

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ROWLEY LANE JUNIOR, INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL**

Lepton, Huddersfield

LEA area: Kirklees

Unique reference number: 107677

Headteacher: Mrs C A Martin

Lead inspector: Mr C Smith

Dates of inspection: 7<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> June 2004

Inspection number: 257365

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 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	456
School address:	Rowley Lane Lepton Huddersfield West Yorkshire
Postcode:	HD8 0JD
Telephone number:	01484 222745
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D B Whittle
Date of previous inspection:	May 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Rowley Lane is a large primary school catering for 415 pupils (206 boys and 188 girls) aged 4 to 11 years. The school has a nursery attached with 41 children attending part-time. The majority of children live in private houses within the village of Lepton. However, approximately a third choose to travel in from outlying rural areas. Five per cent of the children are eligible for free school meals, which is below average. Fifty-four children (13 per cent) have special educational needs, of which one child has a statement. These figures are lower than average. Pupils' special needs are largely related to learning, emotional or speech difficulties. Most children are white, although the school also caters for a very small number of children with Indian, Pakistani, Caribbean or mixed backgrounds. However, none of these children speak English as an additional language. Pupil numbers have increased considerably over recent years as the village has grown in size. Movement of families in and out of the school, although fairly typical, is high in some years as it was in 2003. The movement largely depends on how many pupils move at the end of Year 5 into middle school. The school has achieved two 'Achievement' awards for improved results in national tests and gained 'Investors in People' status for the attention paid to staff involvement and teamwork. There have been very few changes in staffing during the last two years, apart from new appointments made as pupil numbers have grown. Children enter the school with a wide range of levels of attainment but for the majority it is higher than expected for their age in most aspects.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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23887	Peter Nettleship	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Art and design Religious education
32750	Peter Jones	Team inspector	English Geography History Special educational needs English as an additional language
33260	Colin Wong	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Rowley Lane is an effective school that provides good value for money.** Pupils achieve well to reach well above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of their primary school years. Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are very good. Much of the school's success is attributable to effective teaching and learning but good leadership and management has also brought this about.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), history and physical education, and very well in art and design;
- Children get off to a good start in the nursery and reception classes;
- Strong leadership and management provide the impetus to drive up standards;
- Very good provision is made for pupils' personal development.

Good improvements have been made since the last inspection. Standards in several subjects have improved. Teaching and learning continue to be effective and pupils have maintained their enthusiasm for learning. The last inspection called for more rigorous assessment procedures. These have been implemented fully. Pupils' learning is now carefully tracked and swift action is taken when their achievement falters. There is also greater challenge for more able pupils and attention is now being given to extending the learning of the small number of gifted pupils, although there is still more to do in this area.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	B	A	B	C
mathematics	A	B	B	D
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 with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals.*

**Pupils' achievement is good.** Nursery and reception children achieve well and exceed the goals expected for their age in personal, mathematical and creative development and in knowledge and understanding of the world. They achieve steadily to reach the goals expected in language and literacy and physical development. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well overall. Results have been rising quickly in Year 2 and standards are above average in reading, mathematics, science and religious education, and are well above average in writing. Pupils from Years 3 to 6 also achieve well. Standards in English, mathematics and science in Year 6 are currently well above average and higher than in 2003, because of the effective action taken. Infant pupils achieve well in religious education. Infant and junior pupils achieve well in history and physical education and very well in art and design. Standards in these subjects are higher than the levels expected throughout the school. Highly effective support

from classroom assistants enables pupils with special educational needs to make good progress.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral and social development, are very good. Their cultural development is good.** Pupils' very positive attitudes and behaviour are reflected in their very good attendance and personal development. Relationships within school are excellent.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**Pupils benefit from the good quality of the education provided. Teaching is good throughout the school.** Good teaching in the nursery and reception classes enables children to learn effectively. The wide selection of purposeful activities provided fires children's curiosity and helps them to learn independently. Reading and mathematical skills are taught well, although children do not have sufficient opportunities to develop and improve their writing. The very good atmosphere for learning, common to all classes, encourages pupils to give of their best. Infant and junior teachers' good expertise enables them to explain new ideas clearly and use questioning profitably to ensure pupils' understanding. Teachers assess pupils' learning carefully to determine their levels of achievement. As a result, they provide a high level of challenge but adapt the tasks sensitively to match pupils' different learning needs. Many activities involve practical work and investigations. These increase pupils' motivation and also offer more able pupils good opportunities to advance their learning. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from very good support from teaching assistants. Resources, such as whiteboards, are used effectively to encourage pupils to test out their ideas. However, computers are not used enough to extend pupils' learning in several subjects.

The school provides a good curriculum. Pupils' successful learning in school is enriched through the very well organised programme of extra-curricular activities. Homework reinforces pupils' learning well and, along with the excellent information provided, keeps parents very well informed and involved with their children's development. Pupils' care, safety and well being are well taken care of and clear targets are set to help them to improve.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good.** Governance is very good. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are fully met. They provide strong support for the headteacher and maintain valuable contacts with year groups and subject leaders, which informs their decision making and enables them to evaluate the work of the school. The headteacher provides very good leadership. She secures strong commitment from the staff through very effective team building. The process of self-evaluation has gained in strength over the last year in response to disappointing 2003 test results. Checking on and improving the school's performance has become more rigorous and an integral part of the school's work. Although subject leaders make a valuable contribution to pupils' achievements, they do not have enough opportunities to check the quality of teaching across the school to ensure that the good achievement continues.

### **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

The school is very popular. Parents are very happy with the education provided for their children and the extent to which their involvement is welcomed. Pupils enjoy and take pride in their school and greatly value the opportunities to express their views.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Ensure that ICT is used effectively in the learning of other subjects;
- Ensure that subject leaders check quality of teaching and learning to extend their influence in raising standards.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects**

Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6. Standards are higher than at the time of the last inspection.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage and exceed the goals expected for their age in most areas of learning;
- Standards have been rising quickly in Year 2, although they have levelled off;
- Standards in Year 6 are rising again after disappointing results in 2003;
- Pupils achieve well in the core subjects, ICT, art and design, history and physical education;
- Pupils with special educational needs and the more able ones achieve well.

#### **Commentary**

1. Children in the nursery and reception classes achieve well. The interesting activities stir their curiosity and enable them to learn to recognise letters and words and to count, add and subtract numbers accurately. Making choices encourages them to express their ideas and feelings creatively and to gain independence in learning. As a result, children's personal, mathematical and creative development accelerates, along with increasing knowledge and understanding of the world. In each of these areas of learning children achieve well and exceed the goals expected by the end of the reception year. Children's physical development is typical for their age. In literacy and language, children achieve steadily. They rapidly increase their speaking and listening skills and their reading skills develop smoothly. However, they do not have enough opportunities to practise and improve their writing skills, which are at the levels expected rather than higher.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.4 (16.5)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	17.3 (15.5)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	18.2 (16.7)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 62 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.9 (29.1)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.7 (27.8)	26.8 (26.7)

science	29.9 (30.2)	28.6 (28.3)
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*There were 57 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. Trends in results achieved by 7-year-olds have outstripped national improvements over recent years, culminating in well above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics in 2003. Particularly good teaching in Year 2 is a major contributory factor. Variations in cohorts of pupils moving through the school affect results. This year, for example, although standards in speaking and listening and writing are high, standards in reading, mathematics and science are above average, rather than well above as they have been. The additional emphasis placed on improving pupils' writing this year has had the desired effect.
3. The performance of 11-year-olds in English, mathematics and science has kept pace with national improvements and has generally remained well above average over recent years. However, in 2003 results slipped and the school's targets were not met. Although above the national average in all of the core subjects, the results barely matched those in similar schools. Pupils' achievements from Year 2 to Year 6 were also lower than expected. 2003 proved to be a difficult year for the school. An unusually high number of pupils left at the end of Year 5 to attend middle school. This had the effect of creaming off some of the most able pupils, since many of them went on to achieve high levels elsewhere. In addition, the school's long standing tradition of providing booster classes for Year 6 pupils in preparation for the national tests was abandoned in the face of illness and staffing difficulties. Despite understanding why results have fallen, staff and governors were disappointed and determined not to let this happen again. The results were carefully analysed to root out the weaknesses. These boiled down to problem solving in mathematics and pupils' capacity to write quickly, fluently and imaginatively in response to a given topic. Effective strategies have been introduced to raise achievement in both subjects and booster classes have been reinstated. Recent assessments indicate that the weaknesses have been remedied. Results indicate that the school's performance is better in response to the challenging targets set. The current Year 6 pupils are achieving high standards in each of the core subjects.
4. Although the core subjects are a priority, good achievement and higher standards in other subjects are strenuously pursued. Consequently, pupils reach high standards in art and design and achieve well in history, physical education and ICT. Good achievement is also evident in aspects of music and design and technology, although time during the inspection was not sufficient to make a full analysis. Standards of achievement in religious education are good in Years 1 and 2. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve satisfactorily in religious education to reach the standards expected but they did not have the rich learning experiences now provided, when they were younger. Good achievement in singing and instrumental work and aspects of physical education, such as games and athletic skills, is partly attributable to the many worthwhile extra-curricular activities provided.
5. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets. They benefit from very good quality learning support in reading, writing and mathematics. More able pupils are now achieving better than at the time of the last inspection. The assessments of pupils' learning have improved and this makes it easier for teachers to understand what is needed to move their learning on. The school has compiled a list of gifted and talented children. Pupils with particular abilities in art and design, music and sport benefit from many additional opportunities for their talents to be nurtured. Teachers are beginning to provide individual challenges for the small number of gifted

children. A positive start has been made but there is further to go before these pupils consistently fulfil their potential.

**Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attendance, attitudes and behaviour are very good and their relationships with others are excellent. The provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships throughout the school are excellent;
- The provision for pupils' personal development is very good;
- Pupils show a very good interest in all school activities;
- Attendance is very good and pupils arrive on time eager to start work.

## Commentary

6. Pupils' relationship with others is excellent and is based on a foundation of mutual respect. Pupils follow the very good example set by adults in the way they relate to each other. The very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development results in a strong community feeling within the school. Pupils are polite and helpful. Older pupils enjoy supporting the younger ones and display a good deal of maturity in the way they help them and in the conscientious fashion that they carry out other tasks.

The 'Befrienders Group' is an excellent example of the way pupils support each other. The 'Befrienders' are 21 mature and sensible Year 6 pupils who give up two lunchtimes each week to offer a service to their peers. Pupils apply for the position of 'Befriender' and are interviewed by two senior members of staff, who invite them to offer a response to a number of scenarios. Once selected, they are trained to help other pupils to overcome problems related to broken friendships, intimidation or loneliness. They are taught to look for and understand sophisticated social issues, such as emotional bullying. 'Befrienders' explain that they see their role as 'listening with your heart' and that a strict code of confidentiality is observed. In a calm, comfortable and tranquil atmosphere pupils can share their problems and concerns, knowing that they will be listened to and respected. Two adult 'Befrienders' support 'he pupil 'Befrienders', should they need further help and guidance.

7. Pupils are very interested in their lessons and are eager to join in discussions and answer questions. They are confident that their teacher and fellow pupils will listen to them and respect their views. They have good powers of sustained concentration, take an active part in lessons and the vast majority work very hard. There is very good support for the activities held during and after school. Most pupils live up to the high expectations their teachers have of them. This is evident even in assembly, where the youngest reception children join in with songs and prayers and listen patiently when teachers or other pupils speak. Pupils clearly know and understand the school rules and, as a result, hardly any time needs to be spent in correcting inappropriate behaviour. With additional support from the play workers, pupils are equally well behaved when moving about the school and during the breaks and lunchtime.
8. The school provides very good support for the personal development of pupils. There are very good opportunities for them to reflect upon their own views, consider the effects of their actions on others and understand the meaning of racial equality. As a result, the school is a harmonious and considerate community. The school council makes decisions which enhance the experiences of all pupils. For example, they raised £1300 to purchase the very good range of outdoor play equipment. Pupils' cultural development is good. They participate in a wide range of cultural experiences, through visits out of school and visitors into school. The school is now working hard to raise pupils' awareness of the rich cultural heritage of today's society, for example by arranging visits to the Sikh Temple.

## Attendance

### Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.6	School data	0.1
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.*

9. Despite the absences caused through parents taking children on holiday during term time, pupils' attendance is well above the national average. Pupils arrive on time because they like the school and look forward to the interesting range of lessons provided for them.

## Exclusions

There were no exclusions in the last school year.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Pupils benefit from the good education provided. This begins in the Foundation Stage through the provision of stimulating first hand experiences. The good foundation is built on well in infant and junior classes. Although the core subjects of literacy and numeracy are regarded as priorities, worthwhile and interesting experiences are provided in many other subjects. Teachers check and support pupils' learning effectively and the strong relationship with parents ensures that pupils' progress is well understood and encouraged.

## Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning are good, as they were at the time of the last inspection. The procedures for assessing pupils' learning have significantly improved and are now good. The information gathered from assessment is used effectively to provide tasks that closely match pupils' different learning needs.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching in the nursery and reception classes promotes successful learning;
- The positive learning atmosphere in lessons encourages pupils to give of their best;
- Teachers' expertise, challenging activities and the quick pace of lessons ensures that pupils are highly motivated to learn;
- Teachers and classroom assistants provide very good support for pupils with special educational needs;
- Teachers do not make sufficient use of ICT in learning other subjects.

## Commentary

10. Teaching and learning are good in the nursery and reception classes. The key skills of reading and mathematics are taught successfully, although more could be done to enable children to form letters correctly and extend their writing skills. Children's

learning and progress are very effectively assessed. The information is used well in planning future activities. Children benefit from the provision of a wide range of purposeful and exciting activities, which stimulate their curiosity. Teachers and support staff capitalise on this well by encouraging them to talk about their experiences. Children are encouraged to choose activities, explore for themselves and express their ideas creatively. As a result, children become confident and independent learners.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 63 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0)	18 (29)	30 (48)	15 (24)	0 (0)	0 (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.*

11. The atmosphere for learning is extremely positive. Teachers form very close and trusting relationships with pupils. Pupils respond very well to their teachers' high expectations. They listen carefully, contribute willingly to class discussions and give of their best. Pupils are willing to 'have a go', even when they are not absolutely certain of the answer, because they understand that making mistakes is part of the learning process.
12. Teachers' good expertise in many subjects is reflected in the wide range of effective teaching methods used. Lessons invariably begin with a clear explanation of what pupils are expected to learn. Teachers' imaginative illustrations and probing questions keep pupils interested and help them to understand. Lessons are well organised, thoroughly prepared and no time is wasted. Pupils are swept along and learn to think and work quickly. Lesson planning is good. Careful thought is given to pupils' different learning needs. The different tasks or expectations are made explicit. In a Year 2 history lesson, for example, pupils clearly explained which groups had to complete different tasks and why! Pupils who find learning difficult receive adapted activities, matched closely to their level of understanding. More able pupils are given demanding work, often in the form of extension activities to increase their learning further. Teachers are very conscious that children learn best when they are interested. Consequently, approaches such as educational games, investigations and problem solving are high on the agenda. Lessons are seldom predictable and each day is different. As a result, pupils enjoy learning and are highly motivated.
13. Classroom assistants play a vital part in pupils' learning. They are very involved in lesson planning, know exactly what pupils are expected to achieve and what they are responsible for. They often work closely with pupils with special educational needs, providing sensitive and very effective support. They ensure that their charges understand any unfamiliar vocabulary and the meaning behind any questions. They show considerable patience in guiding pupils to think for themselves. Consequently, pupils with special educational needs learn successfully.
14. There are very few weaknesses in teaching and learning. The main one is the limited use of ICT in learning other subjects. This is partly because most of the computers are in the suite and are not accessible during normal lessons. Pupils learn ICT skills effectively in the computer suite. However, when they are learning English, mathematics and other subjects, the many benefits of reinforcing and extending their learning through

ICT are missed. Occasionally, tasks are over ambitious for the less able pupils and there are isolated examples of teachers providing too many different activities to control.

### **The curriculum**

The school provides a good curriculum. Pupils' learning is enhanced and extended through a very good range of enrichment activities.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is well planned and thoughtfully organised;
- All pupils are included, although the needs of gifted pupils are only just being recognised;
- Opportunities for enrichment and personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) are very good;
- There is scope to extend the use of ICT across the curriculum.

## **Commentary**

15. Children in the Foundation Stage benefit from the provision of a good range of exciting activities, which stimulate their curiosity and desire to learn. The curriculum provided for infant and junior pupils is equally engaging. All subjects are taught in depth and pupils' enquiry skills develop effectively alongside their increasing knowledge and understanding. Pupils' learning builds securely from year to year because the curriculum is carefully sequenced. Teachers go out of their way to include all pupils in all activities, both during and after school.
16. The curriculum successfully caters for pupils' different learning needs and talents. The part-time special educational needs co-ordinator fulfils an effective administrative role and is very effective in securing funding and resources to meet pupils' specific needs. Pupils' learning difficulties are well understood. Clear targets are set to help them to master basic reading, writing and number skills. Support staff play a very important role in working closely with them in small groups. More able pupils are also well provided for. They are given demanding tasks to complete, which extend their learning, and they thrive on the opportunities to investigate and learn for themselves. Teachers are now turning their attention to the needs of the small number of gifted pupils. These pupils are already identified on the school's register and teachers are beginning to provide extension work to match their appetite for learning. However, this is a new development. There are still occasions when their learning is not extended enough, partly because computers are not used sufficiently across the curriculum. Pupils' talents are nurtured well in art and design, music and sport.
17. Senior and teaching staff are keen to try out new ideas. Imaginative 'focus subject' days are planned in art and design and design and technology, where pupils have time to explore their ideas fully. Subject leaders encourage creativity and a sense of adventure in learning. For example, in music the leaders' expertise has led to singing and instrumental concerts for parents to attend.
18. Opportunities for enrichment are strengths in this school. Numerous extra-curricular activities are offered, including netball, rounders, football, Brazilian football, yoga, recorder, choir and drama. Pupils' experiences and interests are broadened well through visitors to the school, such as authors, faith leaders, music ensemble, theatre groups and artists. Very good provision is made for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education. Topics including sex and family education, drugs awareness and learning how communities function are carefully woven into weekly lesson planning. In addition, pupils are elected to the school council and have to apply for duties involving care and responsibility for others. These experiences prepare pupils well for the future.

## **Care, guidance and support**

Pupils' care, welfare and health and safety are very good. The school provides good support based on the monitoring of pupils' progress and in seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' health, safety and well being are very well catered for;
- Pupils receive good personal and learning support and guidance;
- Pupils have a very good and trusting relationship with all adults in school;
- Induction arrangements for pupils are very good;
- Pupils are consulted and have a positive influence over the work of the school.

## **Commentary**

19. Staff and governors work together well to ensure the health and safety of all who work in the school. There is a good awareness of potential hazards around the school. Regular risk assessments of the site are conducted and potential hazards relating to out of school visits are carefully considered. All parts of the school are kept very clean and safe. Healthy eating is encouraged at break and lunchtimes. Child protection procedures are very good. There is a designated teacher who has ensured that all adults are vigilant and have received appropriate training. There are a generous number of trained first aiders to attend to pupils' medical needs.
20. Staff provide good support, advice and guidance and pupils' progress is monitored well and assessed thoroughly. They are beginning to set their own targets and they show a determination to achieve them. Pupils support each other extremely well. In most lessons, they work together to achieve success, particularly in physical education. Very good arrangements are made for preparing children for school. Home visits and sensitively handled introductory sessions in school ensure that new children and their parents form a strong bond with staff. As a result, children settle in quickly and learn school routines very well. Pupils in Year 6 say they feel well prepared for the transfer to high school.
21. Pupils' personal development is monitored well through the very good programme of personal and social development. With the support of the school nurses and the police liaison officer, pupils' personal safety has a high priority. Pupils learn about drug abuse and older pupils have discrete lessons in sex education. The school has an active and enthusiastic school council. Councillors take their responsibilities seriously and are a supportive voice for their peers. Along with the support of the four play workers, they have been the driving force behind the purchasing of play equipment. Older children look after younger ones when they feel lost and lonely in the playground. Younger children expressed their pleasure that their 'big friend' was listening to them read. Pupils grow and thrive within the caring community of Rowley Lane School.
22. The school's procedures for ensuring the health, safety and welfare of pupils are good. The provision for pupils' support and guidance based on the monitoring of their progress is satisfactory.

## **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school's links with parents, neighbouring schools and the community are very good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents receive excellent information from the school;

- Parents views are eagerly sought and acted upon;
- The school is very successful in involving parents in children's learning;
- Links with the community and other schools are very good.

## Commentary

23. An excellent range of high quality information is provided for parents concerning school activities and events and their children's progress. The annual report of the governing body and the prospectus are very good examples of information which is not only very detailed and comprehensive, but which is couched in clear language for parents. The three consultation evenings each year have a very specific focus. For example, at the autumn term meeting, teachers share information about children's levels of achievement, homework and how parents can help their children. A written programme of curriculum activities is sent out to all parents so that they can offer maximum support to their children. Parents like the written reports because they explain how much progress their children have made over the year and offer clear targets for improvement.
24. Parents agree that the headteacher and staff are very approachable and make themselves readily available to listen to them and discuss concerns. The school regularly consults parents to seek their views on how to improve the school for their children. The responses are analysed and enable the school to respond to any concerns or suggestions. Parents are very pleased with what the school provides.
25. Parental involvement begins in the nursery with home visits. New children and their parents are then invited into the nursery to sample typical activities and to share a lunch with other children. A significant number of parents help with reading and supporting activities in and out of school. The thriving Parent Teachers' Association has raised significant sums at school events, which have been used to enhance and support pupils' learning and experiences. Most parents support children's learning at home and ensure they attend school regularly.
26. Links with the local and wider community are very strong. Elderly citizens benefit from an invitation to summer tea in the school and pupils visit them to sing and perform in the local Methodist church. There are strong links with local churches and the vicar and a lay preacher lead assemblies effectively. Pupils study aspects of their community in geography and go on visits into the local and wider community, as well as a residential experience to Cliffe House. These very good links are also apparent in the partnership that the school has with other schools and colleges and the playgroup based on the school site. Links with the main receiving high school start in Year 4 and continue until pupils transfer to them at the end of Year 6. This eases the transition to high school.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership, management and governance of the school are good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very effective leadership;
- Governors provide very strong support and monitor the work of the school very well;
- Checking the quality of teaching and learning by subject leaders is not sufficiently developed;
- Financial and day-to-day management are of a high quality.

## Commentary

27. The headteacher provides very good leadership. She communicates very effectively with all members of the school community and maximises the strengths of the staff and governors. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the school's daily life and in the education of their children. The headteacher seeks the views of all the school's stakeholders, including the pupils, before reaching decisions. In this way, stability and clear vision for the future are provided. The headteacher ensures that a strong focus is placed on raising standards. Areas for improvement are very carefully selected and tackled in a thorough, manageable way that brings results. For example, when there was a drop in standards in last year's national tests for pupils aged 11, a great deal of analysis resulted in a range of actions being taken to minimise the chance of this recurring. The headteacher has been particularly successful in developing the skills of staff through their performance management. For example, standards in writing have improved largely because all of the teachers set this as their personal target. Over recent years, good mentoring of new entrants to the profession has helped them to make a very positive start.
28. The leadership and management provided by school governors are very good. Governors are extremely hard working and possess a generous blend of skills and expertise, such as accountancy, ICT and educational management. The specialist knowledge is fully exploited, particularly in decision making. As well as having effective links with subject leaders, each governor works alongside a specific year group. They are invited to visit them to see any special work or presentations. These interests and visits to school provide them with a clear awareness of strengths and areas for development. Very open avenues of communication with the headteacher keep them regularly updated and aware of the outcomes of actions taken to improve provision and raise standards. These factors help them to make very well considered judgements. Areas identified for development in the school improvement plan are closely monitored to check that they are undertaken and are having the desired effect.
29. Leadership by other key staff is good. The senior management team has proved very effective in raising standards throughout the school. They have directed curriculum changes, introduced very good systems for pastoral care and supported newly qualified teachers very successfully. The leaders provide good role models for the staff and pupils. The roles of subject leaders are being transformed through performance management initiatives. They have been given responsibility for the budgets in their subjects. A very effective strategy has been introduced to share subjects between two co-ordinators. This ensures that changes can be monitored through the Foundation Stage and the infant and junior classes more efficiently. It also extends the strong team ethos that permeates the school and promotes a culture of self-improvement. Subject leaders show enthusiasm and dedication and the provision in some subjects has flourished under their guidance. However, their role in checking the quality of teaching and learning, for example in science and religious education, is not sufficient to ensure that standards will continue to rise.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003*

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	889,725
Total expenditure	844,474
Expenditure per pupil	2,281

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	38,891
Balance carried forward to the next	46,391

30. Strong links are made between school priorities and the financial resources available. All options are carefully considered before financial decisions are taken. Outcomes are evaluated fully in terms of their impact on standards before the next budget is determined. The increase in support staff is a good example of resources being used to provide smaller teaching groups, thereby raising standards in English and mathematics. The administration team provides very good support in developing efficient routines, providing good channels of communication and maintaining very good relations with visitors and parents.

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

31. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Children enter the nursery in September or January as they approach four years of age. They spend either two or three terms in the nursery before moving into one of the two reception classes, again in September or January. Children spend a further two or three terms in the reception classes according to their age.
32. The good provision for children in the nursery and reception classes has been extended further since the last inspection, particularly in the use of computers. There are no children with special educational needs in the Foundation Stage. However, individual progress is very carefully checked to identify and cater for those who need extra support. Children make good progress in the nursery and the reception children's skills are better than those typically seen when they enter Year 1. The curriculum is very rich in providing exciting first hand experiences for the children. A greater emphasis is rightly now being given to the development of children's writing skills.
33. There is a very strong team approach to the planning and assessment of children's learning and teachers are well aware of the progress they make. Good teaching builds well on what children already know and can do when they arrive. This enables them to achieve well and many exceed the goals set out for this age group at the end of the reception year. The spacious classrooms are well organised to provide an exciting range of learning opportunities. Leadership and management are good. Very good systems have been established that ensure that children make a smooth start in the nursery and a successful transition to reception. Parents are kept well informed and effectively involved throughout.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children gain greatly in confidence, enabling them to undertake their work independently;
- They develop a strong awareness of their own community, as well as the multicultural world.

#### **Commentary**

34. Good teaching enables children to achieve well and many exceed the goals they are expected to reach. They form positive relationships and interact very well with one another. They organise some of their own activities daily and this helps them to develop independence. They show an impressive ability to concentrate for long periods. Children greatly enjoy their time in the Foundation Stage. They develop a strong sense of their community through their many visits and meetings with visitors. They also gain a very good cultural awareness through studying how different people celebrate their festivals.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have many rich opportunities to extend their vocabulary and express their ideas;
- Good structures are in place to develop their reading skills;
- Children's writing skills are not developed frequently enough in the reception classes.

### Commentary

35. Children achieve well in speaking and listening and reading and many exceed the goals they are expected to reach. Children are interested and respond well to the many exciting activities, which stimulate their desire to speak and listen. Teachers and support staff are skilled in posing questions that make children think and express opinions. Consequently, most children become confident speakers. Sound teaching of word recognition and letter sounds (phonics), plus strong home support with reading, enables almost all children to reach the levels expected. A number of parents have been trained to give children regular practice in school. Books are used effectively to encourage children to read and learn about topics. Children gain a love of stories from reading 'Big Books' together. The teaching of writing is satisfactory and most children achieve steadily and reach the learning goals expected by the end of the reception year. In the nursery, there is good evidence of children's writing emerging. By the end of the reception year, many children are able to write words and phrases and more able children produce short accounts and stories. However, many children still form their letters incorrectly, partly because letter formation is not practised and consolidated using other media, such as paint or by tracing letters in sand. Insufficient emphasis is given to extending writing skills in the daily group activities and children are not sufficiently encouraged to express their ideas creatively.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of mathematical skills is good and children are set a wide range of challenges;
- They see a relevance to their mathematics because it is linked to other work that they are doing.

### Commentary

36. Children achieve well and many exceed the learning goals expected for their age. Computers are used very effectively to develop children's thinking skills and to enable them to practice and improve their skills of counting and adding numbers. Teaching is very imaginative. For example, children are visited by 'Winnie the Witch', who seeks their help with her latest mathematical difficulty. Their learning is enhanced by linking mathematics to other areas, such as using computers to plot routes on a grid to help 'Teddy Bear' to find the picnic. Children's different learning needs are well catered for by setting challenges that are suited to their particular stage of development. More able children, for example, find their way through more complex mazes. Learning is varied, engaging, fun and very effective.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is creatively planned to arouse children's interest and curiosity;
- ICT is very well used to support and enrich the children's learning.

### **Commentary**

37. Teaching and learning are very effective. Children achieve well and many exceed the goals expected in this area of learning. Their education is much enhanced by frequent visits and visitors, designed to widen their learning experiences and fuel their imagination. Typical of the staff's enterprise was 'bringing the seaside into the school'. The imported sand beach, Punch and Judy lady, photo booth with 'head-holes' and picnic area was featured on the 'Look North' television programme. Whether they are racing snails, dressing up for Diwali, drawing around the crossing-patrol lady or riding in a JCB, their experiences leave a strong impression! Computers are very well integrated into children's learning and they gain confidence in operating programs and programmable toys. Skills, taught well in the computer suite, are then developed in the classroom. Children have regular opportunities to use the digital camera and tape recorders to capture what they are doing. The pictures and sounds are then referred to later to enable children to recall events.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Strengths and weaknesses**

- Children develop their creativity well across many areas of learning.

### **Commentary**

38. Teaching and learning are good. Children make good progress along the stepping stones and many exceed the goals expected for their age. They respond well to stimulating challenges that are closely linked to other areas of study. For example, in their 'Water' theme, nursery children showed great delight when blowing coloured bubbles on to paper and seeing their reflections in them. Meanwhile, reception children created underwater sea collages of good quality by recalling a sequence of instructions. Outdoor activities often develop imaginative role play. Multicultural awareness is developed well, for instance, making Chinese dragon masks before performing dances with them.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Strengths and weaknesses**

- Children use equipment with increasing confidence and independence.

### **Commentary**

39. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Children's achievement is satisfactory overall and most reach the learning goals expected for their age. They negotiate their vehicles around the nursery play area with balance, control and an awareness of others. In reception, they handle tools with purpose and adequate precision. In physical education sessions in the hall, children travel around the apparatus with typical confidence, control and co-ordination, though opportunities are missed to draw attention to key skills from which others could learn.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

### **Strengths and weaknesses**

- Action taken to raise standards in writing this year has been successful;
- Pupils achieve well in English and standards in reading are well above average in Year 6;
- Pupils' speaking and listening develop well and are well above average;
- The use of ICT within the subject could be improved.

### **Commentary**

40. Although results in English in 2003 were above average, they were not as high as they had been previously. Swift and decisive action was subsequently taken to improve English, writing in particular. The very good leadership and management provided by the joint subject leaders led to an effective programme of staff training, along with the introduction of more rigorous arrangements for assessing pupils' learning. Assessments were carefully analysed, enabling teachers to identify any weaknesses and set individual and whole group targets to help pupils improve. These strategies have been effective. Pupils are currently achieving well in English and standards by the end of Year 6 are well above average. Pupils' written work, in particular, has improved. Infant pupils show good awareness of rules for spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Handwriting and presentation standards are high. At the same time, they are given ample opportunity to develop their imagination and skills through writing stories, poems and factual accounts. They have benefited greatly from working with a children's author, which has helped them to plan ahead and organise their work.
41. Junior pupils also achieve well in writing. Their work shows flair, confidence and accuracy. High standards of writing are now apparent across the school. Pupils with

special educational needs respond well to the very good levels of support. They display enthusiasm for all aspects of writing and are making good progress towards their personal targets. The teaching of writing is good. Teachers have good expertise and use a variety of effective techniques, including the use of specially developed writing prompts and frameworks, which are adapted to pupils' different learning needs. Their skilled and effective teaching of techniques for different forms of writing improves pupils' skills in constructing poems, composing letters and editing and improving their work. Marking is good and includes points for development. Pupils are aware of their writing targets and are involved in assessing their progress towards them. The classrooms and corridors reflect the prominence of writing, with excellent displays of pupils' work.

42. Reading standards are above average for infant pupils and well above average for junior pupils. Standards in writing are higher than reading because writing has received so much attention this year. Infant pupils achieve steadily in reading and junior pupils achieve well in response to effective teaching of comprehension skills. From Year 2, most pupils read fluently and with increasing expression as they move through the junior classes. There are many good opportunities for pupils to read in lessons. The school library has good stocks of non-fiction resources and is well used by pupils. The home/school partnership is strong. Pupils are encouraged to take reading books home and keep records of their reading. The teaching of reading is good and employs a range of successful strategies and support programmes aimed at boosting skills and confidence for less able readers. Valuable projects, such as 'Reading Friends' and pairing Year 1 and Year 6 pupils for reading, have been introduced successfully.
43. Standards of speaking and listening are high across the school. The conventions of discussion are well understood and adhered to by all pupils. Many pupils speak confidently and articulately, use role play effectively and can sustain and develop a point of view. The quality of their vocabulary and the range and depth of their expressive capabilities is very high. They listen very well to adults and to each other, often picking up and extending points made by others. Class discussions are lively, enthusiastic and involve all pupils.

### **Language and Literacy across the curriculum**

44. There are good links to a range of other subjects, particularly in reading and writing, Pupils have good opportunities to research information and write accounts of their investigations and enquiries in subjects such as science and history. Opportunities to use ICT within the subject are growing but are still insufficient. There are some examples of the use of ICT to develop pupils' writing and their organisation and presentation skills but these are not consistently developed in all classes.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The weaknesses identified in the 2003 test results have been largely remedied;
- Standards are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6;

- Teaching is good, therefore children learn productively;
- ICT is not used enough in the learning of mathematics.

### **Commentary**

45. In response to the fall in test results in 2003, teachers worked hard to analyse the underlying reasons, develop solutions and implement strategies to drive up standards. Pupils' calculation skills were found to be strong but they were uncertain of which operation to use to solve mathematical problems. To strengthen these weaker areas, lessons, homework and booster classes this year have included specific teaching on using and applying skills. Both Year 6 lessons observed during the inspection involved problem solving. Pupils showed increasing confidence in techniques such as using brackets and logical thinking. Monitoring of pupils' progress has been tightened up through better assessment of their learning. When progress falters, teachers can recognise it immediately and take action. These strategies have paid dividends. Upper junior pupils are now working at advanced levels and Year 6 pupils are achieving high standards. All of the good strategies used in junior classes have been successfully implemented in infant classes, where standards are above average. Successful setting arrangements in both key stages, where pupils are taught mathematics in groups according to their levels of achievement, are contributing to the improvements. Leadership and management have been effective in raising standards, although opportunities for checking the quality of teaching are still not sufficient to ensure that the improved standards are maintained.
46. Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection. They are now good in most lessons, therefore pupils learn productively. Teachers plan their lessons carefully, taking account of the pupils' different learning needs. The work provided is usually challenging for all pupils. Teaching assistants play a vital role in planning, teaching and assessing pupils' learning in numeracy lessons. Their work frequently involves supporting pupils with special educational needs, enabling them to make good progress. Teachers select methods, such as games and investigations, which capture pupils' interest and stimulate their desire to learn. They use questioning very effectively to check pupils' understanding and to advance their thinking. Pupils are consistently encouraged to develop mental strategies and explain them to others. Consequently, they realise that there are several ways to find an answer.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

47. Pupils develop their skills in mathematics well as part of their work in other subjects. Consequently, they develop an understanding and appreciation of the practical uses of these skills. This is particularly the case in science, where pupils gather and interpret results using graphs and charts. Similarly in design and technology, they improve their skills of measuring. However, ICT is not used enough in the learning of mathematics, particularly where it has the potential to make new ideas easier to understand, such as converting fractions to decimals and percentages.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' knowledge and understanding and their skills of investigation develop equally well;
- Good teaching and effective use of assessment enable pupils to achieve well;
- Minor weaknesses in conducting experiments and recording findings go undetected because subject leaders do not observe lessons in other classes.

## Commentary

48. Teachers rightly regard science as a practical subject. They provide a wide range of purposeful investigations through which pupils improve their skills in experimenting and increase their knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas. In Year 1, pupils gain a good foundation in learning to use their senses to explore ideas such as light the dark, push and pull forces and how plants grow. These stimulating activities raise their curiosity, improve their skills of observation and extend their scientific vocabulary. This is built on well in Year 2, where pupils begin to predict what could happen, observe what actually happens and explain their findings. This process enables them to understand difficult ideas involving change in plant growth, heating and cooling and electrical circuits. Year 2 pupils achieve well to reach above average standards.
49. Pupils continue to achieve well in junior classes. In Year 3, investigation benefits from the introduction of question sheets which direct the pupils to consider important steps in the experimental process. They become more involved in deciding what they are going to investigate and how they should proceed. As they move through Year 4, they begin to understand the nature of a fair test and, by Year 5, they appreciate that more than one scientific test may be necessary to ensure accuracy. By Year 6, pupils are well equipped to plan and carry out their own investigations. Their literacy and numeracy skills are extended well in gathering results, and recording and illustrating their findings in graphs, charts and written accounts. Apart from the dip in the national test results in 2003, standards have been, and currently are, well above average by the end of Year 6, with well over half of the pupils reaching higher than average levels.
50. Teaching and learning are good, particularly in Years 2, 5 and 6, where the marking of pupils' written work is most constructive and helpful. All teachers have good expertise in enabling pupils to learn through practical activity. Lessons are well planned, carefully organised and thoroughly prepared. They begin with clear discussions about what pupils are expected to learn and how they will gather evidence and record their findings. Recent improvements in assessing pupils' learning gives teachers a clear picture of their different starting points. The information is incorporated well when the tasks are planned. Pupils who find learning difficult, including those with special educational needs, are well supported. Teaching assistants work closely with them, encouraging them to think for themselves but at the same time helping them to formulate and write down their own ideas. This enables them to make good progress. More able pupils are expected to work independently and, at the same time, they are encouraged to share their ideas with others. The investigations offer many open-ended opportunities for more able pupils to search more deeply and extend their learning. This was illustrated well in a Year 5 lesson. After investigating and comparing pulse rates, more able pupils moved on to predicting and measuring heart rates after exercise.

51. Sound leadership and management ensures that science is approached through enquiry and pupils' learning is carefully assessed. However, some minor inconsistencies go undetected because subject leaders do not follow a programme of observing lessons to check teaching and learning first hand. For example, the benefits of using ICT are only pursued thoroughly in Year 5. Just occasionally teachers provide too many different activities in the lesson. Although the activities are very well designed, teachers are so busy attending to each group that they cannot guide pupils' learning efficiently. Some teachers organise pupils' work in booklets, mixed in with other subjects. This makes it harder for teachers and pupils to reflect on the progress made. Although minor in nature, without these inconsistencies pupils could achieve even more.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Throughout the school pupils achieve well in developing skills in ICT;
- Teaching is good and the ICT suite has significantly improved pupils' learning;
- Pupils' ICT skills are not sufficiently extended in the learning of other subjects.

## Commentary

52. Pupils achieve well in gaining skills in ICT and standards are higher than the levels expected throughout the school. Since the last inspection, efficient use of funding has resulted in a significant improvement in resources. These include the well equipped ICT suite, portable interactive whiteboards, digital cameras and projectors, scanners and laptop computers. Standards have improved as a consequence of such hardware being used effectively in ICT lessons. Good leadership and management of the subject have also led to teachers gaining confidence and improving their own skills. The suite is timetabled on a rota for all classes to ensure that all strands of ICT are covered. Good planning and effective teaching ensures that pupils become proficient in word processing, creating and interrogating databases and programming a series of instructions to control events on screen and on remote equipment.
53. Teaching and learning in the ICT suite are good. Effective discussions at the start of the lesson ensure that pupils know how to operate the programs and follow procedures correctly. The use of a teaching assistant in the ICT suite to act partly as a technician and partly as a tutor works extremely well. Her assistance in teaching a group of Year 6 children to enhance their 'PowerPoint' presentations was of a very good standard. In a very good lesson, Year 1 pupils learned very successfully how give commands to 'Pixie', a programmable toy. The level of challenge was very high and the tasks provided were very well matched to pupils' different learning needs. Consequently, all pupils learned to plot a route, using 'forward', 'back', 'right' and 'left' directions and the more able ones successfully predicted 20 instructions to navigate through a maze. Discussion with pupils, who were adding digital photographs to their multimedia presentations, presented clear evidence of their confidence and good abilities.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

54. The suite is well equipped but there are no computers in classrooms, apart from a computer station outside the Year 5 and 6 classrooms and in the Foundation Stage. Consequently, most pupils are not able to use computers to improve and extend their learning sufficiently in other subjects. In the subject leader's year group, however, good links are made between ICT and other subjects because laptop computers are taken into the classrooms. For example, when Year 5 pupils were investigating the effect of exercise on pulse rates, their learning developed effectively because the results were fed into a spreadsheet and the outcomes were clearly visible.

## HUMANITIES

55. Five **religious education** and three **history** lessons were observed, which form the basis of the judgements made. A judgement on the provision in **geography** has not been made because no lessons were seen. Discussions with pupils and an examination of their work provide additional evidence.
56. In geography, improvements in leadership and management since the last inspection are evident in the careful planning of the curriculum and the well organised resources. The study of geography alternates on a half termly basis with history. Teachers' planning and pupils' written work indicates that all aspects of the subject are covered adequately and pupils' learning builds suitably on their earlier experiences. Following

the adventures of Barnaby Bear as he travels around the world enlivens pupils' learning in Year 1. Year 2 pupils begin to understand how the landscape is made up of a combination of natural and man made features. This is extended well in junior classes through units of work on settlements and mountain environments in countries such as India. Pupils acquire a good understanding of mapping skills. In Year 3, for example, pupils make a good attempt to draw maps to scale and provide a key to interpret the meaning of the symbols used.

## History

Provision in history is **good**.

### Strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of achievement are higher than the levels expected;
- Teaching and learning are good, and the methods used stimulate pupils' interests effectively.

## Commentary

57. The weaknesses highlighted in the previous inspection report have been largely eliminated through effective leadership and management. The curriculum has been improved through the careful sequencing of units of study, which enable pupils to build more securely on what they have learnt earlier. There are good opportunities for pupils to visit historic sites to gain first hand and experience of how things have changed. These visits stimulate their interest in the subject and the desire to learn. Pupils are now achieving well and reaching good standards throughout the school.
58. Teaching and learning are good. The subject is taught imaginatively. For example, in a Year 2 lesson on 'Holidays Past and Present', the teacher produced a large suitcase and asked pupils what it might contain. This stirred their curiosity, inspired a productive discussion and led to some interesting written accounts and colourful illustrations. Similarly in Year 6, simulating archaeological fieldwork inspired pupils to reconstruct shattered Greek pottery and make predictions about the shape and illustration of any missing pieces. The earthenware pots, locally bought, had been illustrated and decorated with scenes from Greek myth and legend by the teachers. Pupils' different learning needs are well catered for. For example, the complexity of reassembling the number of broken pieces was made simpler or more demanding according to pupils' skills in reasoning. The lesson brought the subject to life, tested pupils' ingenuity and stimulated their imaginations.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject leaders have worked very enthusiastically to produce guidance for teachers;
- A strong emphasis is placed on learning about different religions;
- In the junior classes, not enough links are made between their studies into different faiths and the pupils' own experiences and beliefs.

## **Commentary**

59. The joint subject leaders have worked hard to raise standards in religious education over the last year. Resources have been improved substantially and teachers have received effective guidance on their use. For example, the theme of the creation is currently being taught in several classes, to enable teachers to refine and improve their understanding of teaching the new units.

60. Good teaching and learning in the infant classes has raised standards above the levels expected. In Year 1, the teacher's enthusiasm in showing a pop-up book version of the creation aroused pupils' sense of wonder as the story unfolded before them. When asked what God might have done on the seventh day, after so much hard work, one pupil wondered, 'Did he make the toys?' They then went on to decorate and discuss large jigsaw shapes with beautiful things. The lesson climaxed with each pupils' piece of the jigsaw being assembled together to form a circle representing the Earth. Equally sensitive teaching in Year 2 challenged pupils to think what they could do to keep their world a beautiful place. Playing waves of relaxing music effectively stimulated their ideas.
61. Junior pupils achieve steadily to reach the levels expected. Teaching and learning in junior classes are satisfactory. Lessons are often imaginatively planned. For example, Year 4 pupils were involved in writing a modern day version of the Lord's prayer. However, pupils' written work indicates that their own experiences are not developed and extended as well as their knowledge and understanding of the different faiths. Consequently, they gain good knowledge about religions but this is not matched by refining and shaping their own beliefs and values. These weaknesses are missed partly because subject leaders are not sufficiently involved in checking the quality of teaching and learning through the school.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

62. Only one **design and technology** and one **music** lesson were observed, not enough to make a judgement on provision in these subjects. However, three lessons in **art and design** and four **physical education** lessons were observed. Along with discussions with pupils, there is sufficient evidence to evaluate the provision in these subjects.
63. Developments in music have been boosted this year through the appointment of a specialist musician. The school already had a programme of work in place to ensure that all pupils received regular music lessons. The school also has long standing traditions in nurturing pupils' musical talents by providing good instrumental tuition for brass, recorders, violin, keyboard and guitar. Consequently, many children learn to read music and reach high standards in playing the various instruments. This year music has been enlivened through specialist class teaching, an extension of instrumental work and very good opportunities for pupils to perform. The large choir practises regularly. In assemblies and music lessons, pupils are taught how to sing well. As a result, standards of singing are good and have improved since the last inspection. Parents and pupils appreciate the new musical opportunities. Pupils enjoy success in performing and parents appreciate the musical events to which they are invited to observe their children's development. In the only music lesson observed, Year 2 pupils achieved well. Good teaching enabled them to listen carefully, think hard and match recorded sounds correctly to a series of pictures. In addition, their cultural awareness and expressive movement were enhanced through the use of aboriginal music.
64. Since the last inspection, design and technology teaching and learning are better planned for. The profile of the subject has been raised and there is plenty of evidence of good quality design and technology around the school. The subject leaders have done a good job in increasing teachers' expertise in devising tasks and teaching

specific skills. In the one lesson observed, the teacher's expertise and understanding shone through. Her explanation of using cams to convert rotary into vertical movement was extremely good, not least because an ICT projection was used to illustrate the effects of a rotating cam. Pupils' written work shows evidence of pupils learning how to think imaginatively. They learn to think critically by explaining what they like and dislike, for example, when designing and making models of hand puppets. Another strong feature is the encouragement pupils receive to evaluate and improve their work. Junior pupils benefit from the many focused practical tasks provided, which help them to practise and improve their cutting and joining skills before starting work on the actual model.

## **Art and design**

Provision in art and design is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The two subject leaders ensure that the school's good reputation for the subject continues;
- Much of the work has relevance and interest because it is produced for a purpose;
- The work of other artists is used well to stimulate pupils' ideas and develop their creativity.

### **Commentary**

65. This subject offers many very good opportunities for pupils to gain a sense of achievement. The sensitivity they demonstrate using a wide range of media shows perseverance and a depth of understanding. The work on display and in the pupils' portfolios is of a high standard.
66. Very good dual leadership has inspired teachers to extend their own expertise and enthusiasm. Much of the work in art and design arises from other subjects, which gives learning added relevance. For example, Year 5 pupils grouped themselves in various poses for digital photographs to be taken. From these, they produced their own replicated Victorian family portraits, using pencil, oil crayons and brown pastels. These vividly captured the mood portrayed in old Victorian prints and enabled the pupils to visualise themselves living in that period. Participating in specific events often stimulates pupils' learning. Last year, for example, every pupil prepared work for an exhibition that demonstrated the full range and quality of their talents.
67. The school invites artists to talk and work with pupils. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 3 worked very effectively with a local artist to develop line drawing before studying old local buildings with industrial connections. This led to some wonderful mixed-media creations, on various scales, that were later displayed in Huddersfield Art Gallery. The school also takes full advantage of the nearby 'Sculpture Park' at Bretton Hall, both to study the exhibits there and to enlist the support of students from the college. Consequently, pupils often produce quality work in three-dimensions. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils studied various works of a well know artist, who uses natural materials, before producing their initial designs for similar creations, using only leaves as their medium. The goal for them is to produce their own sculptures for the school and for the local area. Not surprisingly, most pupils love art and design.

## **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Strong subject leadership is improving provision and raising standards;
- Good coaching enables pupils to learn successfully;
- The wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities significantly improves pupils' skills and enhances their personal development.

## Commentary

68. The good standards recognised at the time of the last inspection have been maintained and are now improving further. Very effective subject leadership offers teachers a first class example of how the subject should be taught and provides them with valuable guidance on how to further improve pupils' learning. In all of the lessons observed, pupils achieved well and reached standards higher than expected in games and gymnastic activities. Pupils also achieve well in swimming. Virtually all pupils reach the 25 metre standard and three-quarters of them gain proficiency awards in water survival.
69. Good teaching begins in Year 1, where pupils make an early start in evaluating and improving their gymnastic skills. For example, the teacher and selected pupils perform various jumps. Other pupils are asked to observe and make constructive comments. The key learning points are then incorporated into their own work and practised further. Pupils benefit from encouragement to add creativity and imagination to their work, for example by investigating different ways to take off, move through the air and achieve a controlled landing. Lessons are characterised by purposeful warm-ups and safe practice. The coaching of new skills is very effective. In a Year 4 lesson, for example, pupils were taught sophisticated techniques, such as scooping a tennis ball out of the air to cushion its contact with the racket. The highly effective coaching enabled pupils to improve their ability to strike a tennis ball and gauge the direction and the distance accurately. By Year 6, pupils have learnt to assess their own performance and, with teachers' support, set themselves greater athletic challenges.
70. Teachers ensure that pupils have many rewarding opportunities to participate in competitive sporting events, such as swimming, athletics, rounders, football and netball. Through these activities, pupils are able to apply and refine the skills they have acquired in lessons. In addition, they gain a good understanding of teamwork and develop an understanding of sportsmanship. Visits to a residential centre provide further opportunities for pupils to tackle unfamiliar challenges. The many physical activities are greatly enjoyed by pupils and make a significant contribution to their personal development.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

71. Personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) is a core feature in the life of the school. This results in pupils' very positive attitudes and the pleasant, inclusive and harmonious atmosphere in school. In addition to discrete time tabled lessons in PSHCE, the school provides many opportunities out of lessons for developing in this area. Notably, children are actively encouraged to take responsibility, such as Year 6 children reading with Year 2 and older pupils befriending others. Displays include photographs and biographies of former pupils, aimed at raising aspirations. Social development is very good and teachers report that they are happy to have 'enriched pupils' lives'. Pupils too recognise the importance of their teachers. One Year 6 boy reflecting on his time at school writes, 'The teachers have done so much for me, how can I repay them?' The 'Befrienders' programme, playground friends and the school council are important features of pupils' understanding of social roles and duties. These are real components of the school that actually impact on pupils' lives for the better. Pupils work at being good citizens for the benefit of the whole

school community. For the wider community, pupils and staff are involved in the village fete, perform music and drama in the local Methodist church and provide a venue for the annual senior citizens tea.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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