acted upon appropriately.
35. Overall, the leadership and management of the school have improved very well since the time of the last inspection.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	183,722
Total expenditure	175,051
Expenditure per pupil	3,302

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year (2001/2002)	19,389
Balance carried forward to the next year	8,671

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

FOUNDATION STAGE

36. All of the children in the Foundation Stage enter school in the September of the year in which they become five. They are taught in a mixed Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 class with 19 children on roll. The class teacher is supported by a well trained assistant for most of the week. There is a wide range of attainment on entry but taken overall children's attainment is average.
37. The provision is well managed and there has been good improvement since the time of the last inspection when the children were judged to make satisfactory progress. The school has recognised the need to enhance further the opportunities for children to work and play in the outdoors as part of the programme.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good** and forms a firm foundation for children's development in all other areas of learning

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well because of the high expectations set by staff.
- Children's behaviour is very good.
- Excellent relationships are established and children develop confidence and independence very effectively.

Commentary

38. Children achieve very well and are on course to exceed the expected standards. Teaching is very good with staff providing good role models and setting high expectations of children. The children respond very well to the warm welcome from all staff and show a good sense of belonging to Pickhill School. Routines are very well organised and children settle very quickly and develop confidence and independence. Behaviour management is consistent and fair, and consequently children behave very well. Children learn to take turns and share equipment, and they concentrate on their activities very well. They gain much from being in a class with older pupils and quickly develop good social skills. The school provides very good opportunities for children to develop understanding that people have different needs, views and beliefs that should be respected.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall, teaching is very good and children achieve very well.
- Children are on course to exceed the expected standards by the end of the year.
- Children enjoy learning to read and write.

Commentary

39. The teacher plans a wide range of activities to support children's development and in the main these are very effective. Occasionally, when the extra support from the teaching assistant is not available the pace of learning slows.
40. Staff and older pupils present good models of spoken language and children widen their vocabulary very well. Many speak confidently in different situations and show very good skills in listening. Children are learning the early skills of reading very well. There is a very systematic approach with a high level of individual attention given to the development of children's understanding. Staff read stories in an interesting way and encourage children to develop a love of books. Children are able to answer questions about stories they have read and can retell their favourite ones. A good emphasis is given to children learning about the ways in which books are organised and they learn to handle books with care. Staff encourage children effectively to learn the sounds and shapes of letters of the alphabet and children apply these in their reading and writing. Writing is developed very well. Children learn to write for different purposes. Many are able to write simple sentences by the end of the year and can talk knowledgeably about their writing. A good emphasis is given by all adults, including parents, working with the children, to helping them establish good pencil control and correct letter formation.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematics development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Children develop number skills very well.
- Particularly good emphasis is placed on children learning mathematical vocabulary.

Commentary

41. Children achieve very well and are on course to exceed the expected standards by the end of the year. Staff encourage children to count and use numbers in a wide variety of situations and many work reliably up to ten and a few are working beyond that. Children enjoy mathematics and benefit very well from some of the well paced oral sessions that take place as well as interesting practical activities that encourage problem solving. They learn to record their thinking in a range of different ways. Children develop a good understanding of the concepts of shape, space and measures. They talk with good understanding about the properties of different shapes; they can recognise and recreate simple patterns and make good comparisons using size and quantity. Staff insist on children using the correct mathematical language and children develop a wide ranging mathematical vocabulary. Occasionally, when the teacher works with the whole class on her own, the pace of children's learning slows but it is usually very good.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- A wide range of very well thought-out activities form the basis of the programme.
- Visits and the environment are used very effectively.

- Resources are very well organised to support this area.

Commentary

42. Children achieve very well. Most are on course to exceed the expected outcomes for children this age. The classroom, outdoor play area, school grounds, the immediate locality and visits further afield are used very well to support the children's learning. Very good opportunities are provided for them to learn about living things. They grow plants from seeds and notice how young shoots appear in Spring. They investigate different materials and develop understanding about their uses. In a recent topic about toys, children have developed good understanding about the difference between 'pushing' and 'pulling'. They confidently use the computer, for example to generate designs, and make very good use of a digital camera. They have ample opportunity to use their imagination and discover different ways of joining items. They design and make objects such as simple toys, and are beginning to record what they have done and the materials they used. Children very effectively learn about the immediate environment and know that many different buildings make up the village. They know about people who help the community such as the Fire Service and through topics, for example about 'Ourselves,' children effectively learn about concepts of 'change'. In this way they gain an understanding about the difference between the past and the present. They have good opportunities to learn about different cultures, for example through the work undertaken on Chinese New Year.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

43. In the short time available for the inspection it was not possible to observe this area of learning. Teachers' planning and a consideration of children's work show that a suitable programme is in place.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

44. In the short time available for the inspection it was not possible to observe this area of learning. Teachers' planning and a consideration of children's work show that a suitable programme is in place.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good** and standards have continued to rise since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain high standards by Year 2 and Year 6 and achieve very well.
- Pupils of different abilities make very good progress over time
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good
- The setting of pupil targets has been particularly helpful in raising standards.
- Leadership is very good.

Commentary

45. Standards in speaking and listening are well above those generally seen. Pupils of all ages listen carefully in lessons and contribute ideas with confidence. They show respect for each other's ideas. Older pupils can describe clearly their knowledge of a subject, for example, when describing what they know about the various history topics they have studied often using an interesting and mature vocabulary. They are prepared to express their opinions and ideas openly; for example, in the playground when older pupils explained how disagreements and quarrels may cause upset.
46. A strong emphasis is given to reading and pupils develop a good sense of enjoyment in reading. They learn to read with accuracy and understanding. At an early age pupils can explain that different books are organised in different ways and that some are story books and others give information. By Year 2, many read fluently and with expression and are good at predicting what might happen next in the story. In Year 6, pupils show good levels of comprehension and are developing clear ideas about their favourite authors. Many appreciate the underlying ideas and subtleties in text. Pupils can explain clearly why they like certain books giving informed reasons for their choice, for example that they appreciate how the character is feeling. They also refer to what they consider to be successful use of writing techniques by the author, for example when one pupil explained why she thought a simile that referred to 'a dinosaur's bottom' was particularly effective. Pupils of different ages use a library, indexes, glossaries and contents' pages successfully to find information from books.
47. Writing is developed very well by the time pupils leave the school. Pupils of all ages are benefiting from the school's recent focus on improving writing. In Years 1 and 2, pupils develop good understanding about the need to include different characters to make a story interesting. Most pay good attention to letter formation and present their work very well. Spelling is usually good. In Years 3 to 6 pupils' writing is developed very effectively. Pupils further develop their understanding about the need to write in different styles for different purposes and show good understanding of this in their work. Progressively they learn to draft and redraft their work in order to achieve a final copy. Care is taken with presentation and handwriting is good. Pupils use vocabulary in imaginative ways, for example in some of their writing based on the book 'The War of the Worlds'.
48. Teaching is very good overall. Staff are very secure in the subject and use the technical vocabulary associated with it well, for example when describing parts of a word and grammatical structures. Very effective use is made of different texts to engage pupils' interests. A strong focus is given to teaching reading in all lessons. Also, pupils receive a significant amount of individual attention from adults in learning to read and there is a well thought out approach to encouraging pupils' independence in reading. Attention is paid to the wide range of levels of understanding in the classes and activities are set which are well

matched to pupils' needs and abilities. All pupils are given targets to indicate how they might improve their work and pupils try hard to achieve these. Pupils concentrate very well throughout lessons. They respond particularly well to the high expectations which are made of them in the class for the oldest pupils. Teachers and the teaching assistant work very well together and pupils with special educational needs are very well supported. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and these support teaching and learning very well, for example when staff and pupils enjoy a moment of humour together.

49. Leadership of the subject is very effective. Teachers work together well on subject development. They have achieved very good improvement since the last inspection and have clear ideas about the next steps forward. Resources are good and the library is used effectively to support learning.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

50. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented and adapted successfully to suit a small school situation. Cross-curricular links are strong. Pupils often write creatively and at length in other subjects, especially in history. High level skills in discussion are evident in subjects like science and religious education.

MATHEMATICS

The provision for mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average in all classes and pupils achieve very well.
- Pupils are very well taught and make very good progress.
- Standards have risen significantly since the previous inspection.
- The subject is very well led.
- Good use is made of assessment to modify the curriculum, to track individual pupils' progress and to set targets.

Commentary

51. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are well above average, and pupils in both year groups are on course to achieve very good results in the 2004 national tests, especially at the higher levels. This is because they are taught to a consistently high standard in all classes and teachers have high but realistic expectations of what the pupils can achieve with effort. The pupils themselves enjoy mathematics and are very keen to be successful. The talk about how they like having to solve problems and working out the correct solution. Standards have improved considerably since the previous inspection when they were judged to be average. Pupils' books demonstrate very good progress within lessons and assessments indicate very good progress term by term against challenging targets. Throughout the school pupils demonstrate very good knowledge of all areas of the mathematics curriculum. They have good computation skills and work with a high level of accuracy.
52. The quality of teaching is very good because teachers have a very secure mathematical knowledge, plan very thoroughly, drawing on the guidance in the National Numeracy Strategy, and take great care to set work that challenges and interests pupils at the correct level of difficulty. Pupils learn very effectively because they are taught to understand mathematical concepts and ideas, rather than just learning the mechanical processes that will get a correct answer. Teachers use mathematical language extensively in their teaching. Pupils listen carefully, and use the 'new' vocabulary accurately in their own answers. Pupils in Year 6 were observed working out their own rules to find the area of a triangle using their existing knowledge. This increases their mathematical understanding and confidence. Pupils with special educational needs receive individual help when needed, are fully included in all

lessons, and make very good progress. Pupils who are more able are given very challenging work that requires them to use their knowledge in a flexible way.

53. The subject is very well led and managed. School and national tests results are analysed carefully and changes are made to the curriculum where necessary. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully year by year, and targets are set that are realistic as well as challenging. Information and communication technology is well used to support pupils' understanding in mathematics.

Mathematics across the curriculum

54. Pupils make very good use of their numeracy skills in other subjects by, for example, making accurate measurement in science and understanding the sequence of historic events on a chronological time line. A very good example of cross-curricular numeracy was seen in a Year 5/6 lesson where pupils recorded their results and drew out trends to support their investigation about forces and the effect of friction. In another lesson pupils in Year 3/4 used line graphs to plot the change in temperature in different months of the year in the regions they are looking at and they knew why they used them, as opposed to other forms of graph.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are high and pupils achieve very well.
- The quality of teaching is very good.
- There is a strong emphasis on investigational science.
- The subject is very well led.
- Resources for learning are good and used very effectively.

Commentary

55. Pupils of different abilities achieve very well in all aspects of the subject. Pupils achieve a particularly high standard of investigative work with increasing development of scientific skills of observation, prediction, testing, recording and analysing as they move through the school. As they progress, they learn to communicate their findings by drawings, diagrams, bar charts, graphs, short and finally longer well thought out reports. All their recorded work shows a developing understanding of science. Older pupils identify patterns in data and give reasons for their conclusions, for example, why a toy car takes longer to travel down a slope covered with corrugated card as opposed to tissue paper. Pupils' developing knowledge of scientific vocabulary is evident, for example when older pupils explain the differences between solids, liquids and gases. Their understanding of materials was also demonstrated well in a discussion about the uses of different materials.
56. The quality of teaching in science is very good overall. One excellent lesson was observed in the oldest class. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and teachers know their pupils well and capture and sustain their interest very effectively. They plan exciting activities with very effective use of resources so pupils are enthusiastic about science. Planning is carefully thought out so that questioning and tasks are matched to pupils' different abilities. This ensures that every pupil has the opportunity to make progress at their own rate, building up their knowledge and understanding in science. Learning is also very effective because teachers use questioning particularly well to establish how much pupils have remembered from earlier lessons and to ensure they understand the scientific vocabulary they will be using. In the excellent lesson, the teacher set a particularly high expectation of the pupils in terms of work and behaviour and the pupils responded to this very well indeed. In all classes

pupils co-operate with one another, hold discussions and respect each other's views and these are key factors contributing to the high quality of their investigative work.

57. The subject is managed very effectively and overall there has been very good improvement since the last inspection. The teachers plan well together and plans provide good working documents. Assessment is very effective and the information used to guide future work. The outdoor environment, good resources in school and access to outside expertise are used well to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in science.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have risen since the previous inspection.
- Pupils achieve well.
- The ICT resources are used well.

Commentary

58. Standards by Year 2 and Year 6 are above those expected nationally. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.

59. By Year 2, pupils learn the basic operations of switching the computers on and off, loading and saving work, and controlling the computer by means of the keyboard and mouse. The school has developed a good range of appropriate software so that pupils enjoy using the computer. Pupils use the computer for a wide range of purposes, for example to write, draw pictures, analyse data, make music and play games. They have also had opportunities to use the Roamer programmable toy, giving it a series of commands in order to produce pre-planned movements. Throughout Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to improve their skills. By Year 6, they use ICT very competently, for example to present information, such as when using a multi-media package, exchange information and ideas with others in a variety of ways, including through the use of e-mail and the internet, and also to note patterns and trends in data. They learn to control events, such as a lighting system in a model lighthouse, and also to interpret data that has been collected through sensing devices. Throughout the school, pupils talk knowledgeably about the use of ICT in everyday life.

60. The quality of teaching is very good. Staff have improved their understanding since the time of the last inspection and are now very confident in the subject. Pupils learn very well because they are given clear instructions and plenty of opportunities to experiment, practise and learn from their mistakes. They also learn quickly because tasks are interesting and teachers' own positive approaches and interesting ideas catch their attention. For example, when pupils in Years 3 and 4, learned about the need to present information about rainfall in a line graph by downloading information from the internet about their 'chosen country' of study in geography. The teaching assistant supports the quality of teaching very well, for example when pupils were taught how to use a computer to create their own musical compositions and also how to use an electronic keyboard. There is a clear system of assessment in the subject and pupils benefit from being involved in recording information about the progress they are making.

61. The subject is very well managed with significant improvements over time. Resources are much improved and used to good effect.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

62. ICT skills are taught with relevant links to other subjects. Staff use ICT very well in all areas of the curriculum.

HUMANITIES

63. Insufficient observations could be made of history to be able to report in full so this subject was sampled using pupils' work, discussions with pupils and school planning. It is not possible, therefore, to judge provision. Standards in **history** are above expected levels by Year 6. Pupils in Year 3/4 demonstrated above average standards and achievement when they studied the features of the Ancient Olympic Games as part of their topic on the Ancient Greeks. They showed a good knowledge of the facts and were able to link them with the modern equivalent and their own school sports day.
64. In discussion, pupils in Year 6 demonstrated a good knowledge of the work they have covered including Britain since 1930. The main feature of their study was around the Second World War and the time immediately afterwards. They showed a good understanding of what life was like and the differences with today. They remembered their visit to Eden Camp very well and the experiences they had there which brought their studies to life.
65. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection so no overall judgement can be made on the quality of teaching. The teaching in this lesson was good. The lesson was well prepared with good resources that were well used to stimulate discussion. The lesson was well paced and pupils worked hard.
66. Co-ordination of the subject is good with a clear programme based on national guidance that ensures that pupils in the mixed-aged classes are gaining appropriate skills and knowledge.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision for religious education is good.

Main Strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above those normally expected and pupils achieve well.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards religious education.
- A good range of visits supports pupils' learning well.

Commentary

67. Standards in Year 2 are above those indicated in the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils have a secure understanding of the basic facts of Christianity, including baptism and the principal events in the life of Jesus. They talk sensibly about things that are of value and concern to others and appreciate what is meant by 'special'. Progress and achievement are good. Standards in Year 6 are also above expected levels. Pupils have a lively interest in religious education and enjoy expressing their own ideas and beliefs. They have a detailed recall of stories from the Bible, and a very good understanding of the principal facts of Christianity, including the importance of Easter and the Resurrection. Their analysis of the parable of the Good Samaritan showed that they can identify with stories Jesus told and make links with contemporary life. Pupils have a good recall of their learning about other faiths including Judaism and Hinduism. They talk very confidently about visits they have made to Christian places of worship and those of other faiths including a Hindu temple.
68. Co-ordination is good. The co-ordinator ensures that the subject has a high profile in the school. Resources are good, and effective use is made of a range of visits to local places of worship including the village church that the school has strong links with. Planning is carefully

linked to the North Yorkshire Agreed Syllabus and suitably adapted for the mixed-aged classes.

GEOGRAPHY

Provision for geography is good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average.
- There is a good emphasis on pupils developing skills and practical learning.
- Good use is made of a wide range of sources, including the internet for pupils to find information about the topics they are studying.

Commentary

69. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are above expected levels, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. The scrutiny of work and discussion with pupils shows a good emphasis on developing pupils' practical understanding of geography which supports their learning well. Year 6 pupils know the principal physical features of the British Isles. They explained why rainfall is greater in areas of high ground, making links with their knowledge of the water cycle, and why northern regions are colder than the south. Pupils in Year 3/4 are currently looking at the climatic regions of the world and the effects on weather of such factors as the nearness to the equator. They use a good range of sources to find the information they need to complete their work.
70. Teaching is good. Teachers are very clear about what they want pupils to learn and the particular skills they will develop. Consequently, pupils are clear about what is expected of them by the end of the lesson and they respond to this well. In the lessons seen good use was made of ICT to support pupils learning. Good use is made of the specific geographical vocabulary, for example as related to river profiles or climatic zones, with the result that pupils confidently use it in their answers.
71. Co-ordination of the subject is good with a clear programme based on national guidance that ensures that pupils in the mixed aged classes are gaining appropriate skills and knowledge.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

72. It was not possible to observe any lessons in art and design, design and technology, music or physical education so these subjects were sampled. It is not possible, therefore to judge provision.
73. An examination of the range of work on display indicates that standards in **art and design** by Year 6 are above average. Throughout, the school pupils have a good range of experiences and opportunities to develop their imagination and techniques. From the work seen it is evident that pupils built up good skills as they move through the school using a variety of media. Pupils in Years 3/4 are developing their skills using paint in a range of pictures showing different types of movement. They have also produced designs in the style of Seurat. In Years 5/6 pupils are showing very good skills in their pictures depicting reflections.
74. The subject is well led and managed. There is a good scheme of work that takes account of national guidance and the mixed aged classes.
75. An examination of pupils' work and teachers' planning and also discussion with pupils indicate that a suitable programme in **design and technology** is undertaken. There is good

emphasis given to the development of pupils understanding of the design, make and evaluate process.

76. The subject is well led and managed, and the co-ordinator has made improvements since the previous inspection. Effective use is made of national and local guidance to help ensure that the programme is both interesting and taught systematically.
77. It is not possible to make a judgement on standards or the quality of teaching and learning in **music**. From the small amount of singing seen during an assembly it is evident pupils enjoy this and do it well. Planning shows a good range of opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their skills and imagination.
78. A scrutiny of teachers' planning and also discussion with pupils indicates that a suitable programme in **physical education** is undertaken. A high emphasis is given to swimming and in this aspect pupils achieve very well. There are limitations with regard to the school building but the school makes suitable use of the outdoor environment to compensate.
79. The subject is well led and managed. Effective use is made of national and local guidance to help ensure that the programme is interesting and that pupils build up skills over time.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

80. No overall judgement of provision is possible because no lessons were seen during the inspection. However, pupils' personal development is a very high priority within the school and they are given a wide range of opportunities to discuss ideas, feelings and matters of importance within a context of trust and mutual respect. Pupils of all ages are mature and articulate, and discussions with them about their work indicated that they hold firm personal views, but respected those of others with different opinions. Pupils are made fully aware of social and moral issues appropriate to their ages and levels of understanding, and are actively encouraged to develop a healthy lifestyle.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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