

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY'S CofE (VC) PRIMARY SCHOOL

York

LEA area: City of York

Unique reference number: 121547

Headteacher: Mrs S Windsor

Lead inspector: Mrs S Earnshaw

Dates of inspection: 17 – 19 November 2003

Inspection number: 257834

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	91
School address:	Askham Richard York
Postcode:	YO23 3PD
Telephone number:	01904 707125
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs K Myers
Date of previous inspection:	27 April 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a small rural school with 91 pupils on roll. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. There are 11 pupils with special educational needs, which is well below average. The majority of pupils have specific learning difficulties. There are no pupils with a statement of special need. A very small minority of pupils speak English as an additional language but all speak English fluently. The majority of children have had pre-school experience before entering the Reception class. The school has a strong partnership with nurseries and playgroups in the area. Children's attainment when they start school is above the level expected. The school has been awarded the Schools Achievement Award and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11938	Mrs S Earnshaw	Lead inspector	English Art and design Music Religious education Foundation Stage Special educational needs
9884	Mrs M Roscoe	Lay inspector	
11807	Mr K Bardon	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Geography History Physical education English as an additional language

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good school with a very positive ethos**. Standards in most subjects are well above average by Year 6, and pupils' achievement is good. Pupils enjoy their lessons very much and parents are very happy with the school. Teaching is good and leadership and management of the school are very good. The value for money the school provides is good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are well above average in English and mathematics by Year 6 and pupils achieve very well.
- The teaching in the juniors is particularly effective and, as a result, pupils' learning is very good in these classes. Whilst the teaching in Year 2 is satisfactory it is not as effective as in the rest of the school.
- The provision for pupils in Reception gives children a good start to their education.
- The curriculum is very good and well planned to meet the needs of the mixed-age classes.
- Pupils' attitudes to school, levels of attendance and behaviour in and out of classes are very good.
- The school is very well led and managed.
- Standards of pupils scientific knowledge and understanding is well above average but pupils' enquiry skills are not as well developed.
- Too few pupils attain the higher than expected Level 3 in mathematics by the end of Year 2.
- Links with parents are very strong and they give very good support to the school.

Since the school was last inspected in 1998 **the rate of improvement has been very good**, particularly since the appointment of the headteacher two years ago. The key issues of the previous inspection have been addressed well and the school is moving forward at a very good pace. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are now above average and the school has a very thorough school improvement plan in place. Some higher attaining pupils could do better in mathematics in Year 2.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

The majority of children in the Foundation Stage attain the early learning goals set for them. **Achievement of children is good in the Reception class and Year 1, satisfactory in Year 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6.** The 2003 results show that, whilst performance in English remained well above average, the results in mathematics were in the top five per cent of schools nationally. There has been improvement in science in 2003, with almost three-quarters of pupils attaining the higher level. By Year 2, although standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average more pupils could attain the higher level 3 in mathematics. Standards are above average in ICT by Years 2 and 6 due to the expertise of teachers. Standards in art and design, music, physical education and religious education are above average by Year 6. Not enough work

was seen in other subjects to make a judgement. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. Pupils have a good awareness of the world around them and care about one another. Pupils enjoy learning and show a strong interest in the work set for them. Pupils' **attitudes to school and behaviour** are **very good**. They show respect to adults and to one another and **relationships** are **very good**. Levels of attendance are **very good**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides its pupils with a **good** quality of education.

Teaching and learning in the reception and Year 1 classes are **good**. Teaching is **satisfactory** in Year 2 and **very good** in Years 3 to 6. Teachers are very clear about what they want pupils to learn and provide work that motivates and interests pupils. They make thorough assessments of pupils' work so that they know what pupils need to learn next. Where teaching is satisfactory, teachers do not always give pupils a reason for what they are doing and skills are not taught as effectively as they could be. Most teachers set challenging tasks and have high expectations of their pupils.

The school provides a **very good curriculum** that meets the national requirements and the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes. Literacy, numeracy and ICT are integrated well across most subjects, and there are some good links between subjects, such as geography and art. Regular visits and visitors into school enhance the curriculum well.

The school's links with parents are **very good** and they are very supportive of the school. There is a **good level of care** and staff support pupils' welfare well.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good**. The headteacher has ambition for the school and leads with a clear sense of purpose. The school has moved forward rapidly since her appointment two years ago. Senior staff and governors promote the school's mission statement rigorously. Governors have a clear picture of the performance of the school and fulfil their statutory obligations well. Management procedures are well established and efficient.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very pleased with the standard of education their children receive and feel that the school takes good care of them. Pupils are very happy to come to school. They find lessons interesting and particularly like the partnering system where older pupils partner younger ones.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in science by increasing pupils' ability to make their own decisions when carrying out scientific investigations, and encourage them to draw informed conclusions from their findings.
- Raise standards in mathematics by Year 2 and increase the number of pupils attaining the above average level.
- Improve the quality of teaching in Year 2 to that of the best in the school. Provide more challenge for pupils, teach the required skills more effectively and improve classroom management.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are **above average** by Year 6 and achievement is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average in all aspects of English by Year 6 and pupil achievement is very good.
- By Year 6, standards are well above average in mathematics and achievement is very good. However, not enough pupils attain the higher than expected level in mathematics in Year 2.
- Pupils achieve very well in science in the juniors and standards are well above average by Year 6, although some of their scientific enquiry skills lag behind.
- Pupils' achievement is good in ICT and standards are above average by Year 2 and Year 6.
- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well in all the areas of learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

Commentary

1. Most children enter into the reception class with above average skills. Children achieve well in the class because of the broad range of activities and experiences on offer to them. By the time they reach the end of reception almost all attain the early learning goals in all the areas of learning.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.7 (16.3)	15.9 (15.8)
Writing	16.3 (15.5)	14.8 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.0 (16.6)	16.4 (16.5)

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

2. Although the cohort was small, as only twelve pupils took the test, pupils' performance in reading, writing and mathematics improved in the 2003 national tests, with an increase in average point scores in all three subjects. Performance in reading and mathematics were above average, whilst writing was well above average. Performance in all three subjects has fluctuated over the last four years, although writing has remained well above average for the last two. Whilst the test results reflect a similar picture of attainment in the current Year 2 class, with above average attainment in English overall and in mathematics, there are more pupils capable of attaining the higher Level 3 in mathematics than are currently targeted. In Year 2, pupils achieve well in reading and writing but their achievement in mathematics is only satisfactory.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.3 (30.0)	27.0 (27.0)
Mathematics	30.2 (29.0)	27.0 (26.7)
Science	31.2 (29.0)	28.8 (28.3)

3. The cohort in Year 6 was small, as only thirteen pupils took the test. However, the 2003 results for Year 6 in national tests shows a steady improvement, particularly in science. All pupils who took the tests attained the expected level, whilst many exceeded it. In science, almost three-quarters of pupils attained the higher level, whilst over half attained the higher level in mathematics. In mathematics, the results were in the top five per cent of schools nationally. These results mirror the current standards in Year 6, which are well above average in all three subjects. Performance in national tests over the last three years in English and mathematics has remained at least well above average, and very high in mathematics in 2003. Performance in science was average in 2002 and was well above average in 2003.
4. The school met its performance targets in the 2003 tests and exceeded the target in English for the higher levels. The targets set for 2004 were set two years ago and have recently been re-adjusted to take account of the progress made by pupils. Targets are now more realistic and challenging, and reflect the attainment of the current Year 6 pupils.
5. Standards overall have improved since the previous inspection. At that time standards in English and mathematics were average by Year 2 and are now above average. By Year 6 standards were above average in English, mathematics and science and are now well above average.
6. Standards have improved greatly in ICT, which was unsatisfactory at the previous inspection. Standards are above average by Year 2 and Year 6. Achievement is good due to the expertise of teachers, who enable pupils to become confident in using all aspects of technology. In art and design, music and physical education, standards are above average by Year 6 and achievement is good. Pupils attain above the expectations in religious education by Year 6 and their achievement is good. Few lessons were seen in geography or history and, although two lessons were seen in design and technology, no work had been done previously. Therefore, no judgements can be made about achievement in these subjects. Teaching is not as effective in Year 2 as it is in the rest of the school. Pupils do not always achieve as well as they could with the result that it is only satisfactory overall.
7. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with work that meets their needs and they make the same rate of progress as their peers.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attendance, their attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils want to attend because they like all that the school offers.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in and around school are very good.
- Children in the reception class settle quickly and relate well to adults and their peers.
- Pupils are kind and considerate to others. Self-esteem is high.
- Pupils' personal development is promoted well through spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision.

Commentary

8. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Their attendance is very good and they are always on time. They enjoy what each new day brings because they are made to feel important and valued. They are confident and able to interact well with adults, using good social skills. They value the fairness shown to them in school and emulate this well. Levels of courtesy in classrooms improves pupils' learning considerably because they are able to discuss ideas sensibly and listen to what each other has to say.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 97.4%

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	2.5	School data	0.1
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
84	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
3	0	0
1	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

9. Pupils behave very well because teaching staff and other adults encourage self-discipline. The majority of pupils rise to this challenge. Pupils are involved in drawing up their own class rules and the majority work hard to keep them. Lapses in very high standards of behaviour do occur when classroom management techniques are only partially successful. Behaviour in the playground and around the school is very good. Girls and boys play happily together. Older pupils support younger ones in play, ensuring their games are not accidentally spoilt. The effect is that the school is a very pleasant place to be for pupils and adults. There have been no exclusions.
10. The arrangements for induction support children's personal and social development well. This leads to Reception children quickly becoming confident in their surroundings and in their relationships with others.
11. Pupils' personal development is good because it is promoted and encouraged well. The emphasis on democratic processes and rule making leads to pupils' moral development being very good. This was further evidenced as pupils in Years 3 and 4 discussed the implications of re-cycling waste paper and glass, and the benefits this brings to the environment.
12. Pupils like the opportunities they have for teamwork and helping as hall or assembly monitors. The school is looking at ways to increase the opportunities pupils have for developing choice

and independence of thought. Relationships are very productive, characterised by mutual respect and the compassion pupils show to others, particularly to those younger than themselves. The 'partner' system is a very effective contribution to pupils' acquisition of life skills. Teaching staff and all other adults play their part by treating pupils fairly and ensuring all pupils have a positive view of themselves.

13. Teachers and helpers promote a strong sense of community, often through geography or shared opportunities with other schools for singing or sports tournaments. Assemblies provide opportunities for learning about life in distant places visited by the school's own 'teddy bear' family. The school has intentions, shown in its school development plan, to further pupils' understanding of the wider world.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides its pupils with a **good** quality of education.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good** in the Foundation Stage and Year 1, **satisfactory** in Year 2 and **very good** in the junior classes.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have a good understanding of how to interest and motivate pupils and they prepare lessons thoroughly and make good use of resources.
- Pupils listen attentively and work hard when they have been told what to do.
- Pupils are very good at working collaboratively, particularly during discussions.
- Teachers set challenging tasks and have high expectations of pupils, although sometimes opportunities to extend pupils fully are missed.
- On occasions the strategies for dealing with behaviour problems do not work well enough and pupils' concentration suffers.
- Sometimes, pupils are not given a reason for what they are doing and the skills they need to acquire are not taught as effectively as they could be.
- Teachers make thorough assessments of pupils' work and use the information for further planning.
- Pupils with special educational needs are provided with appropriate work in lessons and they learn well.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 38 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (5%)	3 (8%)	26 (68%)	6 (16%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

14. The quality of teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and activities presented cover all the areas of learning well. Children are interested and motivated by the tasks they have been set and fully participate in all activities. There is a good mixture of short, focused activities led by the teacher, and activities in which children can work independently on tasks they choose for themselves. Year 1 pupils in this mixed age class, move easily from the Foundation Stage to the more formal work of National Curriculum. All lessons across the school are well prepared and teachers challenge and motivate pupils. In some lessons in Year 2, however, teaching is

not as effective and pupils are not always challenged and therefore do not achieve as well as they could. However, teaching is very good in the juniors and pupils' learning accelerates rapidly. Pupils enjoy learning. This is discernible in lessons as they listen attentively to their teachers, follow instructions carefully and work hard to complete the tasks provided. These positive attitudes to learning build as pupils move through the school so that, by the time they are in Year 6, they produce work of very high quality.

15. Teachers structure their lessons well. They are very clear about what they want pupils to achieve by the end of the lesson and instruct and support pupils throughout, often raising teaching points if they feel that pupils have not clearly understood. This intervention is particularly evident in junior classes where teachers frequently assess the progress that pupils make in lessons. There is constant challenge and teachers' expectations are very high. Teaching in these classes is very good. Teachers mark pupils work thoroughly and ensure that there are helpful suggestions about how pupils can improve their work, so that they know what to do next. This type of marking is not carried out to the same degree in the Year 2 class. Assessment is used very well to inform planning in the juniors and in the Year 1 class. Assessment information is gathered in all subjects and the information is used for planning future lessons and for offering further support to those pupils who have not achieved as well as they could do. The use of assessment to inform planning is not used as well in the Year 2 class. In lessons, teachers ensure that pupils are taught the correct skills to move their learning forward. However, pupils in the Year 2 class are not always told why they are doing particular work. They are not necessarily taught the skills they require to extend their learning and, therefore, do not achieve as high as they are capable. This was particularly noticed in a physical education lesson where teaching was unsatisfactory.
16. There has been good improvement in teaching since the previous inspection in 1998. This improvement is particularly marked in the juniors, where all subjects are taught well, and very well in English and mathematics. Progress has improved in reading and writing in the infants and work is well matched to pupils' needs. There is still some way to go in mathematics, where teachers are not stretching the higher attaining pupils well enough in Year 2. There have been great steps forward in the teaching of ICT since the previous inspection, and the subject is now a strength of the school. Teachers' knowledge and expertise has ensured that it is taught across the curriculum and pupils learn the skills they require. Teaching of ICT is good in the infant classes and very good in the juniors. Although teachers develop pupils' knowledge and understanding well and pupils know how to investigate in science, pupils are too reliant on the teacher and, therefore, do not make enough decisions for themselves when deciding how to go about an investigation.
17. Good use is made of resources in all lessons. These are used effectively to promote pupils' interest and for acquiring new skills. For example, a wide range of resources was available in a Years 5 and 6 art lesson. Pupils had the opportunity to use sponges with paint to produce a background and were provided with different materials to create moving figures, either as silhouettes out of paper, using a stencil or a printing block. Pupils tried the different methods and chose the one they preferred. As a result of the task and materials provided, the learning was good and pupils achieved a good result by the end of the lesson.
18. Pupils have very good relationships with their teachers and with their peers. This is evident from the good links they have within the infant and junior partnership. In lessons, pupils collaborate well and, when given the opportunity to discuss, they do so sensibly and with great maturity. They stay on task and respond very well when questioned by the teacher. Teachers' questioning of pupils is good and pupils are often asked to extend and explain their answers further. Occasionally, teachers spend too long on the introduction in lessons, giving pupils little time to work by themselves.
19. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with activities that match their needs and which relate well to their individual education plans. Teachers are very aware of their needs and plan accordingly. In Year 2, there are not always sufficient behaviour management

strategies in place to deal with problems that arise. The school makes very good use of parent helpers to support teaching, many of whom are highly skilled. Their expertise is used effectively to work with groups of pupils, and particularly the younger children in the Reception class. Parents are very happy with teaching and learning in the school and pupils say that they enjoy lessons.

The curriculum

Curriculum provision is **very good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Literacy, numeracy and ICT are integrated well across the curriculum.
- The Foundation Stage curriculum covers all the areas of learning well.
- The curriculum overall is well planned to meet the needs of the mixed age classes.
- There is good provision for personal, social and health and citizenship education.
- Pupils are very well prepared for each stage of their education.
- Visits out of school and visitors enhance the curriculum very well.
- There is a good range of resources.
- The accommodation for physical education limits the provision.

Commentary

20. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage provides a good range of activities, which meets the needs of Reception children. There is strong emphasis on developing children's literacy and numeracy skills in both focused activities with the teacher and independent activities that children choose for themselves. The curriculum caters well for both indoor and outdoor provision. The outdoor accommodation, although not spacious, is used to its best advantage and has different play surfaces on which children can widen their experiences. For example, the paved area is used for bicycles and the softer surface for physical activities, such as jumping.
21. The curriculum for the infants is good, and it is very good for the juniors. It fulfils statutory requirements, and provision for religious education is good. The school has made great efforts to provide a curriculum that meets the needs of the mixed-age classes, particularly in Years 3 to 6. In English and mathematics, the staff have successfully allocated the main teaching points from the national strategies for each year group. There is a two-year rolling programme in other subjects that works well, and pupils learn at a good rate. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when the curriculum was satisfactory. The key issues from the previous inspection have been addressed well. The provision for ICT, which was unsatisfactory, has improved and is now good. There is effective progression in reading and writing across the infant classes and standards overall have improved.
22. Literacy and numeracy are integrated well across the curriculum. For example, pupils write good accounts about World War II in history, and they use graphs in geography to show the number of cars parked outside the school. Although ICT was an issue at the previous inspection it is now planned in virtually every subject of the curriculum. Often, pupils use the Internet for research in religious education and science to good effect, for example, or use specific programs such as 'Compose' in music. The curriculum is broad and good links are made between subjects. For example, work in geography comparing the Isle of Struay with the local village was used as a focus in art, and children made large very effective tapestry collages with their teacher to depict the two areas.
23. The provision for personal, social, health and citizenship is good. The subject is timetabled in every class each week, and this provision is extended on a daily basis by younger pupils who have partners in the juniors to take care of them and listen to them read. There are regular

visits by the school nurse who talks to every class and the school ensures that older pupils are instructed in the dangers of drugs. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. They are quickly identified and the curriculum is matched to their needs. At present, a learning support teacher visits the school once a week to work with some pupils individually on literacy skills. This input is having a good effect on their achievement. There is no register for gifted and talented pupils at present, although a member of staff is part of a pilot group working on this area. The school has identified the lack of a register in its improvement plan and is working towards its completion.

24. Pupils are well prepared for each phase of their education. They visit their new class and teachers towards the end of each year. Pupils in Year 6, who are leaving the school, make visits to their new high school. The curriculum is well planned so that there is a smooth transition for pupils in Reception who move into Year 1. There is a strong partnership with early years' providers, which benefits children entering Reception. There are regular visitors to the school, including clergy, who lead assembly once a week. The school is working on broadening the curriculum to incorporate more multi-cultural links. A recent visitor introduced and played Indian drums to which pupils danced. Pupils go on regular visits locally, for example to the church, and further afield. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 recently made a profitable visit to Eden Camp to extend their understanding of World War II. Junior pupils go on a residential visit, which develops their knowledge of geography or history. In discussion with Year 6 pupils, they felt that the visit improved their personal and social skills well. There is a good range of after-school activities for a school of this size.
25. Best use is made of every available space in the school. However, the hall is small and restricts the curriculum for physical education. Although it is used regularly for the subject it often means that only half of a class can work at any one time, whilst the rest sit and watch. This restricts pupils' participation and the school is looking at alternative accommodation in a local high school for use by older pupils. Resources in the school are good and pupils are benefiting from the computer suite, for example. Younger children in Reception are provided with an extensive range of equipment to meet all the areas of learning.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes **good** provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Staff provide **very good** levels of support and guidance.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' safety and care is of prime importance to all staff, and parents identified 'care' as a strength of the school.
- Induction arrangements are effective and appreciated by parents.
- Pupils' performance is tracked and assessed regularly. They receive good guidance on how to improve their work. Pupils' views are sought through the school council and other avenues.
- Assessment of hazards needs to be formally recorded and procedures extended further.

Commentary

26. The steps taken to ensure pupils' care, health and safety are good. Pupils' personal care is of high priority and reflected in the expertise of staff who are well-trained in first aid and child protection matters. Parents' confidence is justified in their assertions that the school provides their children with good quality of care.
27. Satisfactory procedures comply with statutory requirements for health and safety. Most hazards are recognised and controlled. Staff are aware of safety considerations that relate to their teaching. Risk assessments are carried out informally at present and not yet through agreed systems that are monitored and reviewed. Pupils like school and feel safe. Risk assessments are carried out fully before pupils go on educational visits. In the pupil

questionnaires they reported that they feel secure and that all adults help and support them in their learning. They say that teachers listen to their ideas, show them how to improve their work in lessons and help them when they get stuck.

28. Parents praise the way they and their children are introduced to school life. They find the home visit, induction information and the opportunity for their children to sample part of a school day useful and effective. Parents feel the arrangements create positive relationships that strengthen the bond between home and school. Inspectors support their views.
29. The progress of all pupils is regularly reviewed to check if they are learning at the appropriate level. Tracking systems work well and information gained is used well to inform teaching. Pupils' achievements are recognised, praised and celebrated, often in assemblies. The school is ready to start implementing one of its priorities to develop ways to share curricular targets with pupils to enhance independent thinking and learning and to further improve the progress pupils are making. Pupils with special educational needs are carefully tracked and their individual education plans are very clear about their requirements.
30. The school council is growing into its consultative role very well. All pupils have a voice through suggestion boxes placed in every classroom. Opinions from the Reception children are sought via their Year 6 'partners' and their class representatives. Confident school 'councillors' eagerly listen to and sometimes act on suggestions. These arrangements work well and many pupils are able to describe changes their suggestions have brought about, such as introducing milk in the mornings for those pupils who want it. Pupils play a part in devising school and class rules. This ensures they know the rules and keep them.
31. The provision of the excellent 'planners' in which pupils, and sometimes parents, keep notes about what they have to do or what they have achieved helps older pupils to review their day-to-day work, and leads to the setting and meeting of personal targets. The key issues concerning improving assessment and providing pupil targets in the previous report have been addressed well, and provision in the whole aspect is now much improved.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The shortfalls in information mentioned in the previous report have been addressed. Now parents support the school strongly and enjoy very good communications with staff.
- Parents feel consulted and involved in the school's ethos of continuous improvement.
- Effective links between home and school support learning very well.
- The school is outward looking and has productive and dynamic links with the community.
- Good links are maintained with pre-school providers and associated schools.

Commentary

32. The questionnaire and the meeting with parents before the inspection revealed parents are very positive about what the school does for their children's personal development and the progress they make. Inspectors fully endorse this view. A contributory factor to parents' positive views is the increase in the information provided. This information is of high quality and very well presented. Staff, led by the headteacher, are fully committed to two-way communications between school and parents and operate an effective open-door policy.
33. The school works closely with parents of pupils with special educational needs, who are involved from the earliest stages of identification. Parents are successfully involved in speeding their children's progress because progress reports provide helpful targets for improvement. Parents are notified of forthcoming topics, and of what pupils will be doing and

learning in each subject. This is very good practice, and complements the well-attended regular briefing meetings for parents about the curriculum and induction procedures.

34. Published information is accurate, meets all requirements and reflects the aim that parents will share in the life of the school. Planners are well used by pupils from Reception through to Year 6. Parents explain that the messages they put in the planners are meticulously followed up and action taken by staff. Regular surveys and consultations seek parental opinion before important decisions are made. Parents feel valued, respected and confident to approach staff for help or advice. They consider themselves very well informed through numerous newsletters, which helpfully make links, for example, between a proposed class visit and the intended learning experience for the pupils. A small number of parents expressed a desire to know more about how to help their children at home.
35. School activities are very well supported as a direct result of the positive action taken by the headteacher to include all parents and the community. Well-briefed parents regularly volunteer to support learning in and out of the classroom. Local residents and parents are similarly actively involved in learning experiences, and both undertake weekly activities making 'story sacks'.
36. Outside visits contribute well to pupils' learning. Local landmarks such as the village pond are utilised well. People from the community and students in training visit the school and use its facilities. Use is made of valuable expertise in organisations, such as local colleges, nurseries and playgroups. Millennium volunteers from the agricultural college developed the wildlife area in the school grounds, for example.
37. Pupils gain much from the good links with other educational establishments and neighbouring schools. This ensures that Year 6 pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their learning. Work with other schools supports pupils' learning in music, singing, drama and sports tournaments. For a school this size, this range is impressive.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **very good**. The quality of leadership by the headteacher is **very good**. The quality of management is **very good**. The quality of governance is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has ambition for the school and leads with vision and a clear sense of purpose.
- The school has a strong ethos and a lively atmosphere.
- Staff carry out their management responsibilities well.
- Governors meet their statutory obligations comprehensively and have a clear picture of how well the school is performing.
- The school improvement plan is a well-structured document that provides a solid framework for development.
- The school's finances are managed very efficiently.

Commentary

38. The headteacher provides the school with strong leadership and clear guidance. Since her appointment two years ago, the school has improved significantly. Almost all the issues from the previous inspection have been comprehensively addressed. Standards have risen and are continuing to rise. Staff, parents and governors have respect for the headteacher's abilities, and are justifiably confident that the school is in secure hands and being steered in the right

direction. Pupils are happy at school and enjoy learning. The ethos of the school is extremely positive and it buzzes with life.

39. The school's clear mission statement and well-constructed aims are promoted rigorously and are evident throughout all of its work. The school ensures that all pupils have equal opportunities and that their individual needs are fully taken into account. Management procedures are well established and efficient. Policies are in place for all key areas and consistently implemented. Consequently, the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis, with everyone fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. All teachers have management responsibilities, commensurate with their experience and the number of days they work each week. They carry out their responsibilities diligently, and there is a shared understanding of how the provision the school is making in the different subjects is impacting on pupils' learning. The headteacher and other key staff regularly monitor teaching and learning. Support to improve teaching through mentoring of new teachers, has already begun in the Year 2 class.
40. The careful delegation of responsibilities and the skilful involvement of staff in decision making and planning is a key feature of the strategy the headteacher has employed to build team spirit. This has been very successful. Everyone works very well together to continue to improve the school. Staff with particular skills have been able to utilise these to the full, which has enhanced their own professional development while at the same time benefiting the school. For example, the ICT co-ordinator has played a key role in the developments that have taken place. She is justifiably proud of what the school has achieved and how this has accelerated pupils' learning.
41. The school's procedures for developmental planning were criticised in the last report and were a key issue for improvement. Considerable improvements have been made and the issue has been addressed very well. The school improvement plan, which is central to the process, is a clear, concise and extremely effective management tool. Priorities for development are documented logically and succinctly and management responsibilities are allocated appropriately. Measurable criteria for success are identified for all initiatives and the detailed action plans make clear what has to be done, and when, in order to achieve the targets the school has set itself.
42. The school benefits from a conscientious and well-organised governing body that plays a full and active part in ensuring pupils receive the quality of education to which they are entitled. Governors have close links with the school and use a wide range of information, including first hand observation, to monitor its work and evaluate its performance. This places them in a strong position to influence the strategic decisions that have to be made and to make detailed assessments of the outcomes. Relationships between staff and governors are very good and there is a strong unity of purpose. Parents are very pleased with the leadership and management of the school.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	296,820	Balance from previous year	26,163
Total expenditure	285,420	Balance carried forward to the next	37,563
Expenditure per pupil	2,912		

43. The school's finances are managed very efficiently. Careful consideration is given to all spending decisions and the principles of best value are actively and conscientiously pursued. As a result of low levels of spending in some areas in the past the school had accrued a relatively large budget surplus. Sensible decisions have been taken to utilise some of this funding to help maintain the quality of educational provision. The senior staff and governors are keeping a close eye on future projections which suggest the school may have some hard choices to make in the future. Financial administration is secure and up-to-date information is readily available and accessible. This is confirmed by the most recent audit report in which the school's financial systems received a positive evaluation.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The quality of education provided for children in the Foundation Stage is **good** and sound improvements have been made since the previous inspection.

At present there are five full time children in the mixed reception and Year 1 class. Nine children, who will attend full time in January, visit the class for one morning a week in the autumn term.

Commentary

44. The quality of teaching is good. The teacher manages to organise activities for both the reception and Year 1 children well, including those Reception children who attend for one morning. The teacher ensures that focused activities, where all children are brought together, are appropriate and at the correct level for the reception children, whilst extending the Year 1 pupils. Often the five reception children work as a group. At these times the teacher provides tasks from which children learn new skills. Children feel happy and secure, and enjoy the wide range of activities provided for them. They are given many opportunities to work independently on activities they choose for themselves.
45. Good attention is paid to developing children's literacy and numeracy skills as both focused and independent activities, such as learning letter sounds or counting numbers to ten. The thorough planning ensures that activities, which cover all the areas of learning, are planned for both indoors and outdoors. Often the activities provide an extension for those higher attaining children. Account is taken of children's interests. For example, some children visited a circus recently, so the wooden cabin in the outdoor area has become the circus 'box office' and clown hats have been provided for children. Stories told in the classroom relate to the same theme.
46. Curriculum provision is good. However, at present creative activities are not continuously on offer in the classroom, such as paint or play dough. Children are carefully assessed and good use is made of the information for planning the next steps children need to take. The teacher regularly jots down information concerning individuals and they are frequently observed to enable the teacher to track their progress towards the early learning goals. Pupils with special educational needs are quickly identified and supported. The resources provided are very good, and good use has been made of the limited outdoor space to make an attractive area for activities. It includes both an open and partially covered area. There are a good number of parent helpers who support the children in the Reception class, all of whom are very skilled at working with children of this age group. There are good induction procedures for new children starting in the reception class. The teacher has produced a very informative booklet for parents and they are invited to meetings before their children start school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the end of Reception the majority of children attain the goals expected.
- Teaching is good and expectations are high.
- Children develop confidence and relate well to one another.

Commentary

47. Children have quickly learned classroom routines and know that they must follow instructions given by the teacher. They relate well to each other when sharing equipment and playing together. The teacher makes a good contribution in developing their social skills by frequently playing games with the whole group. For example, children pass round a toy and, when the singing stops, they have to sing their name; and then the class joins in. This activity helps children to get to know other members of the class and gives them confidence to say something in front of others. Children's confidence builds, so they feel happy to ask questions and put forward their ideas. When provided with a task, the teacher ensures that children persevere and complete it before moving on to more independent activities. This routine ensures that when they are working independently they also persevere instead of flitting from one task to another. All children relate well to adults, including the teacher and parent helpers who are frequent visitors to the class. They readily join in when any adult in the class asks them to take part in a task.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **good** and children achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and there are many opportunities for children to develop their literacy and language skills.
- The story sacks provided give children a good start to their reading.

Commentary

48. Children are given regular opportunities to speak in front of the class, such as suggesting items of food which could be eaten by a toy animal. They listen carefully to one another and to stories told to them by the teacher. The teacher encourages them to identify words in stories by covering up certain ones, which they have to guess. For instance, children tried to guess which word was missing in the title of a book that was called 'Shark in the Park'. The children were shown individual letters and made good attempts at identifying the missing word by looking at the picture and the letters. Their learning about letter sounds builds well as they get to know initial sounds. They are provided with matching word and picture games, which they attempt well when supported by an adult. These activities make a good contribution to developing their reading skills so that, when reading a book with the teacher, they can identify individual words. The time set aside each day for individual reading activities gives children an interest in a variety of books. This is supported by the use of story sacks, which contain books and individual items about the story. Children enjoyed the story sack containing 'The Hungry Caterpillar' book and re-enacted the story using the fabric caterpillar, cocoon and butterfly and pictures of different food. Their writing develops well. There are frequent opportunities to mark make using different writing materials, both indoors and outdoors. They are taught how to form letters and to spell their name so that they can eventually write whole words by themselves.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good** and children achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are many opportunities provided to promote children's mathematical development.
- Teaching is good and children are well supported in activities.

Commentary

49. Children begin to learn the sequence of numbers by singing number rhymes and songs encouraged by the teacher. Using numbers hung outside on a washing line, which can be added to or taken away, enhances these number activities. Children are expected to know numbers to ten and are given many opportunities to learn them. The teacher develops their understanding of number well with activities such as a counting circle whereby each child has to say the consecutive number by themselves. This type of activity promotes their confidence in knowing and using numbers. Consequently, when placing beads on a string in a certain time they begin to recognise that the fastest person had more beads on the string. The activity gave them a good challenge and was also fun and enjoyable, whilst developing their personal and social skills. Children learn to tell the time in hours and the teacher promotes this well by using a puppet that apparently gets the answers wrong each time. The teacher encourages the children to help the puppet and by doing so the children arrive at the correct answers. Independent activities carried out by the children promote their mathematical development, such as counting the number of small jugs of water which will fill a large jug in the water tray, and matching the number of circus tickets sold to the number of children who bought them.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **good** and children achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and questioning is used effectively to promote children's understanding.
- There is a good range of activities on offer.

Commentary

50. The teacher provides a good range of group and independent activities for children, which interest and encourage them to participate. The computer is always available. It is used by the teacher for demonstration purposes, such as the clock activity in mathematics, and is used by children for drawing and making labels. They develop good mouse skills and can move the cursor across the screen by using the mouse and the keys. Children find out about the properties of sand and water by using the wide range of resources provided by the teacher. For example, children recognised that water flowed downwards when pouring it into a piece of guttering and collecting it in a container at one end. They are taught about the festival of Diwali, and the fact that it takes place in other countries as well as this one. Better understanding of the festival was promoted by a visitor to the class who prepared types of food eaten at Diwali, such as samosas. The teacher took a group activity and questions were effectively asked about the properties of different types of leaves. The questioning encouraged children to suggest something that they had observed about their leaves. They noticed that some leaves were 'smooth' whilst others were 'prickly'. Their learning was good and they were beginning to recognise similarities and differences.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good** and children achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and they develop good physical skills.
- Children are given continuous access to physical activities.

Commentary

51. Children are provided with many opportunities for physical development. They have physical education in the hall, although none was observed during the inspection. There are frequent opportunities for physical development provided in the outdoor area. Children were provided with wooden planks and boxes so that they could act as 'clowns' on a tightrope, following the 'Circus' theme. Whilst wearing clown hats they practised balancing in different ways on the planks both on two feet, one foot and on hands and feet. By the end of the session and with encouragement from an adult, their balancing become more precise and they could change from one position to another. The teacher provides children with hoops and space hoppers so that they develop good control when jumping and bouncing. Children have opportunities to ride tricycles, which they do so well considering that the amount of space is small.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good** and children achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and pupils are provided with a good range of activities to develop their creative skills.
- There is not continuous provision for creative development.

Commentary

52. Although there is not continuous provision for creative activities the teacher ensures that there are always drawing materials available. Although few creative activities were observed during the inspection, the work on display showed that children are provided with a good range of materials and that they are developing good skills of drawing, painting and collage. Paintings of faces showed good use of colour, and children are able to incorporate expressions on the faces. The paintings of a girl from Afghanistan, where a portrait was used as a stimulus for learning, showed good use of different shades of brown, and plates of 'fish' made from tissue paper and paint depicted a variety of fish fingers and kippers. The teacher encourages role-play to develop children's imagination, particularly the 'clown' activities. Children are taught to sing well and join in the singing sessions with the infant children each week. This experience has improved their singing so that they feel happy to sing individually in the classroom.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average by Year 6 and pupils achieve very well.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good in the infants and very good in junior classes.
- The National Literacy Strategy is well embedded and there are good literacy links across the curriculum.
- Pupils develop a good range of writing styles by Year 6 and their writing is of a high quality.
- Marking is good in the junior classes and provides pupils with information about how they can improve. However, marking is not as informative in Year 2.
- The strategy of junior pupils listening to infant partners read works well and improves pupils' learning.

Commentary

53. Standards in all aspects of English are well above average at Year 6. This is a similar picture to the test results for 2003. All pupils attained or exceeded the expected level in the national tests and performance was high. All pupils in the current Year 6 class are on course to attain the expected Level 4 with a large proportion attaining the higher Level 5. This level of attainment has been maintained in English for the last four years. Standards at Year 2 are above average overall. Writing was well above average in the 2003 national tests. However, there are fewer pupils in the current Year 2 who will attain the higher Level 3. Pupils achieve very well in the juniors and their achievement is good in the infants. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as their peers. There is no difference in the attainment of boys and girls. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were average at Year 2 and above average at Year 6. The key issue referring to progression in reading across the infants has been addressed well and standards in reading are above average.
54. Pupils speaking and listening skills develop well. Younger pupils in Year 1 suggest words when playing 'I Spy' and can share their ideas about different settings in a story. Their vocabulary extends well because teachers provide pupils with the related vocabulary in each subject in lessons. By Year 6, pupils are very articulate and can explain clearly what they want to say. In discussion for example, pupils explained very clearly and explicitly why certain religions appear to be stricter than others, and why it is good to go on residential trips because they promote development of their personal skills. The many opportunities provided by teachers allow pupils to frequently discuss ideas and to collaborate with each other. They listen carefully and take note of one another's views.
55. Teachers plan lessons that interest and motivate pupils who are encouraged to read regularly. Consequently, pupils enjoy reading from a young age. The provision of story sacks begins in the Reception class and encourages pupils to look at books, even if they cannot read the words, and to re-enact their favourite stories using the resources inside the sacks. Infant pupils take great delight in reading to their junior partners each week and this strategy is working well to improve younger pupils' reading. They develop confidence by attempting words they do not know, helped by their older partner. Junior pupils are encouraged by their teachers to suggest to their partner ways of improving. Younger pupils find this extremely helpful, particularly when suggestions are written down in their individual 'planner,' which they take home to parents. Younger pupils show interest in books read by the teacher and make suggestions about what might be hidden in the park in the 'Shark in the Park' book. By Year 6, their choice of reading material of both fiction and non-fiction books is quite sophisticated. Teachers frequently plan access to the computers so that pupils can increase their reading skills by using the Internet to research information.
56. Teachers concentrate on teaching pupils from Year 1 onwards how to spell correctly so that, overall, their spelling is very good by the time they reach the junior classes. Regular practise of handwriting ensures that presentation of work in books is good and is easy to read. Writing is developed very well across the school and, by the time pupils are in Year 6, they are able to write very well in a wide variety of styles. Teachers set appropriate challenges in writing for pupils to which they respond very well. Pupils in the Year 2 class planned stories about 'The Hidden House'. They suggested characters and settings for the story and were able to use adjectives to describe their characters. The Year 5 and 6 pupils were able to write in great detail about characters in a story and could deduce from lines of speech a person's characteristics.

Example of outstanding practice

The following example illustrates how modelling by the teacher both motivated and enthused pupils to write exceptionally well.

In an excellent lesson in Years 5 and 6, the teacher very clearly explained what she wanted pupils to achieve by the end of the lesson. The teacher set the scene very well, building up information about a character in a story set in World War II. Pupils were asked to contribute more information and were given time to prepare their answers. They were visibly intrigued as to how each piece of information they added identified the character more clearly. The teacher valued all the contributions that pupils made, particularly those from pupils with special educational needs. This modelling by the teacher set the scene very well so that when pupils were given time to invent and write about their own character they wrote extensively over a short period. They completed a high quality piece of writing, including authentic names and dates for the period in which the writing was set.

57. Teaching is good in the infant classes and very good in the juniors. Work is well matched for pupils with special educational needs and they are ably supported by the headteacher, teaching assistant or parent helpers. Good attention is paid to ICT, which is used regularly in lessons. For example, Year 1 pupils were thrilled to read stories on the Internet with their older partners, and Year 5 and 6 pupils produced very good multi-media presentations about the River Nile. Pupils' work is marked thoroughly and they are told how to improve their work in the junior classes but this is not as evident in the Year 2 class.
58. The co-ordinator is new to the role but already has a good overview of the subject. She has attended a range of courses and is involved in developing the Oracy project in school as well as starting to provide enrichment opportunities for gifted and talented pupils.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

Language and literacy are used very well across the curriculum and there are good links to almost all subjects. Pupils achieve the same high standards as they do in literacy lessons. Writing is developed well. For example, pupils wrote very extensive accounts in Years 3 and 4 of how to re-cycle materials. Teachers pay good attention to pupils writing in other subjects, where writing is assessed in the same way as it is in their literacy books.

MATHEMATICS

The provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Junior pupils achieve very well and standards are high by Year 6.
- Not enough Year 2 pupils attain the above average level for their age.
- The teaching is good overall but is less effective in Year 2 than in the rest of the school.
- Pupils show very positive attitudes and enjoy the subject.
- The subject co-ordinator provides clear leadership.
- Pupils use mathematics very effectively in many different subjects.

In 2003, all Year 6 pupils attained or exceeded the level for their age in the national tests and over half attained at an above average level. This was a very high level of performance and a very good achievement in comparison with the results pupils' attained as seven year olds. Results for Year 6 pupils improved for the third year in a row and continued an upward trend since the last inspection.

Standards are currently well above average in Year 6 and above average in Year 2. The difference in attainment at these two ages stems from the proportion of pupils who attain at an above average level, which is significantly higher in Year 6 than it is in Year 2. The school has predicted that 11 of the 16 pupils presently in Year 6 will perform at an above average level when they sit the national

tests next May. In contrast, only four of the 18 pupils in Year 2 are predicted to perform in their respective tests at the higher level for their age.

Pupils achieve well in Year 1 and very well in Years 3 to 6 because the teaching is good and often very good, and pupils are prepared to work hard. Lessons are taught enthusiastically and teachers own enjoyment of the subject transmits to the pupils. As a result lessons are lively, fast moving, challenging and productive. Pupils are taught a wide range of strategies for making both mental and written calculations and, consequently, become confident mathematicians able to apply their knowledge and skills competently when faced with a new problem. The very good attitudes and high levels of interest that many show enhance pupils' learning considerably. They listen closely to advice and instructions, and answer mental questions quickly and accurately. When working in groups, pupils sensibly discuss what they are doing and readily test out ideas on one another.

In Year 2, pupils' achievement is satisfactory but progress is not as rapid as in the other classes because pupils, especially those capable of higher attainment, are not always challenged sufficiently. Teachers in the Year 2 class do not have the same understanding as their colleagues in other classes of how to accelerate the pace of learning and how to promote higher levels of mathematical thinking. Because they are not kept fully on their toes pupils' concentration tends to wander and, at times, Year 2 teachers are unable to keep pupils focused and sufficiently on task.

A high proportion of Year 2 pupils attain the expected level for their age and, because of this, standards are above average overall at this age. In this respect, there has been some improvement since the last inspection and the issue raised at that time has been partially addressed. There is, however, scope for further improvement to bring standards in Year 2 up to the high level of those in Year 6. The school recognises this and has set higher standards by Year 2 as a target for school improvement.

Taking account of all factors, there has been a good improvement in the subject since the last inspection. In particular, the National Strategy for Numeracy has been adopted and utilised very effectively, and this is providing a solid framework for teaching and learning. The strength of the curriculum lies in the way in which lessons build systematically on what has gone before, so that there is a sustained and systematic build up of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly. They generally use well the information this provides to set work that is closely matched to what pupils of differing levels of attainment need to learn next. This has a positive effect on the learning of all pupils and particularly those with special educational needs, who make good and often very good progress.

Subject management is very good. The co-ordinator closely monitors the provision and the progress pupils make, and uses the information constructively to plan further developments. Resources are audited regularly and provide good support for the curriculum.

Mathematics across the curriculum

Mathematics appears frequently in many subjects. It has become second nature to pupils to use their developing numeracy skills to aid their learning whenever this is appropriate. For example, in history, Years 5 and 6 pupils have converted empirical weights to metric so that they can appreciate how much food people received during the rationing in World War II. Measurement is an integral part of science and design and technology, and graphs feature strongly whenever there is data to handle.

SCIENCE

The provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By Year 6, pupils' knowledge and understanding is well above average but their enquiry skills lag a little behind.
- The teaching is good in most classes but less challenging in Year 2.
- Pupils enjoy learning through enquiry and apply themselves well.
- Subject managers have a clear picture of the developments needed.
- Core skills in ICT, literacy and numeracy are used well by pupils to enhance their science.

Commentary

59. Pupils' performance in the 2003 National Curriculum tests for Year 6 pupils was well above the national average. All pupils attained or exceeded the expected level and approaching three quarters attained at an above average level. The results were an improvement over the previous year and continued an upward trend in test performance since the previous inspection.
60. By Year 2, standards are above average. Pupils enter Year 1 with good knowledge and understanding of the world around them and their achievement, while in the infant classes, is satisfactory. By Year 2, pupils have good knowledge of scientific facts. For example, most recognise how their bodies have changed over time and how this affects what they can and cannot do at a particular age. However, pupils' enquiry skills are not as well developed because they have not got into the way of looking for reasons about why things happen as they do. This is often because teachers do not challenge pupils enough with questions that ask them to explain their observations.
61. By Year 6, standards are well above average. In response to the good teaching they receive, pupils' progress accelerates in the junior classes and their achievement in Years 3 to 6, particularly in the acquisition of scientific knowledge, is very good. By Year 6, pupils have a secure grasp and clear understanding of many of the key ideas of science, such as how water changes from one state to another and what to do to separate the components of different mixtures. Pupils' do not develop enquiry skills at quite the same rate. Although, by Year 6, most pupils have a good understanding of the key elements of scientific investigation, such as how to make a test fair and how to assess the reliability of the data collected, they do not yet have a clear picture of the procedure they need to follow in order to answer a question by scientific enquiry. Consequently, when carrying out an investigation, they are too reliant on the teacher to guide them through the decisions they need to make. Once this has been made clear, the pupils have no problems making the decisions, and thoroughly enjoy finding out for themselves. Attitudes to the subject are extremely positive and pupils have a very mature understanding of the importance of first-hand learning.
62. The school is aware of this slight imbalance in pupils' attainment in the different aspects of the subject and has identified, in the school improvement plan, scientific enquiry as an area for development. Teachers, particularly those in the junior classes, place due emphasis on scientific enquiry and asking challenging questions that focus pupils' thoughts on what is most important. They encourage pupils to evaluate information and to relate their findings to the question that was originally set. However, one key step is not yet in place. Teachers are not placing sufficient emphasis on pupils using their existing knowledge and understanding. Consequently, pupils often stop after they have evaluated the information and do not go on to relate it to what they already know and, from this, to draw a detailed and informed conclusion.
63. Overall, there has been good improvement in the subject since the last inspection and standards have risen. ICT is used well as an aid to pupils' learning in science, and both

literacy and numeracy are employed extensively and constructively. Pupils do not need to be told when and how to use their skills in these areas but draw naturally on them as they are working. Teachers assess pupils' work carefully and use the information well when planning further activities. Responsibility for subject management has just passed from one teacher to another. The transition has been smooth and there is clarity of purpose about what is being achieved and what is in need of further development. Consequently, the subject is well placed to move forward.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been considerable improvement and the school has addressed very well the key issue from the last inspection.
- Standards are above average and pupils of all ages achieve well because the teaching is good and often very good.
- Subject management is very effective.
- Pupils are provided with a broad curriculum and very good quality resources.
- Very good use is made of ICT in other subjects.

Commentary

64. There has been significant improvement in all aspects of ICT since the previous inspection. What was a weakness in the school has been transformed into one of its strengths. Standards, which were below expectations when the school was last inspected in 1998, are now above average in both Year 2 and Year 6, and continuing to rise as the full effects of the improvements are felt. Pupils' progress has accelerated rapidly, particularly over the last two years, and at all ages they are achieving well.
65. The comprehensive curriculum as well as frequent access to computers gives pupils regular opportunities to practise and extend a wide range of ICT skills. The quality of teaching has clearly improved since the previous inspection and this is having a marked effect on pupils' learning. From an early age, pupils become competent with mouse and keyboard and, by Year 2, they are word processing, labelling pictures, constructing pictograms and drawing patterns to a good standard. Very good teaching ensures that development continues at a good pace. Years 3 and 4 pupils confidently use simple spreadsheets, combine text with graphics, write lengthy reports and use music programs to help them compose their own tunes.
66. One of the most positive aspects of the teaching is the clear and competent way in which pupils are instructed. Pupils pay close attention to what they are being shown and, as a result, are able to pick up new skills and techniques quickly and add them securely to the ones they have already acquired. Years 5 and 6 pupils added negative strings to their Internet research skills in the matter of a few minutes after a well-structured demonstration by the teacher. Very occasionally, pupils are not given a clear enough task to complete and, when this happens, the pace of their learning slows. Teachers pay very close attention to safety issues. They frequently discuss the hazards of the Internet with pupils and ensure that they have put a secure filter in place before allowing pupils to log on.
67. The subject is very effectively led by a knowledgeable and capable co-ordinator. With the help of the headteacher she has brought the subject forwards in leaps and bounds and put it on a very secure footing to continue to improve. The monitoring of provision and its impact on learning are thorough, and school development and staff training requirements are carefully targeted. In the last two years, the school has spent a considerable amount of money improving the quality of its ICT facilities. Resources are of high quality and much valued and

appreciated by the pupils and staff, who use them almost continually both in lessons and during break times. The school makes every effort to ensure that it acquires the best facilities at the most cost effective price, and that pupils have the resources they need to learn effectively.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

ICT is used extensively across the curriculum to aid pupils' learning in a wide range of subjects. Even in those lessons designated specifically to the teaching and learning of ICT skills, teachers ensure that the content is relevant by relating it to what pupils are currently studying in another subject. For example, while learning how to use the Internet, Year 2 pupils carried out research about Florence Nightingale, and Years 5 and 6 pupils researched World War II to aid and enhance their history work. This constructive use of ICT is embedded in the curriculum, and pupils log onto the computer in the same natural way as they would open a book or get out equipment in a mathematics lesson.

HUMANITIES

Work was sampled in both geography and history but, as it is still relatively early in the school year, pupils have covered only a small proportion of the curriculum. Only three humanities lessons were seen in total; one geography lesson in each of the two infant classes and one history lesson in the Years 5 and 6 class. It is, therefore, not possible to form an overall judgement about provision.

One lesson was seen in religious education in Years 5 and 6. Findings were confirmed by examination of pupils' work in both the current and previous year in the Years 5 and 6 class and through discussion with staff and pupils.

Commentary

68. There are clear indications that the humanities curriculum provides a range of interesting activities that enthuse the pupils and encourage them to learn. The history lesson seen was based on pupils acting out events in the lives of everyday people during World War II. Well acted 'family discussions' about whether to choose Anderson or Morrison systems of air raid protection showed pupils had learned a great deal about the period and were able to empathise with the people who had lived through the experience. This learning had come via a wide range of experiences and activities; class based lessons, individual and group research, listening to visitors who had experience of the war, and an educational visit to Eden Camp. The unusual but very effective structure of the lesson was partly the teachers' response to pupils' request for more drama in the curriculum and a clear demonstration of the thought that teachers put into the planning of their lessons. The standard of teaching and learning in this lesson was very good, and pupils' achievement was high.
69. The geography lessons seen and the work sampled from Years 3 and 4 gave a clear indication of the emphasis teachers place on social awareness and pupils making decisions for themselves. Year 1 pupils understand the need for parking controls and can suggest an appropriate place to park a cycle. Year 2 pupils suggest and model a bridge to help people cross a busy road near to the school. Studies into waste and how it affects the environment lead Year 3 and 4 pupils to a clear understanding of the need for recycling. A visit to a glass factory has given them first hand experience of what this involves. Teachers are well aware of the geography skills pupils need to acquire and integrate these well into many activities. For example, pupils' map skills are built progressively so that, by Year 6, pupils understand such features as contour lines and can translate a map cross section into a three-dimensional model.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievements are good and their attainment is above expectations.
- Pupils gain a good understanding of their own and other faiths by comparing their similarities and differences.
- There are good assessment procedures in place.

Commentary

70. Standards of attainment are above expectations by the end of Year 6. Pupils from the infants upwards build up a good understanding of their own religion and the rituals involved. By the time pupils reach Year 6, teachers have ensured that they have a good understanding of Christianity and can compare this well to other faiths they have learned about, including Judaism and Islam. Pupils recognise that there are similarities between the teachings of the Bible and the Qu'ran, and that the Bible and Jewish Torah scrolls have items in common. When learning about World War 11, pupils in Years 5 and 6 showed sensitive attitudes as they considered the fate of the Jews and their religion. Throughout the school, pupils learn how symbols of each religion are important and what they mean for individuals.
71. Teaching was good in the lesson seen. Work in books and discussion with pupils indicates that teaching is good in other classes. Teachers give pupils opportunities to consider the deeper meaning of different religions and older pupils are asked to research information. In the lesson observed, pupils used ICT to find out about one of the Five Pillars of Islam. All pupils found that Salat meant 'prayer' and many went on to find out what is involved in the ritual of praying. Pupils were interested to find that worshippers in Islam are called to prayer five times a day. Visitors to school enhance the curriculum. Recently a 'Christening' was carried out for all the school by a visiting vicar and there are regular visits from a lay reader and local vicar. Good use is made of visits, such as to the Bible Times Exhibition in York as well as the local church. Pupils are regularly assessed and information is used to help teachers plan future lessons.
72. The co-ordinator has just taken over the role and has already carried out an audit and identified clearly what needs to be done. The national scheme for religious education is being used at present but the co-ordinator would like to enhance this by introducing a local scheme and building up resources.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

One lesson was seen in art and design. Evidence is taken from the evaluation of the curriculum, discussions with subject co-ordinators, pupils' work and discussions with pupils.

Only two design and technology lessons were seen, and information from other sources was limited because in most classrooms the subject has not or is only just appearing on the timetable this year. It is therefore not possible to form an overall judgement about provision or to make a detailed analysis of strengths and weaknesses.

One lesson was seen in music in the Year 3 and 4 class, as well as three recorder groups in the junior classes and two singing groups covering the whole school. Three lessons were seen in physical education.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by the end of Year 6 and pupils achieve well.
- Pupils enjoy their work.
- Pupils study a wide range of work including, painting, sculpture and collage.

Commentary

73. Pupils are taught a range of techniques across the school. In the Year 5 and 6 class, pupils are shown how to incorporate perspective in their work and how to use shade and tone to make still life drawings. Pupils took good account of shade and tone when creating still life drawings or paintings of pumpkins, which are displayed around the school. In the lesson seen, the teacher inspired pupils by showing them how to create an effective background using paint and sponges. On the teachers' insistence, they made good use of their sketchbooks to try out the technique before applying paint to paper. They concentrated well and were pleased with their efforts. Pupils achieved well because of the challenge set by the teacher. Years 3 and 4 pupils put a sculpting technique to good effect when producing interesting figures, sculptured out of wire and tissue. The same class has used the school grounds and local area for rubbings and interesting sketches to contribute to a variety of booklets, such as 'Collecting ideas in Art – The Classroom Garden'. Pupils develop good knowledge of how to use various types of media. In Year 1, for example, pupils learn how to use charcoal to good effect when doing observational drawings. By the time they are in Year 6, they can use charcoal to give a shadow effect when creating pictures of light and shadow.
74. Teaching is good in the junior classes and covers a wide range of work. Good use is made of ICT in the subject for creating patterns for wallpaper, for example, or producing pictures of bonfire night. Good assessment procedures are in place and pupils who are not achieving as well as they could are given further support. The co-ordinator is new to the post and is intending to lead the school towards an Artsmark award.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Commentary

75. It is clear from the small number of lessons seen, the work pupils in Years 3 and 4 completed last year, and discussions with Year 6 pupils, that pupils of all ages are provided with a good range of interesting activities through which they learn a range of skills and techniques. By Year 6, pupils have a solid understanding of most of the elements of the design and make process, although they are a little unsure of the function of evaluation as a guide to further improvement. The school has a good range of resources, which enable the curriculum to be taught effectively, and pupils are provided with appropriate tools and materials to use in their work.
76. The quality of the teaching seen varied between satisfactory and good. Instructions were given clearly and due attention was paid to health and safety. Pupils participated satisfactorily, although the number of decisions they made for themselves were too low. In the satisfactory lesson, pupils' learning slowed when a minority did not follow the teacher's instructions as closely as they should. The good lesson was very well organised, pupils listened attentively and followed instructions closely, and the activities moved along at pace.

MUSIC

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and pupils achieve well.
- The curriculum covers all aspects of music.
- The co-ordinator makes a good contribution to the work of the school.

Commentary

77. Standards are above average at the end of Year 6 and pupils achieve well. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were average. Pupils across the school are taught to sing with confidence by the co-ordinator. Singing sessions for both infants and juniors showed the good progression made. Pupils in the infant classes sing in tune and put actions to the songs, which they thoroughly enjoy. Junior pupils can sing quite complicated songs and sing in two-part harmony without difficulty. The enthusiasm of the music teacher promotes such confidence that individual soloists are willing to sing in front of the whole school in assembly. Pupils develop a good knowledge of music and are able to compose using a variety of instruments. The Years 3 and 4 class prepared good compositions relating to a poem about 'Mice' using glockenspiels and xylophones. The work was challenging and the teacher had high expectations of pupils.
78. All junior pupils are taught how to play the recorder each week by the headteacher, who is the co-ordinator. During the course of each session, pupils make good progress because of the support of the teacher and the acknowledgement of the small steps made by individuals. Pupils, consequently, have a growing sense of achievement. Teachers support pupils in deciding the type of music they prefer. Pupils listen to a variety of music and enjoy music from different countries, such as the 'Rhythms of Africa' music played in assembly. In the lesson seen and the group and class activities, teaching was good. Pupils acquire the required skills and they are assessed regularly so that their progress is tracked. Good use is made of ICT and the school has used the Dance Ejay CD to develop pupils' interest. The Year 6 pupils' recent performance at the Barbican in York has given them great confidence and enthusiasm, and made them very proud of their work.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The provision for physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by the end of Year 6 are above average and, in some instances, well above.
- There are examples of excellent teaching that provide a model for others to aspire to.
- In contrast, there are also lessons in which the teaching is not good enough.
- The school hall is small and places some constraints on what is achieved.
- Subject management is good.

Commentary

79. Pupils' achievement is good in the junior classes but varies considerably across the school because of differences in the quality of teaching. In the three lessons seen the teaching ranged from excellent to unsatisfactory. The most significant differences are in teachers' understanding of how to promote pupils' skills, and in their organisation and management of

lessons. Where teaching is at its best, teachers plan the lesson in detail, make very clear to pupils the standard they are expected to reach and give highly effective demonstrations to model how this can be achieved. Pupils respond positively by trying to match the standard the teacher has set and make very good progress as a result.

Example of outstanding practice

The following example illustrates how setting challenging tasks and teaching key points which are continually assessed leads to high achievement.

An excellent lesson was observed in the Year 3 and 4 gymnastics class. Teaching was excellent because of the expectation that pupils could achieve more if presented with accurate and precise teacher and pupil demonstrations. The teacher focused on key teaching points enabling pupils to improve their body shapes enough to create a stable base which would support their weight and be comfortable, safe and well controlled. Pupils' performance was continually being assessed, resulting in accurate guidance given to them about care of their backs when practising 'landing' techniques. Planning was effective because it incorporated the use of visual clues in the form of large instructional cards so, consequently, pupils of all abilities achieved equally highly. The cards became even more valuable because some of the teacher demonstrations were done facing away from the pupils. Landing techniques improved fantastically when pupils were asked to use 'elastic' knees to soak up the impact of their jumps. Excellent attention was paid to health and safety; risks were assessed throughout and well controlled through the teachers' instructions and constant monitoring. Pupils behaved impeccably because they were engrossed in their own performance, and levels of self-esteem grew as pupils began to appreciate the good standards other pupils attained. The excellent teaching led to very high achievement for all pupils.

80. Where the teaching is unsatisfactory teachers are unclear about what skills pupils should be learning and how to move their learning forward. Lessons do not have adequate structure and activities are haphazard rather than progressive. Although teachers organise their lessons to minimise the problems, arising from the small size of the hall when the gymnastics equipment is set up, there is not enough space for all of the older pupils to be active at the same time. Half of the class sit out while others perform, and they swap over periodically. Teachers encourage the pupils who are watching to make use of the time by evaluating the performance of those who are active, and some productive learning takes place. However, in order for some pupils to practice and refine their performances others have to sit out for lengthy periods, significantly reducing their opportunities to learn. Through involvement in a sports link project, the school is hoping to use some of the facilities of a local high school, which will help alleviate this problem.
81. There has been good improvement in the subject since the last inspection, although there are weaknesses in teaching and learning in Year 2 that need to be addressed. The physical education co-ordinator monitors the subject closely and provides effective support for colleagues. She has a secure understanding of what the school does well and has identified appropriate areas for further improvement.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Two lessons were seen in Years 3 - 6.

Provision in personal, social, health and citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- It is timetabled in every class each week.
- Pupils develop a good sense of understanding about others and themselves.
- Sometimes pupils are not given enough time to discuss their ideas.

Commentary

82. The school has adopted a national scheme for the subject and links are made with other subjects, such as science when learning about the body. Pupils develop a good awareness of the importance of rules and how the democratic process works when voting for something that is felt to be good. They learn about how their bodies change and grow, and how there are certain things that it is possible to do when you are older, such as drive a car. Teachers deal with sensitive issues well and in the lessons observed teaching was good. Pupils learn to listen to each other's contributions, although sometimes discussion between pupils is limited and they are not given enough opportunities to air their views as much as they could.

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	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
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	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
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	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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