

INSPECTION REPORT

ST HILDA'S AMPLEFORTH C. E. PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ampleforth, Helmsley

LEA area: North Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 121475

Headteacher: Mrs C. Windwood

Lead inspector: Mrs M. R. Shepherd

Dates of inspection: 7 – 9 June 2004

Inspection number: 257677

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 – 11 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 37

School address: Station Road
Ampleforth
York
North Yorkshire
Postcode: YO62 4DG

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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr G. D. Thurman

Date of previous inspection: 27 April 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Hilda's Ampleforth C. E. Primary School serves the village of Ampleforth, three surrounding villages and surrounding countryside. Housing is predominantly private with some rented accommodation. Employment varies from professional to unskilled work. There are 37 pupils on roll with 16 girls and 21 boys. In the current Year 6 there is only one girl and eight boys. Children enter the school with only three days a week play group experience. The school will be opening a nursery class in the spring term for children from the school's own catchment area and for children who will then attend the local Catholic school. Children enter the school with attainment broadly average and with a wide spread of ability. Due to the very small number of pupils in some year groups, attainment varies considerably each year. Over 5 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below average. Pupils are organised into two classes. One class serves children in reception and Years 1 and 2. The other class contains pupils from the junior age groups and is taught by the headteacher. Currently there are no pupils in Year 3. There are two full-time teachers and two part-time teachers who work across both classes. Sixteen per cent of pupils are on the special educational needs register, which is average. There are no pupils currently in the school with full statements of special educational needs. There are no pupils from different ethnic groups.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11328	Mrs M. R. Shepherd	Lead inspector	English, science, information and communication technology, physical education, special educational needs
9928	Mr A. Dobson	Lay inspector	
29188	Mrs G. Ulyatt	Team inspector	Mathematics, Foundation Stage, art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music, religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school with many very good features. Children make satisfactory progress in reception, achieve well in their infant years and achieve very well in the junior class. Relationships are excellent, personal development is very good and based firmly on Christian principles. Teaching is good overall and very good in the junior class. The provision for physical education is of high quality. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well in the infant year groups and very well in the junior class. By Year 6 standards are very high in mathematics, science and physical education and well above average in English.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher are very good. She works closely with the good quality co-ordinator and very effective governors.
- The school uses its small size very effectively to create a family community for learning where all pupils are included and pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- Teaching is very good in the junior class, good in the infant year groups but inconsistent in the reception year group.
- The curriculum is very good. The school uses visits very effectively to provide a stimulating curriculum. Provision for physical education is excellent.
- There are no secure outdoor facilities for the reception children and whole school library facilities are not easily accessible¹.
- Links with parents, the community and local schools are very good. The school takes very good care of its pupils.

There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. All the previous key issues have been tackled systematically. Standards have risen considerably in Year 6 in mathematics, science, English and physical education. The quality of teaching is better. Leadership and management have improved.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Standards in the national tests for 2003 in Year 6 were well above average in English, above average in mathematics and average in science. Care needs to be taken when interpreting this data, because each year group is so small. However, standards rose in Year 6 last year and there is now an upward trend, because standards are even higher this year. There were no national results in Year 2 because there were no pupils in this age group. The inspection judges pupils' achievement as **good** overall. It is very good in the junior class, good in infant year groups and satisfactory in reception. Standards in Year 6 are very high in mathematics, science and physical education and well above average in English. This is due to the high expectations of the headteacher, who is the class teacher. Standards in art and design, history and the Christianity aspect of religious education are above expectations in both Year 6 and Year 2.

Standards in Year 2 are well above average in mathematics and science and above average in English and information and communication technology (ICT). Reception children reach standards above the expected level in personal, social and emotional development and mathematical development. Standards in communication, language and literacy and other aspects inspected are at the expected level for these children.

¹ The school has had the plans passed and have the funds allocated for providing these improvements.

Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school. The designated governor and classroom assistant support these pupils very well.

The school places high value on developing pupils' personal development. Relationships are excellent across all age groups. Pupils have high levels of confidence and are very interested in the range of activities that the school provides. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good** overall and very good in moral and social development.

Pupils' attendance is well above average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good** overall, with many very good features.

The quality of teaching is **good** overall. It is very good with excellent features in the junior class. The headteacher organises lessons very effectively for the mixed age groups and for the high proportion of boys in Year 6. She works in close partnership with the very efficient classroom assistant. Teaching is good in the infant year groups. The teacher works well in whole class sessions to provide for the different age groups. Teaching is satisfactory overall in reception. It is good in personal, social and emotional development and mathematical development but in other aspects of the reception curriculum teaching does not systematically build basic skills in group work or independent play. Planning is not based closely enough on the different stepping stones² of the reception curriculum.

The quality of the curriculum is very good overall. Teachers use visits very effectively to stimulate pupils' interests. The curriculum is carefully matched to the boys' needs. The links that teachers create across different subjects support learning very well. There is a high quality physical education curriculum. The whole school library is not easily accessible to all pupils and there is no secure outdoor play area for reception children.

The care and welfare of the pupils is very good. The school provides very effective support and guidance for pupils, which is very high quality in the junior class. The school greatly values pupils' views and acts on their suggestions. The school organises lunchtimes and playtimes particularly well to create a family community for pupils to eat and play in harmony together.

Links with parents, the community and local schools are very good. The quality of information for parents is very good, particularly in the children's annual progress reports, which contain very clear targets. The headteacher listens carefully to parents' views and greatly values their contributions to the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good** overall. The headteacher has a very clear vision of how to improve the school's provision systematically. She combines her role as headteacher and class teacher very effectively. She plays a crucial role in raising standards and in providing a highly effective physical education curriculum. She makes very good use of the available expertise in the community to enrich pupils' learning. The other class teacher is a good quality subject and special education needs co-ordinator. Governance is very good. Governors play an important role in shaping the work of the school. They have very clear roles and responsibilities and they ensure that they have a very good level of personal involvement in the daily life of the school.

² The stepping stones are the different stages in the curriculum for reception children to follow as they progress through the year.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils have a high regard for the school. Parents appreciate arrangements for pupils to settle into school. They believe that teaching is good, and that there is a good range of activities available. They are pleased that their children are helped to become mature. Pupils are pleased that there are trusted adults to go to when they are worried. They appreciate that teachers help them when they have difficulties with their work and show them how to make their work better.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- improve the quality of weekly and termly planning for reception children;
- teach basic skills to reception children more consistently and use assessment more effectively for more able reception children;
- carry out the plans to provide an accessible whole-school library and a secure outdoor learning area for reception children.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is **good** overall. It is **very good** in the junior class, **good** in the infant year groups and **satisfactory** in reception. Standards are **well above** average in Year 6, **above average** in Year 2 and **at the expected level** in reception.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in the junior class, which leads to standards in Year 6 being very high in mathematics, science and physical education and well above average in English.
- Infant pupils achieve well, resulting in standards in Year 2 being well above average in mathematics and science and above average in English and ICT.
- Reception children achieve well in personal, social and emotional and mathematical development but their achievement in other areas of learning³ is at a lower level.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, resulting in good progress.
- Pupils achieve well in art and design, history and the Christianity aspect of religious education in both infant and junior year groups, producing standards that are above the expected level in Years 2 and 6.

Commentary

Foundation Stage

1. Achievement overall in reception is satisfactory. It is good in personal, social and emotional development because children benefit from working with older pupils and follow their example. Children play well together and are proud of their work. The many whole school opportunities for personal development also support achievement in this aspect very well, so standards are above the expected level. Standards are also above expectations in mathematical development. Children handle numbers to ten confidently and record them correctly. Teaching ensures that children's learning of basic mathematical skills builds systematically, as they progress through the year. However, this does not take place so effectively in the reading and writing aspects of communication, language and literacy, so achievement here is satisfactory and standards at the expected level. Children handle books sensibly, but do not expect to use the strategy of tackling unknown words through the use of letter sounds. Standards in the other areas of learning inspected are at the expected level. Planning is not based closely enough on the stepping stones of the reception curriculum. This reduces the systematic development of skills across these areas of learning.

Key Stage 1

2. There are no national tests results for last year, because there were no pupils in that year group. Previous results show that standards have been consistently above, or well above average, in reading and writing and predominantly at that standard in mathematics. Pupils benefit from the small numbers in their class and the individual support they receive from adults. The older pupils benefit from working with younger pupils because

³ There are six areas of learning that the government recommend reception children to follow. These are personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development.

they are expected to explain their work to them. This reinforces their understanding well. The inspection judges achievement as very good in mathematics with standards well above average in Year 2. Very good teaching ensures that more able pupils fulfil their potential and a high proportion reach higher levels than expected. Standards in speaking and listening are above the expected level in Year 2, because pupils get very regular opportunities to talk, both in lessons and around the school, at other times of the day. Reading and writing are above average. Pupils use their individual personal experiences confidently when writing and enjoy discussing their reading. Standards in science are well above average and pupils cover the different aspects of the science curriculum in depth. Infant pupils have good levels of confidence when handling ICT. They produce individual, well presented pieces of work that are above expected standards for their age. Scrutiny of pupils' work and displays show standards in art and design and in history to be above the expected level.

Key Stage 2

3. Data from national statistics needs to be treated with caution, because of the small numbers involved each year. The 2003 national tests show standards to be well above average in English, above average in mathematics and average in science. Compared with schools with a similar intake of pupils, but generally much larger groups of pupils, standards were above average in English, average in mathematics and well below average in science, despite all pupils reaching the expected level in science. Last year's results showed a rise in standards from the previous three years. The inspection judges standards as even higher this year, which produces a trend of rising standards over time. They judge standards as very high in mathematics and science and well above average in English. Junior pupils achieve very well because of the high quality of teaching they receive over several years of being in the headteacher's class. In mathematics and science, more than half the Year 6 pupils are reaching Level 5⁴, which is much higher than expected for their age. Pupils handle numbers very confidently and provide logical explanations when they solve mathematical problems. In science, Year 6 pupils have a thorough understanding of the different aspects of the curriculum and tackle investigations with confidence and accuracy. In English Year 6 pupils read fiction with enthusiasm, write very confidently using a wide range of styles and thoroughly enjoy debating issues. The headteacher ensures that pupils achieve extremely well in physical education. Although there are few pupils in each age range, they all expect to take a full part in this subject, particularly in team games. This leads to very high standards in Year 6.
4. The school identifies pupils with special educational needs quickly, when they enter the school. Individual programmes are set up, which support their needs well. The individual support that they receive from a variety of adults ensures that they make good progress. Pupils with behavioural difficulties make particularly good progress, due to the strong emphasis put on personal development throughout the school.
5. There are interesting programmes of work in art and design, history and the Christianity aspect of religious education throughout the school. The aspects that were available for inspection in these subjects show that standards are above the expected level.
6. There has been a significant improvement in standards and achievement since the previous inspection, particularly in English, mathematics, science and physical education.

⁴ Level 5 is the standard expected for fourteen-year-old pupils at a secondary school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance at the school is **well above** the national average and punctuality is **very good**. Pupils have a **very positive** attitude to school life and **behave very well**. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good** overall.

Main strengths

- Pupils have a very positive view of school and enjoy learning.
- Very good behaviour ensures a very good climate for learning.
- Relationships are very good, giving the school a clear sense of community.
- Pupils develop into sensible, confident and very responsible individuals as a result of the school's effective procedures for personal development.
- Parents are very conscientious in ensuring that their children go to school every day and get there on time.

Commentary

7. Pupils enjoy going to St Hilda's. They know they go to learn but also very much appreciate the strong sense of a family community; at school they are amongst friends. Pupils think St Hilda's is a very good school and are particularly proud of the school's sporting achievements. In class they settle down very quickly and are keen to join in. The good teaching motivates the pupils well to work hard and do their best. Pupils take homework seriously and are very enthusiastic about participating in school clubs.
8. Behaviour is very good, providing a climate that is both friendly and very conducive to learning. School rules are very simple and well understood by the pupils. They think that they are treated very fairly. The wide age range in the classes allows older children to set a good example to younger ones, which they do very well. Pupils have no concerns regarding bullying or name-calling. There have been no exclusions in recent times.
9. Relationships within the school are excellent. Everybody knows everybody else. Pupils get on very well with the adults and other children. The family atmosphere is very apparent at lunchtime with the very effective dining arrangements based on mixed aged groups on each table. Older pupils act as servers, giving out food, ensuring each person has enough and clearing away afterwards. Lunchtime is a very civilised, social occasion and very effectively develops pupils' social skills, good table manners and a clear sense of responsibility in the older pupils. During the inspection, in the dining room and in the playground, older pupils were consistently providing very good role models, in terms of attitudes and behaviour, for the younger pupils.
10. The school is very good at providing opportunities for pupils to develop their character. Being a Church of England school, pupils' spiritual development is encouraged by close association with the church, for instance by having the vicar regularly say prayers and give the blessing in assemblies. By providing a climate where achievement is recognised both academically and in sport, the school effectively encourages pupils' self-worth. Very good use is made of photos around the school to show pupils' achievements. Religious education lessons, class discussions and the very good example set by staff all contribute well to pupils receiving a clear message regarding moral values. Pupils' moral development is very good. They develop a very clear understanding of the importance of rules through the many team games that they play. They have a clear understanding that, although they want to win their games, this needs to be done in the context of valuing

every team member. Pupils understand that they must respect the decision of umpires, even when they do not think that they were accurate. Social skills are developed very well by group work in classes, playtime games and the many sporting activities that pupils are involved in. Pupils have many opportunities to help in the running of the school and these give pupils a very good appreciation of what it means to take responsibility for something. Pupils' understanding of cultural issues is satisfactory. Pupils have a good understanding of their own culture, but their grasp of issues related to multi-cultural development is not as comprehensive. By the time they are in Year 6, most pupils have developed into polite, confident and responsible individuals with sensible opinions.

- Attendance is well above that normally found in primary schools, with no cases of unauthorised absence recorded so far this year. Registers are well kept and it is rare for pupils to get a late mark.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	3.8	School data :	0.0
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good** overall, with many very good features. Teaching and learning are good. The quality of the curriculum is very good. Care and welfare of pupils, links with parents and links with the community and local schools are all very good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good** overall. It is very good in the junior class, good in the infant year groups and satisfactory in reception. Assessment is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are excellent features in the teaching of the headteacher; she is particularly effective in developing boys' learning.
- Teachers organise lessons well to meet the needs of the mixed-age classes.
- Teaching of basic skills in reception is not consistent enough.
- Teachers work well with classroom assistants and other adults in the infant/reception class and extremely well with the very good quality classroom assistant and governor in the junior class.
- Planning for reception children is not linked closely enough to the stepping stones.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge in mathematics, science and physical education and good subject knowledge in English but subject knowledge of the reception curriculum is at a lower level.
- Assessment systems are good; teachers have a very good understanding of individual infant and junior pupils' progress but assessment has unsatisfactory features in reception.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 15 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1	8	3	3	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; no figures are given for percentages because fewer than 30 lessons were seen.

12. The headteacher has high expectations and expects all pupils to do their best to achieve well. Her lessons proceed at a brisk pace and she swings her questioning skilfully across all the different age groups in whole-class discussion. She expects every pupil to remain alert in case they are targeted and they thoroughly enjoy this level of challenge. Pupils settle to group tasks quickly and are proud to finish their work within the allotted time. The headteacher uses a wide range of strategies to stimulate learning in the high proportion of boys in her class. Without disadvantaging the girls, she encourages lively levels of debate and interesting, purposeful activities that engage the boys' attention throughout lessons.
13. Teachers are careful to organise their lessons to provide activities that match the different age groups' needs. Different tasks are provided for older and younger pupils to ensure that their work is pitched at the best level for their learning. When the same task is set for the whole class, teachers provide additional challenge for the older pupils. Younger pupils benefit from seeing the more difficult work, because it helps them understand what they will be striving for as they get older. The headteacher uses whole-class sessions at the end of lessons very skilfully. She carefully devises tasks that combine the needs of all year groups. These include older pupils presenting their work to younger pupils. The younger pupils then interrogate their classmates and thoroughly enjoy keeping them on their toes when they respond. The infant/reception teacher organises her pupils well for sharing their work but does not then keep all pupils fully involved in the task. This reduces the effectiveness of these sessions.
14. The infant/reception teacher organises the different age groups effectively and ensures that reception children have regular play-based learning activities. In personal, social and emotional development and in mathematical development she ensures that reception children systematically learn basic skills. However, in other aspects of the reception curriculum she does not provide sufficiently focused tasks to ensure that these children build up basic skills. This results in some play-based activities being too random in terms of the learning that is taking place.
15. Teachers work well with classroom assistants and other adults. They organise them carefully to support the different age groups, both in whole class sessions and in group work. In the infant/reception class the teacher works in a productive partnership with the efficient teacher trainee. In the junior class the partnership between the headteacher and the classroom assistant is excellent. The classroom assistant is very highly skilled and supports individuals and groups with sensitivity. This ensures that all pupils play a full part in lessons. This classroom assistant and the special educational needs governor give very good individual support for pupils with special educational needs when they withdraw them from the classroom. With the skilful use of practical apparatus and a laptop computer, these adults ensure that pupils make systematic progress in their basic skills.

16. The unsatisfactory provision of play-based activities for reception children was a key issue in the previous inspection. This weakness has been tackled effectively. However, much of this play is not based clearly enough on the many different aspects of each stepping stone identified by the government for the reception curriculum. This reduces children's coverage of each of the strands of learning that are expected for their age.
17. Teachers have very good subject knowledge in mathematics and science, which has a very positive impact on the learning of pupils in these subjects and the resulting very high standards in them. Subject knowledge is good in English and teachers ensure that they use technical language regularly in lessons. This increases both pupils' vocabulary and their understanding of English language. The subject knowledge of the part-time teacher in physical education is very high and the headteacher has very good subject knowledge across the physical education curriculum. This has a very positive impact on pupils' achievement over time. The reception teacher's knowledge of the reception curriculum is not as comprehensive as her other good subject knowledge. This reduces her effectiveness in supporting reception children across the full curriculum.
18. The school uses the benefits of being a small school very effectively, to track pupils' progress over time. Teachers know all the pupils very well and have a real interest across the different aspects of their progress. The full-time teachers both work with each other's pupils. This ensures that the infant teacher continues to monitor the progress of the pupils she used to teach full time and the headteacher gets an equally good understanding of the rate of development of the pupils who will be coming into her class when they get older. The school combines this informal system with a good range of formal systems. Tests are carried out regularly and analysed to identify pupil's individual needs and to track their progress over time. Pupils have clear targets for development and understand what they have to do to improve, because teachers use them regularly and they are shared with their parents. Assessment in science is particularly good. Pupils write about what they know before a unit of work and do this again at the end of the unit. These records show clearly the understanding that has been gained. It also gives pupils a sense of pride in their achievement. The use of the assessment books in writing is good. Teachers thoroughly analyse pupils' standards over the full range of writing skills. Assessment of reception children is satisfactory overall but more able children's progress is not tracked closely enough.

The curriculum

Curriculum provision is **very good**. It caters **very well** for all pupils and offers a **good** level of enrichment through additional activities available outside the school day. The accommodation is **satisfactory**, and resources are **adequate**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a very well balanced curriculum for infant and junior pupils with a very good balance between academic and personal development and a high emphasis on physical development.
- The junior curriculum matches the needs of the boys very effectively.
- The reception children's curriculum does not cover the areas of learning systematically enough.
- There is a good range of additional activities provided for pupils outside lessons.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The school uses visits and visitors very effectively to enrich the curriculum.
- Provision for outdoor play for reception children is limited and the school library is not easily accessible for all pupils.

Commentary

19. Teachers in both classes provide infant and junior pupils with a very good range of experiences across the full curriculum. The different aspects of English, mathematics and science are covered thoroughly and provide pupils with a systematic programme of work, as they move through the school. The school plans carefully for the mixed-age classes and ensures that pupils are not covering the same work when they remain in the same class for several years. Staff work hard to create links across different subjects, which extend pupils' understanding very well. Teachers provide a very good personal, social, emotional and health programme of work. Health education is covered thoroughly in the living processes of the science curriculum and pupils understand how important physical exercise is to keeping healthy. The headteacher considers the needs of boys and girls very carefully because there is a great imbalance between boys and girls in the current Year 6. She provides very interesting topics that match boys' interests very well. She sets up careful checking arrangements to ensure that the girls are also interested in these topics. The mathematics curriculum is extended very effectively in the junior class by additional voluntary support from a mathematics expert who is a retired lecturer. His efforts support more able pupils very effectively in this subject. The school provides an excellent physical education programme of work that covers a wide range of sports. A generous time allocation is given to this subject and this has a very positive impact on pupils' learning in this subject as well as on their overall enthusiasm for school.
20. The curriculum for the reception pupils is not matched carefully enough to the stepping stones. It is good in mathematical development and this programme of work ensures that children steadily build their basic skills in this area of learning. However, the other areas of learning are not planned systematically enough. This reduces these children's opportunities to extend their learning across all the elements of their curriculum.
21. Considering the size of the school, the extra-curricular provision is good. The curriculum is especially well enriched by an extensive range of lunchtime and after-hours clubs and activities. In these groups, pupils can develop their skills in team games, gymnastics and athletics. The school places great emphasis on sport and offers pupils an extensive range throughout the year. A number of pupils now play the recorder during the lunchtime

club. Pupils also join 'interest' groups, for instance, or play games including chess and scrabble. They join the computer club to help to extend their ICT skills and some combine their computer skills well with art.

22. The school provides a good curriculum for pupils with special educational needs. There is a clear policy to identify these pupils quickly, work to support their needs and get them off the register. There is a good balance of whole-class teaching and withdrawal sessions for these pupils. The individual support that they receive is carefully planned to extend their skills while sustaining their self-esteem.
23. The school organises an extensive range of visits, which stimulate pupils' interests very effectively. These visits are carefully tailored to match the curriculum covered in lessons. Pupils of all ages benefit from these first-hand experiences. Recent visits have included the seaside, York Minster, the National Railway Museum, Helmsley Castle and walled garden and the local church. Junior pupils have an annual residential visit to a place of outstanding natural beauty in North Yorkshire. Visitors to the school include theatre groups, musicians and missionaries who share their experiences with pupils. Subsequent curriculum planning uses the experience pupils gain to enhance learning opportunities across the curriculum.
24. The good number of qualified teachers and teaching assistants supports the curriculum well. The accommodation indoors is used to its full potential. There is a large area that is shared well by both classes and which allows pupils space to work in smaller groups. The playground and field are both suitable and used well by all pupils throughout the year. The headteacher and governors have worked very hard to improve the accommodation and in recent years the provision for the disabled and cloakroom facilities have been updated well. The level of ICT equipment and software, the decoration of the interior of the school and the furniture have also systematically been improved. However, there is no secure outdoor play area for Foundation Stage children. This limits their learning in physical development and in outdoor activities. The library is sited in the outdoor classroom and, while junior pupils access it easily, it is not as convenient for infant pupils. This is having a negative impact on pupils' choice of non-fiction books. The school has identified both these weaknesses and plans have been passed to solve both these problems.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are **very well** cared for and given a **very high** level of support and guidance. Health and safety is **very good**. The school has **very good** procedures for taking account of pupils' views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is a very caring community, based firmly on Christian principles.
- Child protection and healthy and safety issues are taken very seriously.
- All pupils receive excellent support in their personal development.
- Pupils are very actively involved in the way the school develops.

Commentary

25. St Hilda's is a very small school, where all pupils are very well known to the staff and treated with respect. The way children are cared for reflects very well Christian standards and beliefs. There is a strong sense of a family community, where everyone is valued. Pupils feel safe and among friends. Supervision is good at all times. Child protection is

treated very seriously, both teachers being fully trained in the subject and all staff familiar with the school's procedures. The school has a strong culture of health and safety; risk assessments are prepared assiduously, first aid cover is good and fire drills take place every term. The school's procedures for child protection and health and safety have improved well since the previous inspection.

26. The school keeps track of the pupils' development very well. Pupils know clearly what they need to do to improve academically. Individual targets in English and mathematics are widely used and these are reviewed regularly – often weekly. The small size of the school means that the teachers know their pupils extremely well. The headteacher describes it as 'knowing them inside out'. This knowledge results in close, very trusting relationships between the pupils and their teacher. Personal support and advice is extremely effective, as it is based on an intimate knowledge of each individual child. The high quality of the sections on personal development in the pupils' annual reports reflect a deep understanding of each pupil's personal qualities.
27. Pupils are very much involved in the way the school develops. Class discussions are used extensively for pupils to air their views and for the headteacher to sound out the pupils on new ideas. Major developments are discussed with the pupils; for instance, the decision for all pupils to go swimming for one term a year was arrived at after consultations with all the pupils. Simple questionnaires are used, roughly twice a year, to pick up any underlying concerns or wishes. The high level of interest in pupils' views is symptomatic of the community spirit that permeates the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **very good** links with parents, the local community and other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have a very high opinion of the school.
- The school keeps parents very well informed about their children's progress and school life in general.
- Parents are very much involved in the way the school develops.
- Pupils benefit from very good links with the local community and very good links with other primary schools.

Commentary

28. Parents have a very high opinion of the school and the way it is run. They particularly like the good behaviour and lack of bullying in the school, the way their children mature and the range of sporting activities available. Parents are of the opinion that the school has improved significantly in recent years.
29. The school works hard at keeping parents very well informed. Documents for parents such as the school brochure, the governors' annual report and the weekly newsletter are all of consistently high quality. They are very informative and easy to read, being free of educational jargon. Pupils' annual reports are written in a way that makes them very useful to parents. Progress is clearly stated, including the National Curriculum level at which the child is currently working, based on most recent test results. Targets are specific enough to allow parents to be involved in their children's learning. Sections on personal development give a clear appraisal of a child's strengths and weaknesses. There are good formal arrangements for parents to see their child's teacher each term

and the very sociable open-door arrangements before and after school each day allow for easy early contact, if there are any concerns.

30. Parents' views are taken very seriously. Every month the headteacher holds a 'parents' forum' open to all parents, when ideas, developments or concerns can be discussed. This is a highly effective method of involving parents in the way the school develops. Subjects discussed recently include rewriting the home/school agreement, homework policy and how educational visits are paid for. On average, around a third of all parents attend these meetings. In addition, the school uses questionnaires on a regular basis. These procedures ensure very effectively that parents are consulted on and feel involved in all major developments in the school.
31. The school is an integral part of the local community and pupils benefit greatly from the links it has. For instance, village walks are included, whenever possible, as part of the curriculum. Visits are made to the nearby Howardian Hills, an area of outstanding natural beauty, and to North Yorkshire National Park, the boundary of which runs through the village. The school works closely with local schools in arranging educational events, for instance performances by travelling theatre companies. There are extensive sporting links with other primary schools covering tennis, football, netball and cross-country. These allow pupils to appreciate competition and develop team spirit very effectively. There are also close links with the local church college and pupils greatly benefit from the use of their facilities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good** overall. The leadership and management of the headteacher are **very good**. The governance is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher sets a very clear educational direction for the school and sets high standards in her own teaching.
- The management of the headteacher is very good and she very skilfully combines her responsibilities in managing the school with the role of class teacher.
- The governors have a wide range of expertise that they use very effectively to support and direct the work of the school.
- The leadership and management of subjects are good overall.

Commentary

32. The headteacher has a great determination to provide a very good education for each pupil in the school. She sets a high value on using the small nature of the school to provide one huge family for learning. She has a clear belief in the importance of extending academic, physical and personal development, to produce well-rounded individuals who achieve high standards by the time they leave the school. She provides a very effective role model in her own teaching, which is very good with excellent features. Her expertise as a physical education co-ordinator is having a great impact on this subject. This is particularly beneficial for the boys, who have a great passion for different sports, but understand that their academic success is also important. The headteacher has a real commitment to working in partnership with parents and the local community. These partnerships are combining very effectively to support pupils' development as they move through the school.

33. A key feature of the headteacher's very good quality management is her systematic organisation. She identifies key areas for improvement through comprehensive planning for school improvement, then sets about identifying a wide range of ways of reaching those goals. The school improvement plan is a well organised document, which the school uses regularly to evaluate its progress. The headteacher skilfully introduces new strategies to extend pupils' experiences, such as the organisation of mixed-age groups for lunch, where the older pupils take great delight in looking after the younger pupils. She very effectively covers all her key responsibilities of managing the school, while carrying the load of teaching two thirds of the pupils in the junior class. She makes very good use of available expertise, and in improving the level of resources. The contributions of part-time teachers and volunteers with expertise in subjects such as mathematics and physical education greatly enrich the work of the school. The headteacher is very effective in gaining grants to extend the accommodation and resources for the school. She continually strives to improve this provision, setting challenging goals, such as working with the other primary school in the village to provide nursery provision, and then overcoming the obstacles to achieving such improvements. The headteacher uses the principles of best value very effectively to ensure available finance and development opportunities are used efficiently.
34. The headteacher ensures that there are clear responsibilities for leading and managing different subjects. Although this gives each teacher a heavy load, the system works well and teachers' strengths are used to good effect. There are regular opportunities for subject leaders to monitor teaching and learning. The headteacher organises performance management thoroughly, including every member of staff. Full-time teachers go on a good range of course to extend their expertise.
35. The quality of governance is very good. Governors have a great commitment to the school, particularly to inclusion issues. They take high levels of responsibility for extending the work of the school in aspects such as sex education, where they are taking the lead in deciding details of the curriculum. They have a very good understanding of education and monitor the work of the school very thoroughly. They carry out regular visits to observe teaching and learning, providing detailed feedback for staff. The chair of governors takes a clear lead in his role and has a keen personal interest in the work of the school. Pupils value his visits and use his expertise in physical education to extend their knowledge of current sporting events. Governors take up their key responsibilities with enthusiasm. The work of the special educational needs governor is particularly valuable in supporting the work of individual pupils in the school. These pupils see it as a privilege to work with her.
36. There were several key issues in the previous inspection related to management. These have all been completed in full. Overall there has been a good level of improvement in leadership and management since the previous inspection.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	169,600	Balance from previous year	21,576 ⁵
Total expenditure	173,417	Balance carried forward to the next	17,759 ⁶

⁵ This includes money allocated for the improvement of cloakroom and disabled toilet provision.

Expenditure per pupil	4,686		
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⁶ This includes money allocated for the new nursery provision.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The quality of provision is **satisfactory** overall.

37. Reception children are taught in a class alongside pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 and they benefit from working and playing alongside older pupils. Attainment on entry to the reception class is average overall, although a minority have limited experiences and immature speaking and listening skills. Children achieve steadily and standards by the end of reception are at the expected level in communication, language and literacy. In mathematics and personal, social and emotional development they are above what is normally expected. Teaching is satisfactory with some good features. When working with the small group of children, staff teach them well and the activities they provide engage and challenge young children well. However, planning for the reception children is not linked closely enough to the stepping stones and does not focus consistently enough on the development of basic skills. The teacher provides activities, which children can choose for themselves, but some are 'ad hoc' and do not systematically cover all six areas of learning. The key focus for learning in some play activities is not planned well enough, so children are not clear about what they are supposed to do. This means that children miss opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning and consolidate their understanding through play. Staff know each child well through detailed assessments and where this useful information is used well, such as in mathematics, children make good progress. However, in other aspects assessment is not used well enough to provide challenging work for more able children. Leadership and the management of the Foundation Stage curriculum are satisfactory. The action plan shows appropriate developmental points, including the development of the area outdoors to improve curriculum provision and the impact on children's learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children benefit from the mixed age classes and the whole-school emphasis on personal development.
- Children do not take enough responsibility for their own learning.
- Children value each other and play and learn together well, because adults are good, caring role models.
- Children are well behaved, confident and relaxed, because relationships at all levels are very good.

Commentary

38. Reception children enjoy working alongside older pupils in their class. They follow the example of the older pupils and behave well. Staff are sensitive to individual children's needs, which results in children feeling safe and secure. The whole-school emphasis on personal development greatly benefits reception children, particularly the family group eating arrangements and the team-based activities available at break times. In this positive environment, children achieve steadily and reach standards above the expected level. Children play amicably together and have established good friendships. They share resources well,

such as the seaweed and shells found on the beach. They invite each other to play and discuss what each will do. Children make some choices about what they would like to do, but activities do not always have a clear focus for learning, so opportunities for children to take responsibility for their own learning are lost. Children show good levels of concentration during planned activities with staff. For example, when they count cups of water into a larger container, children experience a clear sense of achievement. This has a good impact on all their learning. Children show pride in their work when making sea creatures with dough. They talk enthusiastically about their trip to the seaside. Staff expect good behaviour and children are clear about boundaries, because staff explain clearly. Children follow rules and routines well. They sit quietly in assembly and in whole-class teaching sessions and pay good attention. Children know they are valued at school, so they show good levels of self-esteem and confidence. They are very friendly and engage staff and visitors easily in conversation.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff give very good emphasis to speaking and listening skills.
- The approach to developing literacy skills is not focused enough.
- Writing activities for more able children are not challenging enough.

Commentary

39. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Children develop very good speaking and listening skills and this has a significant impact on their learning. Staff support children's development of language well during activities and teach them a good range of new words. Throughout the day they encourage children to talk about their ideas. The topic approach to learning has a positive impact on children's spoken language and they use good, clear sentences when talking, for example, about their trip to Robin Hood's Bay. The role-play emphasis changes to match the topic and children recently played different roles in the garden shop. However, the teaching of reading and writing is not as systematic. Children use picture clues well, to make sensible predictions of what might happen in the story. They handle books carefully and turn pages correctly. However, too little attention is given to encouraging them to use the letter sounds they know to sound out unknown words. Children are learning to express their ideas and draw detailed pictures. They are beginning to write, but do not achieve as well as they could, because the teaching approach is not systematic enough. Assessment is not used well enough to provide challenging work, particularly for more able pupils. There are no words or letters displayed large enough and clear enough to help them. Planning overlooks opportunities for children to write and make marks through play. Children are not given enough chances to learn how to form letters correctly when writing short phrases.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well, because staff know exactly what children understand and can do, and build systematically on it.
- Staff provide a good range of activities that enhance children's understanding of pattern, shape, space and measure.

Commentary

40. Teaching is good and children reach standards that are above the expected level by the end of reception. They achieve well because in lessons the teacher ensures that the questions that

are directed towards reception children match their stage of development. Children are also well influenced and challenged when listening to the bigger numbers used by older pupils in the class. In lessons staff are well focused on what they want each child to learn. They place good emphasis on number skills, so children learn to count beyond ten. They learn to order numbers and record them. More able children confidently write numbers beyond ten. Staff make sure that children have regular chances to consolidate their ideas through supported play activities. In water play, for example, they count the number of cups needed to fill a larger container. Children discuss mathematical ideas regularly, including most and least in relation to capacity. They develop good counting skills through activities such as making starfish with dough and counting the legs. Children produce simple addition sums and they generally form numbers correctly. Staff exploit visits well, to support mathematical understanding. Children play with shells of different sizes and make comparisons. They are aware of symmetry in shape. They use cubes to measure seaside artefacts and use many objects when playing with balancing scales, learning what heavy, light and balance mean. Children learn to make and record repeating patterns with colours.

41. Planning across the other aspects of the reception curriculum is not linked closely enough to the stepping stones and children do not systematically work their way through all the different features expected for this age group. As a result, children do not develop skills across each of the different strands of these areas of learning. Teaching does provide interesting experiences. In this rural setting, some children have first hand experiences of the animal world. Visits are used to full advantage to extend children's **knowledge and understanding of the world**. The recent trip to the seaside resulted in children improving their knowledge about sea-life. Children develop investigative skills through play with objects such as shells, pebbles, driftwood and seaweed. Staff extend children's observational skills through discussion and interesting tasks such as making replicas with dough. Children develop appropriate skills in understanding place by making objects such as a three-dimensional map of the beach and buildings on the coast. They use a range of materials well and construction equipment and talk about the many features connected with coastal towns. They learn about religious events when they visit the local church and simulate a christening. In **physical development** children regularly play outdoors each day with older pupils. Resources are varied and plentiful and pupils throughout the school include reception children in their play. Delicate finger skills are not developed well enough, because planned activities to support the development of control are not always available. Children learn to develop skills such as balancing along beams and to use small skills apparatus through very good activities at play times. In **creative development** children paint from time to time and enjoy singing a range of songs and miming the actions. The visit to a walled garden inspired the role-play area, where children dress-up and pretend to be other characters.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising in the junior class and in Year 2 standards have been average or better over time.
- The school identified raising achievement and standards in writing as a priority and has been successful in reaching this aim.

- The high emphasis on personal development throughout the school supports speaking and listening skills very effectively.
- Teachers use visits well as a stimulus for extending English skills.
- Whole class sessions at the end of lessons are inconsistent.
- The co-ordinator has a good understanding of individual pupils' learning through the school.
- The lack of access to the whole-school library is having a negative impact on reading development.

Commentary

42. Although the small size of the school produces considerable differences between year groups, standards in the national tests in reading and writing in Year 2 have been consistently above average or higher since 2000. The inspection judges achievement as good in the infant year groups and standards in the current Year 2 are above average. All pupils are reaching the expected Level 2. The early identification of pupils with special educational needs and the well focused support they receive ensure that no pupil fails to achieve the expected level.
43. Standards over time in Year 6 have been very inconsistent, ranging from well below average to above average. However, the current headteacher has worked hard, together with the co-ordinator, to raise standards. They achieved this in the 2003 national tests, where standards were well above average, compared with all schools and above average compared with schools with a similar intake of pupils. These high standards have been sustained and achievement is very good in the junior class, with standards well above average in Year 6. The support for pupils with special educational needs is very good in English in the junior class, so they achieve very well. The classroom assistant is very skilled in working with these pupils in class and supports them very sensitively. This ensures that they enjoy lessons and make full contributions to whole class sessions. These pupils receive very well focused support in developing basic skills, from the special educational needs governor as well as from the teaching assistant, when they are withdrawn from the classroom for individual support.
44. The school has worked hard to extend its provision in writing. It now promotes a very well balanced range of writing styles over time. Infant pupils achieve well and standards in Year 2 are above average. Pupils produce very interesting pieces of writing, employing a range of different styles and use grammar and spelling confidently. Pupils achieve very well in writing in the junior class and standards are well above average in Year 6. The headteacher plans the content of the writing very carefully, to match the large proportion of boys in the class. They thoroughly enjoy covering topics such as presenting arguments for and against building a theme park in the village, or writing persuasive letters. The recent whole-school focus on spelling ensures that pupils systematically learn words and use them correctly in their independent writing. Both teachers identify an audience for writing as often as they can and this really motivates pupils, because their writing has a real purpose.
45. Standards in speaking and listening are above expectations in Year 2 and well above in Year 6. The school greatly encourages pupils to express their opinions, so by Year 6, pupils have great confidence in framing an argument or explaining their work. The teaching techniques in the junior class extend these skills very effectively. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 thoroughly enjoy challenging Year 6 pupils, when they present their work at the end of lessons. The older pupils rise to this challenge and strive to use specific

vocabulary to justify their views. The organisation of family groups at lunchtime and shared activities across age groups at play times support speaking and listening skills extremely effectively. Older pupils speak gently to younger pupils and listen carefully to their responses.

46. Pupils throughout the school enjoy reading. The regular paired reading sessions support reading development very well. The younger pupils enjoy the individual attention of the older pupils. Year 2 pupils expect to talk in depth about the content of their books and appreciate the different characters in stories. Although the junior class has access to the library in the outdoor classroom, it is not easily accessible for infant pupils. These younger pupils handle all the technical aspects of non-fiction books well, but are not as confident in choosing books independently. The school has identified this weakness and new library facilities have been included in the building improvement plans, which have already been passed and funded. Junior pupils develop a real love of literature, through the headteacher's use of classic fiction for whole-class reading and her personal enthusiasm for children's books. Her organisation of different versions of the same text supports the learning across the different age groups very effectively.
47. Teaching is good in the infant class and very good in the junior class. Both teachers make good use of visits as a basis for pupils to extend their learning in English. Pupils talk and write from personal experience, which gives every piece of work an individual perspective. The headteacher uses whole-class sessions at the end of lessons very effectively. She plans carefully for the different age groups and ensures that all pupils are actively involved in the tasks. The infant teacher is not as successful during these sessions and several pupils lose concentration when they are not actively involved in presenting their work. The headteacher has very high expectations of more able pupils. This leads to some pupils achieving extremely well, particularly in writing, where their work contains subtle, sensitive prose of a very high standard.
48. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well. She has a very good understanding of pupils' achievement throughout the school, because she regularly teaches the junior pupils in English. This arrangement provides pupils with a good variety of teaching approaches. The co-ordinator is particularly effective in teaching different aspects, such as the writing of parodies. Consequently, pupils produce very interesting work, such as very inventive alternative fairy stories. The introduction of assessment books in writing has resulted in good tracking of the individual development of pupils.
49. The school has worked hard to raise standards in English, so there has been considerable improvement since the previous inspection. Standards were average both in Year 2 and Year 6 but now they are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6. The key issue of improving writing in the infants has been tackled very effectively.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

50. Teachers plan carefully in other subjects to extend literacy and language skills. Pupils use word processing regularly throughout the school and produce good quality work that classroom assistants display sensitively. Pupils are proud of their final products and match the style of fonts to the work, using formal letter formats well in the junior classes. The infant teacher carefully records pupils' verbal opinions in subjects such as responding to famous artists' work and then includes these comments in displays of

work. This very effectively extends pupils' efforts to think about what they want to say, because they know that their ideas are valued. In the junior class pupils develop skills very well in personal, social, health, citizenship and education lessons, through the high level of debate carried out and through activities such as writing letters to national figures.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 6 in mathematics are outstanding and have greatly improved since the previous inspection.
- Teaching is very good, with teachers planning interesting work and relevant activities resulting in pupils achieving very well.
- There is a strong focus placed on developing pupils' mental skills.
- There is very good emphasis on problem solving.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is very well developed.

Commentary

51. Standards in mathematics in Year 2 are well above average and Year 6 they are very high. In the national tests in 2003 all Year 6 pupils reached the expected standard, with about a third achieving the higher standard. There were no Year 2 pupils in 2003. Scrutiny of work and teacher assessment show that standards of Year 6 pupils are very high this year, with over half of the pupils achieving at the higher level. The headteacher has organised additional support for more able pupils in mathematics, which ensures that these pupils reach their potential. Infant pupils also achieve very well. All pupils are working at least at the expected level and over half at the higher level. Since the last inspection staff have worked hard to raise standards in mathematics throughout the school. Most pupils enter the school with an average mathematical understanding but by Year 2 they achieve very well, developing a very good knowledge and understanding of place value and recalling addition and number facts, up to at least 100. By Year 6, pupils add and subtract within 10,000. They multiply and divide numbers, showing good levels of accuracy. This represents very good achievement.
52. Teaching is very good overall, with some excellent features in the junior class. Teachers know pupils very well and pay good attention to the age and ability of each individual. In the junior class, the headteacher uses excellent questioning skills and challenges pupils, whose knowledge and understanding is very varied because of the mixed age classes. In lessons seen, teachers made good use of pupils' direct experiences, to make mathematics relevant to them. In the infant class, following a visit to the seaside, Year 2 pupils examined timetables to calculate how long boat journeys take. They record their results well on a chart, because the teacher demonstrates well for them. In the junior class, the teacher challenges pupils to interpret information from four graphs of increasing difficulty. Pupils find the activity both interesting and very challenging. Additional strengths in teaching include:
- carefully planned lessons with clear learning objectives, which have a very positive impact on pupils' learning and standards;
 - an extensive range of mental problems covering many aspects of mathematics;
 - teaching which captures pupils' interest and enthusiasm;
 - very good emphasis on the correct use of mathematical vocabulary;
 - very good opportunities for pupils to explain methods of calculation;
 - making sure that pupils fully understand how work builds on previous learning;
 - encouraging pupils' enthusiasm, so that all feel secure and willingly contribute, with no fear of failure;
 - class assistants who are well briefed and very supportive of individual pupils;

- questioning that is well used to check pupils' understanding and advance their thinking.
53. Teachers put very good emphasis on developing pupils' mental skills and all pupils achieve very well. This is because teachers allocate time at the beginning of the lesson to develop quick thinking in pupils, across several aspects of mathematics. They plan several short activities to extend pupils' understanding and consolidate previous learning. Therefore as they move up the school the speed and range of pupils' mental calculations increases. Year 2 pupils, with limited support, correctly add three numbers together to reach a total of 88. They mentally calculate multiplication problems using the two and five times tables. They work out time differences, for example, and know that 10.30am is one hour and a half after 9.00am. By Year 6, pupils are very knowledgeable about, for example, the many number patterns that feature in the nine times table. They are very clear about place value and understand how the value of digits changes when multiplied or divided by ten.
54. Teachers give very good emphasis to problem solving. In Year 2, pupils have to consider how many different ways to solve problems such as colouring a flag, using three colours only. In Year 6, they extend these skills very effectively and tackle problems such as working out from four graphs which one is used for converting miles to kilometres, favourite colours, temperature records and the results of throwing a dice. Pupils are well able to offer clear, logical explanations about each graph and its use.
55. Leadership and management of mathematics are very strong. The arrangements for monitoring teaching and learning are very well established. Pupils' work is marked so well that they are very clear about what they need to do to improve. All pupils have targets that are linked to key learning objectives. Pupils' test results are analysed to identify weaknesses in learning and these are quickly addressed in planning and teaching. The co-ordinator is an excellent role model in teaching mathematics.

Mathematics across the curriculum

56. Pupils regularly use mathematics as part of their work in other subjects and consequently develop an appreciation of the practical uses of these skills. For example, they use graphs to record data in geography, such as places they would like to visit. Older pupils create graphs on the computer. They use shape and pattern confidently in their art work.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is very good throughout the school. Standards have risen considerably over the past two years in Year 6 and are now very high.
- Teachers provide a very well balanced curriculum with a high emphasis on investigations.
- The headteacher provides a very good role model and is a very effective co-ordinator.
- Assessment systems are carefully built into the programme of work and give pupils a very good understanding of their own learning.
- Teachers make very good use of visits out of school to stimulate and reinforce learning.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy using ICT to extend their learning in science.

Commentary

57. There were no pupils in the 2003 Year 2 group. In 2002 pupils reached standards that were well above average. The inspection judges that standards have remained at this level in Year 2. Pupils have a very good understanding of investigative science, with

pupils with special educational needs achieving particularly well in this aspect. The teacher ensures that pupils regularly make predictions about what they think will happen in investigations and all pupils observe experiments carefully and record them clearly.

58. Standards in science in Year 6 have been very variable over the past four years, with the 2002 national tests showing levels well below average. Since then standards have risen considerably due to the increased emphasis on this subject and the very good quality teaching of the current headteacher in the junior class. All junior children now achieve very well. Work is carefully structured to ensure that older pupils are challenged and younger pupils are supported. The classroom assistant plays a valuable role in working with the younger pupils and pupils with special educational needs. Over half of the Year 6 pupils are working at the level expected for thirteen-year-old pupils. They have a very good knowledge of scientific facts and tackle investigational work with great confidence. This is because the headteacher has very high expectations and provides demanding tasks for pupils to solve.
59. Teaching is very good quality. It was not possible to inspect a science lesson in the infant class but an ICT lesson was based on science and provided evidence of teaching in this subject for that year group. Judgements are also based on scrutiny of work and discussion with the teacher and pupils. Both teachers cover the curriculum very effectively, in long blocks of work. This ensures that pupils become confident within the different scientific areas of living things, materials and physical processes. They develop a very good understanding of key scientific principles, because teachers give them an interesting range of different tasks that build systematically on previous learning. Both teachers provide a very good mixture of different ways of recording scientific learning. This includes carefully observed drawings and diagrams, charts and computer programs. Pupils regularly write up the full scientific process, which extends their understanding of experimental systems well.
60. Teachers organise a range of well-focused visits out of school to extend pupils' learning. This gives pupils opportunities to experience for themselves such things as the variety within a seaside habitat. Teachers then relate learning to practical experiences that pupils have had, which produces very good quality discussion. The infant teacher only had to mention the huge seagull that arrived when pupils were eating their lunch the previous day, to give pupils a clear reminder of some features of living things. Both teachers use ICT very well to extend pupils' learning. In the infant class pupils use branching databases confidently to identify aspects such as different categories of living things. Junior pupils use a digital microscope and digital photographs skilfully to extend their observations of objects such as the stamens and stigma of flowers.
61. The headteacher has placed a high priority on improving provision in science and is a very effective leader and manager of the subject. Her teaching is lively and well organised and provides a very good role model for other staff. Junior pupils approach their work with great enthusiasm because they know that their efforts will be appreciated. The headteacher has introduced very effective assessment systems. Both teachers now get pupils to record what they know at the beginning of a topic and then again at the end and this gives pupils a real sense of pride in the amount that they have learned. The clever strategy in the junior class of identifying twenty different things at the end of a topic ensures that pupils really strive to remember different aspects of their learning.

62. There has been significant improvement in this subject since the previous inspection, with standards rising considerably in both Year 2 and Year 6. The previous key issue of improving leadership and management of this subject has been completed very effectively.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising and pupils achieve well. Standards are above expectations in Year 2 and at the expected level in Year 6.
- The purchase of new hardware and software over the past two years has had a significant impact on the rate of pupils' progress.
- Teachers make good use of the computer suite across different lessons.
- Pupils with special educational needs benefit from using individual skills based programs.
- The systems for organising pupils' work are not efficient enough to allow them to easily access their own work.
- The computer club plays an important part in extending pupils' learning.
- Standards of display are high and pupils are proud of their achievement.

Commentary

63. The school is working hard to raise standards in ICT. Infant pupils develop a good level of confidence in using computers because they regularly work in the computer suite. By Year 2 pupils use word processing confidently because they receive individual help to complete these tasks. They produce well-presented pieces of work from their writing in literacy sessions. Tasks such as their colour poems show their understanding of the need to match the font and the colour to the text. Pupils use graphics packages skilfully to produce work in the style of different artists such as Paul Klee. They combine different graphical techniques to produce well-balanced compositions, because the teacher helps them to identify what is special about different paintings. She then relates their understanding to the techniques that computers make available. Pupils handle branching databases with confidence, because the teacher uses clear explanations of how to use the key features of these programs.
64. Pupils achieve well in the junior classes. In Years 4 and 5 pupils are working above the expected level. This is due to the considerable efforts put into improving the provision of hardware and software and providing access to the Internet. These improved facilities have had a beneficial effect on pupils' progress through the school. However, the current Year 6 pupils have not had the full use of these new resources throughout their schooling. In most aspects these oldest pupils have made up for lost time. They use word-processing well, to produce carefully presented work, such as formal letters in different fonts. They produce formal reports in the format of a newspaper, effectively and at the expected level, including graphics and digital photographs. They appreciate the role of ICT in communication because the teacher identifies real audiences for their work. Pupils handle digital cameras and microscopes confidently and enjoy analysing the images that they produce. Year 6 pupils have not developed enough skills in techniques such as multi-media presentations, but this work is clearly identified in this term's programme of work.
65. Teaching is good overall and very good in the infant class. It was not possible to inspect the teaching of the junior class. However, there was evidence of lessons that included a

high level of work on computers, such as the science lesson. This evidence, together with the scrutiny of pupils' work and discussion with teachers, was used to make judgements. Teachers organise pupils well to use the computer suite regularly. Pupils enjoy handling computers and sharing each other's work. They save their work confidently and understand how to retrieve work. However, the way the school organises their files does not allow pupils to carry this out efficiently. Pupils do not have their own individual files and have to search through the whole class's work. Teachers organise classroom assistants well to produce high quality displays of pupils' ICT work, which significantly reduces teachers' workload. The junior classroom assistant supports pupils with special educational needs very effectively in their work on computers that develops their basic skills in English. She ensures that pupils carry out the work thoroughly and each pupil enjoys her individual attention. The student teacher in the infant class supports the school's work in ICT very effectively. She uses her expertise very well, both in supporting individual pupils in lessons and in producing high quality resources for pupils to use.

66. Leadership and management of this subject are good. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has good subject knowledge. She runs a good quality computer club for Year 4 and 5 pupils. This club covers a good range of different work. The art work in the style of David Hockney is particularly good and is helping new pupils to the school to settle in well. Pupils are proud to produce materials in the club for the infant class to use, such as finding definitions or digital images for their work on branching databases.
67. There has been a good level of improvement since the previous inspection, where this subject was a weakness identified as the major key issue.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

68. Teachers work hard to include ICT in other subjects. They extend both literacy and numeracy skills well, by identifying tasks that can be carried out on computers. Links with physical education are good. Junior pupils thoroughly enjoy producing newspaper-style reports of their different sporting, gymnastics and dance work. Junior pupils expect to use the Internet to research key information across a range of subjects.

HUMANITIES

69. **Geography** was sampled by looking at displays and pupils' books and by talking with them about their work. Standards are at the expected level. In the infant class there are good links between geography and literacy, as pupils learn about the physical features of a fictional island in Scotland from stories of 'Katie Morag'. Pupils develop effective skills of drawing maps and learning about the importance of symbols. They have a good understanding of localities beyond Ampleforth, such as discovering features of coastal towns when they visit the seaside. In the junior class, pupils develop a good level of mapping skills and identify main towns and national parks in the United Kingdom confidently. They have the expected level of knowledge of rivers and how they are formed and have good opportunities to carry out individual research.
70. **History** was sampled in a similar way, although it was not possible to see any lessons. From discussions with Year 6 pupils and through analysis of work, it is clear that pupils enjoy history and that standards are above what is normally seen both in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils recall periods they have studied, including the Romans, the life of John Lennon and that of the Ancient Greeks. They discover the legacy of ancient civilisations and the impact they have in the world today. Pupils in the infant class learn about famous people,

including Louis Braille and consider the impact of his work on society today. Pupils' work in books is of a good standard, with plenty of illustrations to support their writing. They are regularly given individual research to carry out, which extends their literacy skills well.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in knowledge and understanding of Christianity are above the expected level but standards in other faiths are not as high.
- There is a good cross- curricular approach in religious education.
- Visits and visitors support pupils' knowledge and understanding very well.

Commentary

71. Standards of attainment seen during the inspection remain in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, as they were at the time of the last inspection. There is good emphasis given to the Christian faith, so pupils throughout the school achieve well and their knowledge and understanding in this aspect of religious education is above the expected level. Pupils' knowledge of other major faiths is not as strong, because too little time is allocated within the programme. Analysis of pupils' work and talking to them indicate that they achieve at a steady rate throughout the school.
72. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is very good in the junior class in the aspect of Christianity. The headteacher gives junior pupils many opportunities for reflection and research. Relationships are very good, so pupils freely express their ideas. They are very enthusiastic about their work and are disappointed when time runs out. Teachers mark workbooks well, consequently pupils show great pride in their illustrations and carefully produced writing. Teachers link religious education to other subjects effectively and this enhances learning opportunities for all. Pupils enjoy drawing maps of the Holy Land and plans of temples. There are good links with art. The headteacher uses an extensive range of paintings and draws across eras and countries to illustrate how Jesus is interpreted in many different ways.
73. Infant pupils benefit from well-planned visits to the local church. They prepare well for a simulated Christening by dressing up for the occasion and, in the church, the vicar explains the ceremony to them in detail. Older pupils visit York Minster and look in detail at its history and the beautiful stained glass windows, which they reproduce in art lessons in school. Missionaries working in Honduras visit the school, giving pupils an insight into their work with people living in poverty. Pupils make many comparisons between their lifestyle and that of people living in poor communities. When learning about Hinduism, the school welcomed a Hindu visitor who brought Indian food for pupils to sample and Hindu clothing for pupils to wear. This visit gave pupils a good practical experience of another faith.
74. The subject is well led and the curriculum is planned to accommodate the mixed-age classes. The subject leader has improved the range of resources to include videos and the internet. She monitors teaching and learning in the school and is aware that the teaching of other faiths is less well developed.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

75. **Art and design** was sampled through displays, where the standard of work seen was above the expected level. Pupils in the infant class use sketchbooks to draw flowers from direct observation. They paint pictures of what they see during a visit, including the visit to Helmsley Walled Garden. Older pupils in the junior class extend their skills and produce very interesting drawings of food packaging, which show both accuracy and fine detail. There are very good links with science, where pupils make detailed drawings to develop their scientific observational skills. Junior pupils make good quality Greek pots, sometimes using clay and sometimes using papier-mâché, and they paint these carefully in the Greek colour scheme of black and orange. They are influenced by the work of Paul Klee. They copy his style, creating several pieces of unique work using a variety of media, including collage, pastels, paints and computer programs. Pupils work confidently with fabric, using techniques such as tie-dye designs. Year 6 pupils enjoy art and talk about their work with enthusiasm and pride. Many say it is their favourite subject.
76. In **design and technology**, work was sampled in a similar way. Standards are at the expected level. Pupils in the infant class designed a scarecrow and labelled the materials they needed to use. Junior pupils design and make large African masks, showing an extensive range of materials. They learn to use a range of tools to join fabrics, wool and paper. Their designs are well planned, with all materials labelled and clear instructions written to show they clearly understand the construction process.
77. **Music** was sampled in assemblies and by talking to pupils. Standards are at the level normally seen. The school has a well-considered action plan to raise the profile of music and has adopted new curriculum plans to support teaching and learning. Pupils sing a range of songs in assemblies and have opportunities to listen to music played sensitively on the piano. At Christmas, they sing during the festive productions. The school has sufficient percussion instruments to support lessons and plans show these are used regularly in teaching. When making African masks, junior pupils listen to African music, so they find out about different types of rhythms. There are good opportunities for a small number of pupils to learn to play the violin when the peripatetic teacher visits each week. Another group is extending their experience well by learning the recorder during lunchtime. The school recently invited the local authority music service orchestra to play for all pupils, which extends their cultural development effectively.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is excellent in the junior class and standards are very high by Year 6.
- The headteacher and governors set a very high priority on this subject.
- The high emphasis on providing a family context for learning ensures that younger and older pupils work very productively together.
- Opportunities for junior pupils to take part in regional activities outside lessons are excellent.
- The school organises playtimes and lunchtimes extremely well to extend pupils' physical skills.

Commentary

78. The headteacher has a strong belief in the value of physical education in developing pupils' personal development and in providing a contrast from academic work. She has been extremely effective in raising the profile of this subject, which is having a particularly positive impact on the high proportion of boys at the top of the school. Achievement is excellent in the junior class. This includes pupils with special educational needs, who play a full part in this subject. The high achievement is due to a combination of very effective teaching and the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer. By Year 6 pupils play tennis at an extremely high level. The part-time teacher has a very high level of subject knowledge. He ensures that pupils develop a very good understanding of the rules of the game. He expects older pupils to organise themselves with umpires and score-keepers during lessons, whilst he supports different activities for the younger pupils. This provides excellent opportunities for moral development, since pupils honour the judgements of the umpires, no matter how controversial those decisions may be. Older pupils have an extremely high level of skill in tennis. They play within a court, using serves, volleys, forehands and backhands accurately and co-operating skilfully with their doubles partner. They have a very good understanding of key international tennis players and of their success in current tournaments. Younger junior pupils achieve extremely well, because they strive to match the older pupils. The teacher organises the tasks in different parts of the lesson really carefully, so as to match the needs of the different age groups.
79. Pupils achieve extremely well in swimming and Year 6 pupils reach very high standards, both in distances swum and in personal survival awards. This is because all pupils now go swimming in the Ampleforth College pool for a full term each year and steadily develop their skills over time.
80. The headteacher's leadership and management are excellent. She strives to provide high quality provision for pupils. Together with the governors, she is extremely effective in using local, regional and national human and physical resources to extend provision. She is very successful in setting targets for the school to reach, such as the national Activemark. She brings in additional teachers with high levels of expertise, such as the regional co-ordinator for the Lawn Tennis Association. She ensures that pupils take part in a very wide range of regional and local sporting competitions, including cross-country, athletics, rugby, football, cricket, tennis, netball and gymnastics. Due to the small number of pupils in the school, every one expects to take part in these events. Pupils have a sophisticated understanding of the urge to win competitions, whilst valuing the role of every team member and realising that not every member of the team has the same level of skill. This is due to the systematic teaching of this approach to sport by staff. The headteacher uses every available opportunity to extend the school's resources and systematically builds up equipment to support a wide range of different sports. She organises a very good residential trip, where pupils experience a wide range of outdoor activities and challenges that they are very proud to have accomplished. The chair of governors shares the headteacher's passion for this subject. He has a high level of expertise himself, which he uses very well to monitor and support the work of the school. He takes a keen personal interest in pupils' achievements.
81. The quality of teaching is very good overall. The headteacher places a high value on the development of physical skills and teamwork, during playtimes and lunchtimes. She very effectively introduces a range of equipment designed to develop these skills. She systematically varies this equipment each week to provide different challenges. Pupils thoroughly enjoy these activities and younger and older pupils work harmoniously together within the family context set by the school to solve the problems. Support staff have a good

understanding of the purpose of these tasks and support pupils well as they play. Improvement since the previous inspection is very good, both in terms of provision and in standards.

Example of outstanding practice

Pupils in this school love their sport. There is a strong emphasis on this subject and a very good range of opportunities for different sports and physical activities. The headteacher provides sequences of physical team challenges at playtimes, using different structural equipment. Pupils use their playtimes to the full, speedily organising teams and working flat out to extend their skills. They return to lessons beaded in sweat, full of exuberance, but knowing that the classroom is a place to settle down to a different type of work. Boys see the girls as full members of any team. "She's one of us", remarked a boy of a fellow footballer. Physical education lessons reveal the same level of commitment. Pupils move straight into organising themselves for a game when the teacher gives the word. They appreciate each other's efforts. "Well done!", "Good shot!", "Bad luck!" echo across the court. Not a second is wasted. At the end of games it's all change and on to the next game. "I'll referee", "I'll score", "Be my partner?" and they're off again. In a PSHCE lesson every pupil chooses a different combination of sports they enjoy the most – a real accolade to the school for the range and quality of the opportunities it provides.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

82. It was not possible to inspect this subject in both classes. The strong emphasis on pupils' learning to work and play together, across all age groups, has a very positive impact on pupils' progress in this area of development. The organisation of the family groups at lunchtime promotes pupils' personal and social development extremely effectively. Older pupils learn to take very good levels of responsibility, through tasks such as finding out what every individual on their table wants to eat. They learn to handle minor crises and to reassure younger pupils, encouraging them to finish their meals. At break times pupils learn to work together to solve problems that can only be carried out through co-operation. Teaching is very good in the junior class. Pupils are given real decisions to make, such as whether they should take the younger pupils swimming next term. They also learn to identify the implications that arise from decisions they make. Junior pupils understand that their actions can affect issues, because the headteacher gives them real tasks to carry out, like writing to a Secretary of State. The school provides a good programme of work on health issues through work in science and physical education. Junior pupils have a very good understanding of the importance of physical exercise and healthy eating in keeping fit.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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