

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **FERNEY LEE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Todmorden

LEA area: Calderdale

Unique reference number: 107478

Headteacher: Mrs Sue Ellis

Lead inspector: Mr Declan McCarthy

Dates of inspection: 16 – 18 March 2004

Inspection number: 258021

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Type of school:              | Primary                                    |
| School category:             | Community                                  |
| Age range of pupils:         | 3-11 years                                 |
| Gender of pupils:            | Mixed                                      |
| Number on roll:              | 177  |
| School address:              | Ferney Lee Road<br>Todmorden<br>Lancashire |
| Postcode:                    | OL14 5NR                                   |
| Telephone number:            | 01706 812412                               |
| Fax number:                  | 01706 839998                               |
| Appropriate authority:       | Governing body                             |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Mr Tim Lister                              |
| Date of previous inspection: | 1 <sup>st</sup> June 1998                  |

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Ferney Primary School has 177 pupils on roll, aged three to 11, including 21 full-time children in the nursery and 20 full-time children in the reception year. The school draws its pupils from Todmorden, a small rural town on the edge of Calderdale LEA close to the Yorkshire/Lancashire border. Most pupils are from a wide variety of social, economic and cultural backgrounds, including the town's largest area of council housing and the town's Asian community, which contains Pakistani and Bengali families. This social mix is not found in any other area of the Calderdale Authority. Most pupils are white British heritage, but a significant minority of other pupils are of Asian heritage – mainly Pakistani and Bangladeshi. A few other pupils are from other ethnic backgrounds including white Irish and mixed Asian. Thirty-five per cent of pupils are at an early stage of learning English, which is well above average – their first languages are Panjabi, Bengali (Bangladeshi) and Urdu. The levels of knowledge and understanding of children when they arrive at school are well below average. Almost a third of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average. The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs (SEN), including those with a statement is also above average. These pupils have a range of difficulties including dyslexia, speech language and communication difficulties, moderate learning difficulties and emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. The number of pupils joining and leaving the school during the year is also above average. The school gained the Schools Achievement Award and The Healthy Schools Initiative in 2003. During the inspection the school was awarded with Investors in People status. The school is involved in a variety of community initiatives for the benefit of pupils and their families. These include provision for under-threes, The Children's Fund used for transition and family support, and Out of Hours learning. The headteacher is due to retire very soon after long service; a new headteacher has been appointed for next term.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team |                 |                | Subject responsibilities   |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--|
| 23886                          | Declan McCarthy | Lead inspector | Mathematics<br>Geography<br>History<br>Physical education<br>English as an additional language                         |
| 9981                           | Saleem Hussein  | Lay inspector  |  |
| 28320                          | Robert Willey   | Team inspector | Special educational needs<br>English<br>Information and communication technology (ICT)<br>Art<br>Design and technology |
| 22452                          | Mary Farmer     | Team inspector | Foundation Stage<br>Science<br>Music<br>Religious education  |

The inspection contractor was:

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very good** school with some excellent features. These include excellent leadership of the headteacher who has established excellent links with the community and with other schools to promote very good inclusion and ensured very good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' overall achievements are very good. Teaching and learning are very good and the school is very well led and managed. The school provides good value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils are achieving very well, as a result of very good teaching and learning.
- Excellent leadership by the headteacher has ensured very good improvements in provision.
- Very good use is made of performance data to raise standards, and assessment information is very well used by teachers to move pupils' learning forward.
- The attendance of most pupils is good. However, a few pupils do not attend as regularly as they should, despite the best efforts of the school to promote their good attendance.
- The outdoor play area for children in the Foundation Stage is restricted and impacts on learning.
- The school's provision for pupils' personal development and high quality care, support and guidance has resulted in pupils' very good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, very positive attitudes to learning and excellent relationships with others.
- Excellent links with the community and other schools and very good links with parents help to ensure that all pupils are included in all that the school has to offer.
- The management of the school is very good. The senior management team, subject leaders and governors make rigorous checks of the quality of the school's work.

The school has made very good improvement since it was last inspected in April 1998. The key issues from the last inspection have been very well addressed. There has been very good improvement in leadership, teaching and learning, with very good improvements to the curriculum, particularly in relation to information and communication technology. Standards have improved and there has been excellent improvement in assessment.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average  
N.B. Caution is needed in interpreting this data as numbers are small. Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

**Pupils' achievements are very good** overall. Results show a steady rise in standards, with trends over time above the national trend. However, care must be taken when interpreting these results because a high proportion of pupils were either at an early stage of learning English or were identified with special educational needs. The high number of pupils who join the school during the year also affects standards throughout the school. This inspection shows that standards in Year 6 are at the levels expected for their age in English, mathematics and science and above the national average in information and communication technology. The school's own detailed analysis of pupils' performance over time, indicates that pupils in Years 3–6 are achieving very well, confirmed by inspection findings. The Year 2, 2003 results show that standards in reading were very low,

standards in writing were well below the national average and standards in mathematics were below the average. This inspection shows that standards in reading, writing and mathematics are lower than in most schools. However, pupils enter the school with levels of attainment that are very low for their age and standards are rising faster than nationally; pupils are achieving well. Although most children may not meet the goals expected by the end of the reception year, their achievements in the Foundation Stage are good in most areas of learning with very good achievement for personal, social and emotional development.

**Pupils' personal qualities are very good.** Pupils' attitudes are very good; they have excellent relationships with others and behave well throughout the school. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.** Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching and learning are very good.** Teachers plan their lessons very well, have high expectations for learning and behaviour and maintain very good relationships in lessons. Very good use is made of support staff to promote the learning of pupils who are at an early stage of learning English and those with special educational needs. Teachers make very good use of assessment information to set targets for pupils and move their learning forward. Teachers match work closely to the needs of all individuals. The curriculum is very good, with good provision for pupils with special educational needs and those who are at an early stage of learning English. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Resources are very good and accommodation is good. However, restricted outdoor space in the Foundation Stage limits opportunities for free play and children's physical development.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good.** Leadership by the headteacher is excellent. The new deputy provides very good support for the headteacher and staff. Subject leaders are very effective in developing and monitoring provision within their subjects. They motivate other staff very well and teamwork is strong. Management is very good and the school rigorously checks and evaluates its work, making effective use of performance data to raise standards. The school operates very smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Financial management is very good. The work of the governing body is very good and governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

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

Parents and pupils have very positive views of the school and support the school strongly.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Continue to work closely with the parents of the few pupils whose attendance is poor in order to improve their attendance.
- Work closely with the LEA in order to improve the outdoor accommodation in the Foundation Stage.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Overall, pupils' achievements are very good. Standards in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 are below those expected for pupils' ages, but by Year 6 they have risen to the expected level.

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

- Children in the nursery and reception achieve very well in personal, social and emotional development in response to very good teaching.
- A restricted outdoor play area in the reception class limits children's achievements in physical development.
- Standards are steadily rising and are broadly in line with the national average.
- Standards in information and communication technology are above those expected for pupils' ages.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those who are at an early stage of learning English achieve very well.

#### **Commentary**

1. Children in the nursery enter the school with skills that are well below those usually found at this age. By the end of the reception year their attainment rises, although most children are not expected to reach the learning goals set nationally for this age group. However, their achievements are good in most areas of learning and they achieve very well in their personal, social, and emotional development because there is very good teaching and support for children in the early stages of learning English, and for those with special educational needs. Restrictions to the outdoor play area in the reception class limit the children's physical development.
2. The table below shows the sharp dip in the Year 2 national test results in 2003. This occurred because over a third of pupils in this group were either identified with special educational needs or were at an early stage of learning English. Furthermore, there were few higher attaining pupils in this group. Despite these limitations, national data shows that standards are rising above the national trend over the last five years.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| Reading       | 12.6 (15.0)    | 15.7 (15.8)      |
| Writing       | 12.1 (13.4)    | 14.6 (14.4)      |
| Mathematics   | 15.7 (18.8)    | 16.3 (16.5)      |

*There were 22 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. Inspection findings confirm that standards by the end of Year 2 are almost in line with the levels expected at this age and that pupils are achieving well against their prior attainment in reading, writing and mathematics because teachers set high expectations for learning, and match work closely to the different needs and abilities of all pupils.
4. As pupils move through the school they build on their prior achievements so that by Year 6 standards are above those of similar schools for English, mathematics and science and are broadly in line with the national average. Given the high proportion of pupils with special



educational needs, those who are at an early stage of learning English and the high level of mobility among the pupils, pupils' achievements are very good. The main determining factor is very good teaching, which includes very good teamwork between support staff and teachers, with high expectations for learning and very good use of assessment. Pupils' achievements are also very good because the school provides extended learning opportunities to promote achievement. There are, for example, additional learning programmes for those pupils with special educational needs, late entrants into school and those at an early stage of learning English. Use of the wild garden to support learning in science, geography and physical education is maximised and sporting links and family learning opportunities for literacy and numeracy contribute well to the pupils' achievement.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English       | 26 (25.3)      | 26.8 (27)        |
| Mathematics   | 25.8 (25.6)    | 26.8 (26.7)      |
| Science       | 28 (28.7)      | 28.6 (28.3)      |

*There were 31 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

5. Standards in information and communication technology are broadly as expected for the pupils' age by the end of Year 2. Standards rise steadily so that by Year 6 they are above the expected levels because pupils throughout the school are allocated teaching time to develop their computer skills. Information and communication technology is also used very effectively in other subjects to support pupils' learning and achievement.
6. Very good support is provided for pupils at an early stage of learning English and those with special educational needs, which results in their very good achievement. Support is sharply focused on the development of literacy skills and communication so that as pupils with particular needs move through the school they steadily build on their achievements. The school's very good use of the information from its analysis of assessment data targets supports precisely year on year where it is most needed. Some of these pupils reach Level 4 in the national tests in Year 6 and the school exceeded its statutory targets for 2003 for Levels 4 and 5 in both mathematics and English. Furthermore, the school is on course to meet its more challenging targets in 2004. The school's own detailed analysis of performance data, confirmed by the local education authority analysis, shows pupils achieving well between Years 2 and 6, with very good achievement since they first joined the school.

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

Pupils' attitudes and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good. Behaviour is good. Attendance is generally satisfactory and punctuality is good.

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

- Pupils' very good attitudes to learning and good behaviour in lessons help them to achieve very well.
- They are very confident and very keen to take responsibility because they are given many opportunities to do so.
- Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are excellent.
- Personal development is very good because of the school's very good provision.
- Although attendance was well below the national average in the last school year, it is rising because of very good procedures to promote attendance.

## Commentary

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

| Authorised absence |     | Unauthorised absence |     |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data        | 6.9 | School data          | 1.2 |
| National data      | 5.4 | National data        | 0.4 |

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

- Most pupils' attendance is good. However, the school experiences a high level of absence for health reasons and there are a small number of pupils with very low attendance. These factors reduced the overall rate of attendance last year. Rewards such as certificates and book tokens are very well used as an incentive to improve attendance. Extended holidays for cultural reasons have reduced since the last inspection.
- Pupils show very good attitudes to learning in lessons. They listen attentively, concentrate and work very hard. This is the result of very good teaching and very strong personal and social education.
- Behaviour is good in the classroom, in assembly, in the dining room and in the playground, where pupils play harmoniously together. All pupils discuss and agree class rules and are fully aware of the school's very high expectations regarding behaviour. No aggressive behaviour was seen and the great majority of parents and pupils confirm that inappropriate behaviour, including bullying, is dealt with very well. Two boys were excluded for extremely unacceptable behaviour in 2003.

### Ethnic background of pupils

### Exclusions in the last school year

| Categories used in the Annual School Census         | No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| White – British                                     | 112                  | 2                                 | 0                              |
| White – Irish                                       | 1                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| White – any other White background                  | 1                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Mixed – White and Asian                             | 2                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British – Indian                     | 3                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British – Pakistani                  | 18                   | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi                | 8                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background | 1                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| No ethnic group recorded                            | 10                   | 0                                 | 0                              |

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

- From the outset, children are encouraged to become independent. This contributes to the way that children make progress in the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception. The system of class councils also applies to reception. It is remarkable to see such young children coming to terms with the idea of a chairman controlling a class council meeting. For example, they have the opportunity to formally open and close meetings with excellent support from adults. Many other responsibilities across the school enable pupils of all ages to experience responsibility, for instance, by acting as monitors. Pupils take their responsibilities of living in a community very seriously and develop very high levels of maturity as they move through the school.

11. All pupils work particularly well together in groups. For example, in a science lesson pupils co-operated exceptionally well in groups of four as they devised 'fair' tests and valued each other's views and ideas. Year 6 pupils are paired with children in reception and often help them to learn and play. The school's race equality policy is especially effective and is reflected in the exceptional relationships between different racial groups. Any issues are dealt with very well. Relationships between pupils and staff are also excellent.
12. The school nurtures personal development very well and pupils achieve very well in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assembly themes, personal, social and health education lessons and religious education are all very effective. Assemblies provide very good moments for reflection allowing pupils to develop their self-knowledge and spiritual awareness very well. Pupils learn about their own feelings, the beauty of the natural world, human achievement, suffering and sacrifice. For example, pupils described with awe Captain Scott's ultimate act of unselfishness. They have learnt principles that enable them to distinguish right from wrong very well. Pupils enjoy contact with a wide cross section of society through many visits and visitors and this contributes very well to their social development. They have many opportunities to appreciate different cultures around the world and their own cultural heritage. They are prepared very well for life in our multicultural society. For example, they did much work about the traditions, values and beliefs of Muslims during the Eid ul-Fitr festival.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. The curriculum is very good and leads to very good inclusion of all pupils. Teaching and learning are very good. Pupils are very well cared for and there are excellent links with the community and other schools, and a very good partnership with parents.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

Overall, teaching and learning are very good. Assessment of pupils' work is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology is very good throughout the school.
- High expectations for learning and behaviour, lively lessons and very good teamwork with support staff ensure very good learning and behaviour.
- Very good promotion of information and communication technology skills enhance pupils' learning and achievement.
- Assessment is very well used to move pupils' learning forward.

### **Commentary**

13. The quality of teaching is very good overall and has improved significantly since the previous inspection as a result of the systematic monitoring of teaching by the headteacher and subject leaders. The key strengths in the teaching of English, mathematics, science and ICT include: very good subject knowledge; matching lesson activities closely to individual and particular needs of pupils; the use of challenging questions to extend pupils' learning and very good planning that takes account of new curriculum developments in these subjects. For example, teachers have implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies very well, so that lessons follow the recommended three-part structure and the plenary session is very well used to develop pupils' understanding of how well they have met their learning objectives. Parents and pupils recognised the high quality teaching throughout the school, both in discussion and in their questionnaires. Pupils believe teachers expect them to work hard and do their best.

14. Consistently high expectations for pupils' learning and behaviour are strong features of teaching throughout the school. In nearly all lessons seen teachers challenged pupils' thinking through the use of carefully prepared question and answer sessions. As a result, pupils were seen to reflect carefully on the question before providing their answers. Homework is regularly set and carefully marked to consolidate and extend pupils' learning. Lessons are always lively and pupils' behaviour is managed very well. As a result, pupils concentrate on their learning, try their hardest and behave well in their lessons. Very good teamwork with support assistants ensures that pupils with special educational needs and those who are at early stage of learning English are fully included in all lessons activities. For example, support assistants focus strongly on developing pupils' understanding of subject vocabulary, linking new subject ideas closely with pupils' prior learning so that all pupils feel confident in their learning. Any misconceptions pupils may have are clarified carefully so pupils learn from their mistakes. As a result, pupils receiving support achieve very well in lessons.
15. Very good use of information and communication technology to promote teaching and learning was seen in most lessons and in pupils' written work. For example, in English pupils' work is often word-processed using a variety of styles and imaginative layouts to enliven their writing, in geography pupils used the Internet to research river features and in mathematics pupils used formulae to derive accurate statistical information from a range of data. Teachers also use interactive whiteboards very effectively in lessons to enliven their teaching and this always focuses pupils' attention and increases their motivation to learn. This also represents very good improvement in this aspect of teaching since the previous inspection.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 28 lessons**

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 0         | 20        | 8    | 0            | 0              | 0    | 0         |

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

16. Improvement in assessment since the previous inspection is excellent. At that time assessment was unsatisfactory and teachers did not use assessment information effectively to track pupils' progress or in planning the next stage of learning. Teachers now make very good use of assessment to move pupils' learning forward. Challenging targets are set for pupils and clear learning objectives are established at the beginning of every lesson, so pupils know what they must do to improve. At the end of each lesson, the plenary session is used very effectively to review pupils' progress against these objectives. This was confirmed in pupils' responses to their questionnaires. Pupils believe that teachers help them when they are stuck and show them how to improve their work. Pupils' achievements are systematically recorded over time and teachers make very good use of this information to plan the next stage of pupils' learning, modifying sequences of lessons so that there is a close match between teaching and the various needs of different groups of pupils.

**The curriculum**

A very good curriculum provides a wide range of experiences for all pupils and opportunities for enrichment are very good. Accommodation for pupils in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and good for the rest of the school. Resources are good throughout the school.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The provision of enrichment activities both within and outside the school day is very good.
- Teaching reception and Year 1 pupils together lessens the impact of good and very good teaching.

- All pupils, including those with special learning needs or identified as being gifted and talented, are fully included in school life and have equality of access to the curriculum.
- Curriculum innovation makes excellent use of national and local initiatives that extend provision well beyond that offered in most schools.
- The school has a very well-structured programme for personal, social and health education that makes very good use of the expertise of outside agencies.
- The school is developing very good links between subjects in a planned and coherent way in order to maximise curriculum time and raise standards further.

## Commentary

17. The quality of the curriculum is very good and very well matched to pupils' age, ability and aptitude. It meets all statutory requirements including provision for religious education and collective worship. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented very well. Subjects are now generally led very well and all have policies and schemes of work based on the latest national guidance.
18. Although the curriculum for pupils in nursery and reception years is good, it is restricted by a small playground that lacks such features as grassed and soft areas. Reception children have no direct access to the playground. The location of classes for these children, in rooms remote from each other, also has a detrimental effect upon the co-ordination of provision.
19. Every opportunity is used to make learning more meaningful and interesting for pupils. The provision of a wide range of experiences outside the basic curriculum, which are open to all, is a strength of the school and generates genuine enthusiasm for learning. An abundance of clubs for pupils of all ages includes dance/drama, cooking, Internet, choir, art and crafts in addition to sporting activities. The school makes full use of external funding and expertise for sporting, art and computer clubs. Visits are made by all classes and are numerous and varied. Visits include reception and Year 1 to Dobroyd Castle for literacy and history and to a mosque for religious education. Older pupils visit Eureka! for science, the Buddhist Centre and a local choral society. Pupils in Year 6 enjoy a residential visit to Ripon that fosters their independence and social development. Visitors include drama groups, visiting teachers for art and French and museum workshops as well as regular curriculum contributions from local clergy, ministers, other schools and local services such as library, police and health.
20. The curriculum has been planned to avoid repetition and enable good progression. The recently appointed deputy headteacher has been given a curriculum brief that includes the monitoring of provision. She has established very good arrangements for co-ordinators to monitor work in their subjects and this is beginning to make an impact upon the standards that pupils achieve. The curriculum is adapted well to enable access for pupils with special learning needs and those for whom English is not their heritage language. The targets set for them are clear. Careful assessment of their progress and effective use of well-informed and dedicated support staff are key factors underpinning the school's approach, and are major reasons why these pupils achieve very well. The school makes very good use of national and local initiatives, including funding, to support specific groups of pupils in order to improve their attainment in literacy and numeracy. Although the school has no formal register for gifted and talented pupils, the needs of able pupils are well recognised because teachers know their pupils so well. Their high expectations and the good challenges afforded in lessons and in other activities, such as class and school councils, ensure that provision for these pupils is also very good.
21. There is a well-devised programme for personal, social and health education. This is linked to aspects of the science curriculum and uses 'circle time' for discussing aspects of drugs awareness in addition to dedicated lessons on personal, social and health education. The school is involved in a 'Healthy Schools' scheme in conjunction with the local education authority and this has been a particular focus for discussions within the school council. There is a definitive programme for sex education in Years 5 and 6 that involves class teachers and the

school nurse. Delivery is to both gender and mixed groups and parents are well informed about the provision in this area.

22. The school is very aware that good time management is essential if it is to expand the present curriculum to include the many initiatives in which it is currently involved. As a result, very good efforts are made to link subjects across the curriculum. Links between literacy, information and communication technology and other subjects are particularly strong. Links are developing well between art and design and other subjects. These sorts of links are becoming a very strong feature of the curriculum for all ages.
23. The school has very good staffing provision. Teachers are well qualified and possess a good range of skills and expertise that cover curriculum requirements very well. The use of part-time teachers with particular expertise in computers and art supplements this well. Teachers teach classes other than their own. The design and technology co-ordinator, for example, takes lessons with reception and Year 1 pupils. This makes good use of her subject expertise and contributes to rising standards. Teachers are very well supported by numerous, well-qualified and trained teaching assistants. Teachers and assistants form a talented, dedicated and settled team.
24. Accommodation is good. It is spacious with sufficient rooms to provide a very good well-stocked library, computer suite and art room. The music room is currently unavailable as it is being used as accommodation for a local infant school during its refurbishment. A number of other rooms are being brought into use for school and community purposes. The accommodation for nursery and Year 1 pupils is less good and reflects the building's former use as a grammar school. The school has three floors and many stairs and this restricts disabled access. Maintenance of such a large building is also a budgetary strain.
25. Resources are generally very good and well used. They are particularly good in information and communication technology, book provision, mathematics, physical education and art.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The school ensures pupils' care, welfare, health and safety very well. It provides pupils with very good support, advice and guidance and involves them exceptionally well in aspects of the school's work and development.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good induction arrangements ensure that children new to the school settle in very quickly.
- Pupils feel secure because there are very good arrangements to ensure health and safety and they have excellent, trusting relationships with adults in school.
- They achieve very well because their progress is monitored very well.
- Pupils have excellent opportunities to be involved in the school's development through the school council and class councils.

### **Commentary**

26. New children to the school are gradually and sensitively inducted. They have the chance to take part in several sessions with their prospective class before they start school. The school deals very well with pupils joining the school at times other than the start of the school year. For instance, these pupils are allocated a peer mentor in the class to help them settle in.
27. The school's designated officer for child protection is well trained and there are very good arrangements to inform staff about the school's policy and procedures. Accident and emergency procedures, including first aid, are very good. Risk assessment is undertaken as required for general health and safety matters and governors are very well involved. External agencies make a good contribution to raising awareness about health and safety. For example, the school nurse is very well involved in personal hygiene and sex education. The school takes

part in the Healthy Schools Initiative and also encourages pupils to have plenty of fruit and water as part of a healthy lifestyle.

28. There is a very caring ethos at this school, underpinned by excellent relationships at all levels. The great majority of pupils feel that they can turn to an adult if they have any worries and that teachers are fair. Staff work very well together to give advice and support to pupils in their academic and personal development, based on very good monitoring. The school works very effectively with specialist support agencies. For example, the behaviour support service, social services department, educational psychologist, statement review team and speech therapist are engaged to meet particular needs. Both the home/school liaison officer and family support/transition worker provide excellent support in school by helping to resolve barriers to learning. These support mechanisms illustrate the school's approach to ensure that all pupils are equally able to participate in lessons.
29. There are many opportunities for pupils to make their views known to staff and become involved in the school. The school takes many of their suggestions on board. For example, pupils are very heavily involved in the layout, design and development of features in the wildlife garden. Inspectors are especially impressed by the effectiveness of class and school councils and the contribution they make to personal development. The business like approach of the school council enables pupils to raise concerns, hold debates and make suggestions in a democratic environment. Consequently, pupils develop particularly well as young citizens.

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

The school has very good links with parents and excellent links with the community, including other schools and colleges.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school involves parents in the school very well by seeking, valuing and acting on their views.
- Parents are very well informed about the school and their children's standards and progress.
- The very good contribution parents make to their children's learning at school and at home makes a significant contribution to their achievement.
- Outstanding links with the community enrich the curriculum and contribute to pupils' learning and achievement especially well.
- Excellent links with other schools and colleges ensure that pupils transfer easily to the next stage of their education, and also help to enhance the curriculum.

### **Commentary**

30. The school has an 'open door' policy and welcomes parents as partners in the education of their children. The headteacher and staff are always happy to meet with parents to discuss any suggestions, concerns or complaints. Parents are formally consulted on particular matters. This has enabled them, for example, to influence and help to develop the school's aims and mission statement, the code of conduct and anti-bullying policy.
31. Parents are very well informed about the school through an information pack that includes the prospectus, home and school agreement, code of conduct, homework and computer usage policies. They are also very well informed about their children's progress through two consultation evenings, an open day and very comprehensive annual reports for their children.
32. The school makes excellent provision to enhance parental involvement in their children's learning in partnership with colleges and training providers. For example, courses held in school include computer skills, Coping with the Kids, Helping in Schools and Family Literacy/Numeracy. The school's inclusive approach extends to parental courses since it recognises that cultural reasons make it necessary to provide English for Asian women.

33. The parents and friends association works very hard in organising many social and fund-raising events. Money raised is used to improve learning resources. For example, the group has bought a new climbing frame for the nursery recently. Many parent helpers give their time generously to the school. For instance, they help in the wildlife garden, in classrooms and with school trips. Virtually all parents support their children with their homework. Parents of children with special educational needs are very well involved in their learning.
34. The school has established an excellent range and very high number of links in the community. This is because of the vision of leaders and excellent work of staff, especially the caretaker, home/school liaison and family support workers. Links with local churches and mosques make a significant contribution to the pupils' personal development and religious education. Many visitors lead activities and give talks for pupils. Local football and rugby clubs provide skills coaching. A paramedic, community policemen and dental nurse regularly give talks in the nursery as part of the 'people who help us' topic. The Mid-Pennine Arts group enhances literacy and poetry across the school by giving performances. Very close links with Ashenhurst Community Centre are maintained through the school's family support worker, who, for example, encourages parents to take advantage of courses on offer. The school puts much back into the community by fund-raising for charities and good causes. It is heavily involved in the Todmorden Carnival and celebrates Eid through a special assembly, food and activities.
35. This school is generating exceptional interest and involvement from the community through the wildlife garden development. For example, many community members, parents and disaffected youths are taking advantage of vocational and other training courses on offer. The caretaker is instrumental in developing the site and the hard work of the school and community is easy to see. Developments such as the outdoor classroom, orienteering, birdwatching and facilities for disabled users are advanced and will provide a wonderful school and community legacy.
36. Excellent educational links exist with Todmorden High School. Teachers from the high school often lead lessons in subjects such as French, ICT and art and design. Bridging projects also operate in literacy and numeracy. There are outstanding mechanisms in place for the transfer of pupils to secondary schools. For instance, information is particularly good and induction visits include Years 5 and 6.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are very good. Leadership is very good and management is very good. Governance is also very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is very well supported by the new deputy head and the senior managers.
- Subject leaders have developed their subjects very well since the previous inspection.
- Governors provide very good strategic support for the school, ensuring that continual improvement takes place. The management of the school is very good and ensures that the school operates efficiently and effectively.

### **Commentary**

37. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and management for the school and has been instrumental in achieving very good improvements since the previous inspection, in motivating staff and moving the school forward.

### **Example of outstanding practice**

**The headteacher has been inspirational in creating a very effective school since the previous inspection.**



Through her excellent leadership the headteacher has established a very effective school with a strong culture for raising standards and promoting the school within the wider community where the contributions of all staff, parents and pupils are valued. The headteacher's success is exemplified by the school gaining the Schools Achievement Award and the Healthy Schools Initiative in 2003. Furthermore, during the inspection the school was awarded with Investors in People status. The headteacher has worked extremely hard to promote inclusion for all by establishing a variety of excellent community initiatives for the benefit of pupils and their families, which include provision for under-threes, The Children's Fund used for transition and family support, and Out of Hours learning.

38. The headteacher has established a strong senior management team that provides very good support for raising standards and improving the school further. The recent appointment of a deputy headteacher, with expertise in the Foundation Stage, has provided a very good role model for staff, particularly in the early years of learning. The headteacher receives very good support from her senior managers who share the same vision for improvement.
39. Subject leaders provide very good leadership and management with strong support for the headteacher in improving provision. They have developed their subjects very well, ensuring very good planning, the establishment of very good assessment systems and high quality teaching and learning in their subjects. Provision for special educational needs and for pupils who are at an early stage of learning English is also very well led and managed and these pupils are fully included in learning. For example, support for these pupils is very well targeted to meet their needs, so that pupils have full and equal access to learning in all subjects.
40. School governance is very good. Governors have a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and provide very good strategic support for the school, particularly through their formalised links with subject co-ordinators. Governors also visit the school regularly to monitor aspects of its work and report back to the full governing body on their findings. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities effectively.
41. The school runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis and overall, management is very good. Arrangements for performance management are very good and have led to good improvements in teaching and learning. The headteacher's objectives are clearly linked to raising standards, with close links to teachers' objectives. Governors have ensured that objectives are clearly focused on the school's priorities for improvement and there are very good opportunities for staff development to ensure that objectives are achieved. School priorities for development are clearly set out in a well-structured school development plan and fully involve staff and governors in all stages of review and development. Consequently, the plan is a very useful tool for moving the school forward. Very good management has ensured that significant barriers to pupils' learning have been overcome with, for example, the appointment of a family support worker who closely liaises with families to support greater inclusion, improvements in pupils' behaviour, attendance and learning. The school is very effective in combating other barriers to learning such as the very high mobility of pupils and the increasing numbers of pupils with special educational needs who are referred to the school. It provides these pupils with intensive support through additional programmes and develops strong partnership links with parents and within the community, such as the 'family learning' initiatives. The school is also recognised by the LEA for its successful work with vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils. The headteacher and governors have also identified more intensive marketing of the school to combat falling rolls, which are mainly due to loss of employment opportunities in the area and competition with selective schools.

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

| Income and expenditure (£) |         |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Total income               | 588,796 |
| Total expenditure          | 681,262 |
| Expenditure per pupil      | 3,423   |

| Balances (£)                        |         |
|-------------------------------------|---------|
| Balance from previous year          | 133,276 |
| Balance carried forward to the next | 40,810  |

42. Financial management is very good. The budget is thoroughly scrutinised by governors to ensure that spending is clearly linked to the school's priorities for development. The relatively high carry forward budget has been earmarked for further developments of community initiatives. The school makes very good use of its strategic resources and information and communication technology to support school administration. Specific budgets allocated for pupils with special educational needs and those who are at an early stage of learning English are used very effectively to promote their learning. The budget is very well managed and monitored and any minor overspend from year to year is met from the school's basic budget. The school closely adheres to the principles of best value, achieving this very effectively, through wide consultation, challenge and seeking competitive quotations, which guarantee quality in purchasing decisions.

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

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

The provision for children in the Foundation Stage of learning is **good**.

43. Children achieve well in the nursery and reception classes. The majority of children enter the nursery with low levels of attainment overall. There is very good provision and support for the increasing number of children who speak English as an additional language. This enables them to learn and work alongside their classmates. The children quickly become secure and confident with each other and adults because of the very positive relationships. Children with special educational needs are included in all Foundation Stage activities. This increases their confidence and self-esteem very well. The patient, calm and sensitive teaching ensures that these children develop well in all areas of their learning. All members of the Foundation Stage staff take every opportunity to encourage parents and carers to take a full part in their children's development. This increases the sense of partnership between staff and parents.
44. The quality of teaching is consistently very good across the Foundation Stage. Its very good features include assessment and teamwork. This ensures that children make good progress in their learning. They respond very well to the interesting, varied and stimulating activities. All adults keep careful notes of individual achievement and use these to plan children's work. The teachers, nursery nurse and support assistants work very well together. This partnership ensures that each child is supported according to its identified needs. There are very good arrangements for children entering the nursery and reception classes. The arrangements for their transfer to Year 1 are smooth. These steps enable children to settle quickly into school routines.
45. The sensitive and supportive teaching and emphasis on personal, social and emotional development ensures that children quickly relate very well to each other and adults. High expectations of behaviour result in children developing very positive attitudes to learning and an eagerness to do well.
46. The nursery and reception class are physically separated and this limits the access adults and children have to the whole unit.

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

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

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

- Children achieve very well because of the consistently very good teaching that promotes independence and develops social skills effectively.
- Most children are on target to meet the requirements of the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1.
- Many children enter the nursery with low levels of social skills.

#### **Commentary**

47. All adults working in the Foundation Stage give children a very strong foundation for their future development in this area of learning. The timetabled sessions effectively increase children's self-awareness, listening skills and patience in taking turns to respond. All members of staff take great pains to ensure that children are able to join in all activities. This helps the children to gain confidence and self-esteem. Children tackle their work with much enthusiasm in the nursery and are keen to have a go at new experiences. For instance, they responded very well

to a visit from a policeman and concentrated hard during his visit. Children continue with these very positive attitudes in the reception class because of the encouragement that the whole team provides. The careful organisation of group work throughout the Foundation Stage ensures that children learn to work and co-operate with each other and adults. This makes a positive contribution to the harmonious relationships amongst all groups of children in the nursery and reception classes. Children in the nursery settle quickly to the expected routines and become confident and secure. The reception class builds on this very good start and ensures that all children feel valued. Improvement since the previous inspection is good and most children are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they leave the reception class.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All adults give children very good opportunities to develop their understanding and use of language.
- The consistently very good teaching ensures that all the children achieve well in increasing their communication skills.
- Many children have a limited range of vocabulary when they enter the nursery; this restricts their attainment.

### **Commentary**

48. The Foundation Stage team work very well together to encourage children to listen carefully. They share stories with children to interest them in books and help them understand that print has meaning. Children enjoy listening to stories, but many do not move naturally to look at books. Most children achieve well in developing their speaking skills, but many still have difficulty in speaking clearly in sentences. The very good level of support throughout the Foundation Stage helps children who speak English as an additional language to begin to understand simple English. This enables them to join in with their classmates. Close work with parents increases their understanding of their children's needs. The reception class includes some Year 1 pupils. Careful planning by the teacher ensures that the reception children have their Foundation Stage entitlement. The teacher and nursery nurse ensure that children in the nursery begin to make marks on paper and whiteboards. This increases their understanding that writing has meaning. The reception team builds effectively on these early experiences and the more able children are beginning to write simple sentences. This is a result of the careful teaching and children's high levels of interest and enthusiasm. However, many children are unlikely to achieve the expectations of the Early Learning Goals by the time they leave the reception classes. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. This is because the very good teaching ensures that children achieve well from a low base.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All adults ensure that children have many opportunities to explore number and shape.
- The very good assessment procedures build carefully on children's previous experiences.
- The consistently very good teaching makes children's work interesting and stimulates them to learn.
- The lack of understanding of mathematical language restricts attainment for some children.

## Commentary

49. All members of the Foundation Stage team provide a stimulating range of mathematical opportunities in the nursery and reception classes. These engage children's interest and help to increase their skills in recognising and using numbers. Many, however, have a limited understanding of what the numbers mean and have difficulty in writing them. The very effective support for children who speak English as an additional language increases their knowledge and understanding. The nursery and reception class teachers ensure that the support for children with special educational needs gives them opportunities to work alongside their classmates. All children join in counting sessions with increased confidence and self-esteem. The reception class team works hard to increase the children's ability to use suitable mathematical language. This ensures that, although standards are below those expected, children achieve well. For instance, the more able children understand the process of adding on and count accurately up to twenty. They support their learning by using computers. This increases their mathematical understanding as well as their computer skills. All children achieve well because adults use assessment very effectively to give them work that meets their identified needs. Improvement since the previous inspection is good because of the improved teaching, the very effective assessment and children's very positive attitudes.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- All staff take every opportunity to increase children's curiosity and awareness of the world around them.
- The consistently very high quality of teaching gives children the confidence to explore and ask questions.
- The lack of immediate access to an outdoor learning area for reception children restricts their chances to wonder at natural change.
- Many children have limited horizons and understanding of English; this limits their understanding of the wider world.

## Commentary

50. Throughout the Foundation Stage adults work hard to increase children's awareness of the world around them. For instance, nursery children visit the local garden centre and reception children visit Dobroyd Castle. These visits help them understand how plants grow and what a real castle looks like. They make a positive contribution to increasing the children's limited awareness of the world around them. All adults give very clear explanations of what they want the children to do and encourage them to ask questions and make suggestions. Work in the reception class promotes children's learning well as they manipulate and join materials to make moving drawbridges. It increases their ability to use tools such as scissors and to choose which joining materials to use. In both classes children make regular observations of the weather. This increases their awareness of change around them. Careful teaching ensures that all children develop a keen interest in computers. They have secure skills in using the mouse and keyboard effectively to control movement on the screen. For instance, by the time they enter the reception class children create pictures and know how to click and drag to change paint colours. All adults make good use of the different cultures and religions in the Foundation Stage to help children develop understanding and respect for each other. However, many children have limited understanding of English and few experiences of the world outside home and school. In spite of the improved teaching and provision since the previous inspection their standards are below those expected.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

51. It was not possible to make an overall judgement about standards or provision in the area of children's physical development. However, children in the reception year do not have immediate access to a secure outdoor learning area. This restricts opportunities for them to develop independence in their learning and ability to work effectively with large equipment. The very effective co-ordinator has plans to create a cohesive Foundation Stage in order to overcome this problem. All children throughout the Foundation Stage have plenty of chances to increase their skills in using tools such as pencils, scissors and brushes and in shaping and joining materials. Although children's skills are below those expected they make good progress in using tools and achieve well.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

52. It was not possible to see direct teaching of children's creative development during the course of the inspection and, therefore, there was not enough evidence to make a secure judgement on provision, teaching or standards. The work around the walls in the nursery and reception classes indicates that children develop their skills of using media and materials well. All children practise their singing skills in a range of nursery rhymes and jingles in lessons and have specific music sessions. Throughout the Foundation Stage children have many opportunities to develop their imagination effectively through role play indoors. For example, a visit to a local castle successfully promoted interest in developing an imaginative fairy tale role-play area. All staff promote children's creative skills well, but their standards are below those expected for most children by the end of their reception year.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching is underpinning rising standards and enabling pupils to achieve very well.
- Standards attained by pupils by the end of Year 2 are below average in speaking and listening and reading.
- The improvement in assessment procedures has enabled the subject leader to address weaknesses in the subject.
- The good subject leadership and improved resources have contributed to the rise in pupils' attainment.

#### Commentary

53. Pupils' attainment has risen steadily over the last three years. They enter the school with standards that are well below those nationally. Despite the very good teaching they receive, by the end of Year 2 they have not had time to overcome these limitations and standards are still below average, although achievement has been good. Standards in Year 6 are average when compared with all schools, but above average when compared with similar schools. Their achievement had been very good and reflects the very good quality of teaching throughout the school.
54. Pupils enter the school with a restricted vocabulary and only limited experience of expressing their thoughts and ideas orally. They make good progress because teachers focus well on enriching their vocabulary and plan for activities in lessons that will give pupils the opportunity to

develop their speaking and listening skills. In a Year 5 lesson in which pupils were to write their own version of a myth or legend, the teacher began the lesson by working with the class to compile a list of adjectives to describe appearance, movement and sound that they could later use in their work. In a lesson with pupils in Year 2, the teacher encouraged pupils to make up and share with the class sentences that included their five spellings for the week. Opportunities are not confined to literacy lessons, but planned across the curriculum and through class and school councils. Despite this, however, in a discussion with five pupils in Year 2 only two were able to express themselves articulately. By contrast, in a parallel discussion with pupils in Year 6, all expressed views easily, clearly and fluently illustrating the progress made during their time in the school.

55. Pupils come into school with little experience of books, newspapers or magazines. By contrast, there are many books around school and the library is extremely well stocked. Pupils in Year 2 are enthusiastic about reading, but they have limited skills to decode and understand text. The average and lower attainers gave poor recounts of the plots of the books they were reading, which was, in part, the result of poor understanding and memory and, in part, another example of their poor speaking skills. Most of the older pupils are confident in their ability to locate books and use the contents, index and glossary pages efficiently. By Year 6, most pupils can decode text in order to access the knowledge it contains and are reaching standards expected for their age. The higher attainers are reading several books a month and can talk fluently of the favourite authors explaining their appeal.
56. Writing is now the strongest aspect of the subject as a result of the input by the school. It is clear from the volume of work that teachers have high expectations and set appropriate but challenging tasks for all pupils. As a result, although attainment is below average at the end of Year 2, achievement is very good, and by the end of Year 6 attainment is at the expected level overall. By the end of Year 2, all pupils have experienced a good range of writing styles and higher and average attaining pupils are writing clearly in structured sentences. The spelling of lower attaining pupils is poor and their sentence structure is uncertain. The writing of these pupils still lacks fluency by the time they reach the end of Year 6 and their punctuation remains erratic. By contrast, the work of higher attaining pupils is fluent, imaginative and technically accurate.
57. The new arrangements for recording and tracking pupils' achievements are proving effective. Older pupils have targets set for them showing them how to improve their work. These are referred to by teachers when marking and are, therefore, seen as relevant and attainable by pupils. Consequently, they are helping to raise standards. Throughout the school, teachers mark work thoroughly adding affirming and encouraging comments.
58. The subject is well led and managed. The good planning is the result of the subject leader's analysis of the strengths and weaknesses seen in pupils' work and her monitoring of teaching through lesson observations. Resources have been much improved since the last inspection. The book stock in the library is now very good and is supplemented by 'book bags' and story tapes for younger pupils. Reading is well promoted through the school.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

59. The development of literacy skills in other subjects is good. Pupils are encouraged to explain their strategies in mathematics, to provide oral feedback on the work they have been doing in many subjects and to discuss their ideas in 'circle time'. Pupils are required to read extensively in most subjects from a variety of formats. They have good opportunities to practise the skills of information retrieval from non-fiction books and from web sites on the Internet. Pupils in Year 6, for example, were researching the characteristics of rivers during the inspection. They also have a wide experience of writing in a variety of styles, for example, when they write a recount of an experiment in science or analyse their work in design and technology. These opportunities consolidate the good progress pupils make in English lessons and enable them to achieve very well.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good levels of challenge for pupils of all abilities result in their very good achievement.
- Teaching support for pupils' with special educational needs (SEN) and those at an early stage of learning English is very good and leads to very good inclusion.
- An extended and rich range of activities deepens pupils' understanding of using and applying mathematics in everyday situations.
- Very good leadership and management have led to very good improvement since the previous inspection.

### Commentary

60. The 2003 national test results for Years 2 and 6 pupils show that standards were broadly in line with the national average. This represented very good achievement of pupils, since they first entered the school, when their attainment was well below average. A high proportion of pupils throughout the school, were identified as having special educational needs or were at an early stage of learning English. A similar picture in relation to standards and pupils' achievements was confirmed during this inspection. By Year 2 pupils develop good mental strategies for problem solving, using a variety of approaches for addition and subtraction. Pupils show a very good understanding of using money, for example, by giving the correct change for various items purchased up to the value of £5. They also develop their skills in telling time to quarter past and quarter to the hour. Higher attaining pupils double and halve numbers up to 100, and use their knowledge of tables for multiplication and division accurately. Lower attainers recognise numbers up to 100 and name common flat and solid shapes. By Year 6 pupils further develop their mathematical skills, converting fractions into decimals and percentages, and calculating the mean average, mode and median from a range of given numbers accurately. Higher attainers make good use of spreadsheets and databases accurately to calculate and record results using formulae. Lower attainers sequence large numbers accurately and make good use of their knowledge of tables for multiplication and division. Pupils of all abilities achieve equally very well, including higher attainers, those who are at an early stage of learning English and those with special educational needs. There are no significant differences between in the performance of boys and girls. Very good teaching with high expectations for learning and very good levels of challenge, is a major factor in pupils' very good achievement. High expectations for learning were seen in all lessons and in pupils' work. For example, in Year 6 pupils were encouraged to work harder and show their working so that it could be corrected and, consequently, they did. In a Year 3 lesson, very skilful and well-prepared questions enabled pupils to identify patterns when multiplying given numbers by ten.
61. Support for pupils with special educational needs and those who are at an early stage of learning English is very well focused with an emphasis on developing mathematical language and mathematical ideas. Mathematical words are identified and their meaning is rehearsed with pupils using a variety of practical resources such as pictures, counters and number lines. Support staff ensure that their pupils are fully included in learning by modelling solutions to mathematical problems before challenging pupils to solve similar problems for themselves. Support staff also provide encouragement and very good feedback on an individual pupil's performance so that pupils have a clear idea how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. As a result, all pupils have full access to learning and achieve equally as well as other pupils. Literacy and ICT are very well promoted to support teaching and learning in the subject. For example, the interactive whiteboard is used widely in lessons to support learning.



62. A very good feature of mathematics provision is the extended and rich range of activities provided for pupils to deepen their understanding and skills in using mathematics in everyday situations. For example, pupils use their knowledge of ratio and proportion to make pictures of sailing boats and space ships and they make use of compass bearings to determine their location at fixed points in orienteering. Mathematics workshops are provided for all pupils throughout the school. For example, older pupils use methods for counting the number of trees in the wild garden and use a large protractor and rope to work out compound areas in the playing field. Younger pupils develop their counting skills with the use of 'Brain Gym'. During the inspection, children in the nursery related their 'see-saw' song to balancing using scales and different numbers of big bears and little bears to balance a range of objects in the classroom. As a result, pupils see mathematics as fun and behave very well in lessons.
63. There has been very good improvement in mathematics since the last inspection as a result of very good leadership and management of the subject. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented very effectively with good improvements in teaching. There have been several training days in numeracy to develop teaching skills further and the development of a very good range of resources, particularly information and communication technology, which are used very effectively in lessons. Very good assessment systems have been introduced, which include target setting, class assessment records and baseline assessment. The subject leader also monitors teaching and learning effectively providing feedback to teachers on areas that could be improved.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

64. There are very good opportunities to promote mathematics within other subjects. For example, in art and design pupils use ratio and proportion for colour mixing to produce attractive displays; in geography pupils use coordinates to locate features on maps and in science pupils use standard measures during investigations to record their results in graphs.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **very good**.

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

- The current focus on scientific enquiry and investigation is having a positive effect on standards and achievement.
- Pupils achieve very well because of the consistency of teaching and very good leadership and management.
- The school's clear focus on the use of specific technical language is increasing pupils' understanding and use of English.
- The curriculum is rich and very stimulating.
- There is very good use of information and communication technology to support learning in science.
- The systematic and thorough assessment systems meet individual needs very well.
- Standards in written work are depressed by the pupils' weak understanding of scientific vocabulary.

#### **Commentary**

65. There has been a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work, teaching in the junior part of the school is very good and the focus on scientific enquiry is having a positive effect on achievement. The very good leadership and management ensure that guidance for teachers is clear, pupils build on their earlier learning and marking is used effectively to improve pupils' work. The systems for assessment of progress and achievement are very thorough and the co-ordinator monitors teaching,

learning and standards regularly. The school makes very effective use of its stimulating and exciting grounds and the local area to give pupils a varied and interesting curriculum.

66. It was not possible to see any teaching in the infant part of the school. An analysis of work in pupils' books and around the school shows that by Year 2 pupils' standards are, overall, below those expected nationally. They achieve well in the investigation element of science and their work shows a considerable improvement from the previous year. Many pupils enter the school with limited vocabulary. This restricts their written work.
67. By Year 6 standards are close to those expected nationally. There are not, however, enough pupils achieving the higher levels. This is because of their limited understanding of technical language. The school works very hard to increase pupils' knowledge, understanding and use of scientific vocabulary. This is beginning to have a positive effect on achievement across the junior part of the school.
68. The very effective subject leader ensures that all teachers place much emphasis on the investigation element of science. This makes a very significant contribution to pupils' achievement, interest and motivation. Throughout the school teachers ensure that pupils produce carefully labelled drawings and accurate diagrams. Their ability to write concise and clear summaries of their findings is restricted by their understanding of scientific vocabulary. The tasks for pupils with special educational needs are planned to support their individual needs. This, and the sensitive support from adults, ensures that they achieve very well in science. Support for pupils who speak English as an additional language is very good. All adults take great care to ensure that these pupils understand what they are doing. This, along with help from classmates, enables them to achieve as well as the indigenous pupils.
69. The coverage of the science of living things is thorough and teachers make very effective use of computers to support pupils' learning. For example, pupils in Year 2 use computers confidently and accurately to record their findings about food. The school has a very well structured programme of health education that forms part of pupils' work on living things. This ensures that by Year 6 pupils have a very clear moral understanding of relationships. Their work shows a good level of understanding of issues such as alcohol abuse and drug misuse.
70. By Year 6 pupils have secure knowledge of the properties of solids, liquids and gases and are eager to share their learning. Skilful questioning enables them to recall and use the correct technical formula for gases such as oxygen and carbon dioxide. In a Year 6 lesson pupils investigated properties enthusiastically. They identified the result when bicarbonate of soda and vinegar were mixed as a 'chemical reaction'. Further skilful questioning led to pupils increasing their understanding of why the reaction happened and that the change was irreversible.
71. Teachers make work in science interesting and exciting for all pupils. This makes sure that girls are as enthusiastic as boys and achieve equally well. The subject leader is very clear about what needs to be done to raise standards further. He has put a range of effective strategies in place already. These include an emphasis on the use of investigation and correct scientific language from Year 1 and are making a positive contribution to pupils' achievement. All teachers use assessment and marking very effectively to improve pupils' work. They ensure that all work builds carefully on pupils' previous learning and give pupils targets to attain. This increases pupils' awareness of their own learning and achievements.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology is **very good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The criticisms made at the time of the last inspection have been addressed and standards have risen as a result.
- The provision of laptop computers for all class teachers has improved staff knowledge and confidence so the quality of teaching is now at least good.
- The acquisition of good software has enabled ICT to be used across the curriculum.
- Very good subject management and good resources have contributed to the improvement in pupils' learning.

## **Commentary**

72. By the end of Year 6, standards are above the levels expected at this age, which is an improvement since the last inspection. They remain at the expected level at the end of Year 2, but as less than a quarter of pupils come from homes with a computer, attainment when they start school is well below that usually found. Progress, therefore, is very good throughout the school and this is due to the quality of teaching pupils receive and the improvement to the school's resources. All aspects of the subject are well covered including control technology and the use of sensing equipment and digital cameras.
73. The provision of laptops for class teachers has been very successful in raising their proficiency and subsequently their use of computers in teaching. The quality of teaching is now very good, as was shown in the work pupils had produced and the lessons seen during the inspection. In a very good lesson with pupils in Year 3, the pace was brisk, expectations high and questioning effective in developing pupils' understanding, whilst the dual teaching role of class teacher and subject leader was most effective in ensuring that all pupils achieved very well during the lesson. Pupils are well motivated, settle quickly to given tasks and work co-operatively with each other. Those with special learning needs are supported well allowing them to make very good progress also.
74. There are two or three computers, linked to the school's network, in each classroom and interactive whiteboards in three of them. These and the enhanced range of software now owned by the school have encouraged staff to use information and communication technology across the curriculum. In a very good Year 6 mathematics lesson, the difficult concept of mean, median and mode was made more accessible for pupils through a game projected on the interactive whiteboard. In a good geography lesson the same pupils used computers to access the Internet and retrieve information about river systems.
75. The very knowledgeable subject leader supports other staff well. He gains a clear overview of the subject by working alongside some teachers and seeing the planning of others. He has led training sessions for both teachers and parents and established a very good system for monitoring and recording pupils' progress.

## **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

76. Information and communication technology is used well to support other areas of the curriculum and is a very strong feature of provision in the school. Each class has a digital camera with which to record artefacts made in design and technology and work done away from school on visits. Word-processing skills are used well in English and all classes use data handling skills to record mathematical information such as pictograms, pie charts and block graphs in both numeracy and science.

## **HUMANITIES**

*Geography and religious education are reported in full below. History was sampled.*

## History

77. Although discussions were held with the subject manager and pupils' work was seen, judgements on teaching, learning and pupils' achievements cannot be made as no lessons were seen. By Year 2 pupils have a good understanding of past and present times using pictures and artefacts, for example, when they compare modern hospitals with those in the time of Florence Nightingale. By Year 6, pupils deepen their knowledge of history through their study of the Tudors and Victorians. They compare life in those times with modern day life through, for example, topics on rich and poor families, and crime and punishment. There has been good improvement in history since the previous inspection. The policy has been rewritten and planning is now based on national guidelines. There are good opportunities to extend pupils' learning through focused visits in the local area, and resources such as information and communication technology, videos, artefacts and topic boxes are well used to promote achievement. Pupils' work is assessed at the end of each unit and this also represents good improvement since the last inspection. The subject is well led and managed.

## Geography

Provision for geography is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because teaching is good.
- Rich and varied lesson activities promote pupils' learning and achievement well.
- Good improvements since the previous inspection are as a result of good leadership and management.

## Commentary

78. Pupils' attainments in geography throughout the school are broadly as expected for their age, and their achievements are good because of good teaching. Pupils in Year 2 identify the physical and human features of the island of St Lucia, locating it accurately on a globe. They also compare the similarities and differences between Todmorden and the seaside. By Year 6, pupils produce interesting holiday booklets containing information on weather, rainfall and tourism and they compare climates in different parts of the world. They have a good understanding of physical geography, for example, in using aerial photographs to locate the tributaries of the River Amazon and key physical features such as waterfalls and the Amazon delta. Pupils also develop their map skills well, using Ordnance Survey maps to locate key physical features in the environment. Teachers have high expectations for learning and they know their subject well. As a result, pupils learn new skills and knowledge quickly in lessons and achieve well.
79. Lessons are always interesting and varied so pupils are well motivated to learn, remain focused on their tasks and enjoy their activities. For example, in a Year 2 lesson pupils used atlases, globes, travel brochures, postcards, photographs and the Internet to find out information about St Lucia. This followed on from a video production about St Lucia. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils used computers to research and present information about river systems, which not only furthered their geographical knowledge, but also improved their ICT skills well.
80. Good leadership and management have led to good improvements since the previous inspection with a written policy and improved planning and more resources for learning including information and communication technology. Assessment has also improved with the systematic monitoring and recording of pupil progress. The subject manager monitors teaching and learning, by analysing pupils' work and discussing this with teachers. This has led to improvements in practical work and visual displays and greater use of information and communication technology.

## Religious education

Provision for religious education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils across the school achieve well because of the well-informed teaching.
- The wide range of visits and visitors deepens pupils' knowledge and understanding of major world religions.
- Assessment and marking are used effectively to help pupils improve their work.
- The new locally agreed syllabus has not had time to have a positive effect on standards.
- Good quality leadership and management have ensured improvement to the range of resources.

### Commentary

81. Standards meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for pupils by the ages of seven and eleven. This does not reflect the findings of the previous inspection because the very new syllabus has not yet had time to be fully embedded. Pupils' achievement throughout the school is, however, good. This is because of the consistently good quality teaching. All teachers have a clear understanding of the subject and are confident in teaching religious education.
82. Pupils in the infant part of the school achieve well in learning about Christianity and Islam. For example, pupils in Year 2 talked with enthusiasm about their recent visit to the local mosque. They have a clear knowledge of artefacts that are special to Muslims and know that the Qu'ran is a holy book. Careful questioning helped pupils understand the importance of the Bible to Christians and that Muslims and Christians believe in one God.
83. Teachers build effectively on pupils' earlier experiences as they move through the school. This was evident in a Year 5 lesson where the local imam spoke to the pupils. He helped them realise the similarities between Islam and Christianity and that all faiths have rules by which they live. All pupils were very interested and showed a high level of enthusiasm and motivation to learn about different beliefs. They asked sensible and mature questions and clearly appreciated the opportunity to explore religion through first-hand experience.
84. The school uses assemblies effectively to develop pupils' awareness of different beliefs and give opportunities for personal reflection. For instance, a local Baptist minister led one assembly and asked pupils to think about the meaning of friendship. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
85. All teachers keep good records of pupils' achievement and progress across the school. This gives a clear picture of standards and enables teachers to plan work that meets individual needs. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
86. The good quality and enthusiastic leadership is ensuring effective implementation of the new locally agreed syllabus. This has only been in place since September and its effectiveness is to be reviewed at the end of the academic year. The subject leader has already improved the range and quality of resources. These support the new scheme of work effectively and are an improvement since the previous inspection.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

*Art and design, design and technology and music were sampled. Physical education was inspected in full.*

87. **Art and design** has a high profile within the school and is being introduced into all subjects including mathematics. All aspects of the subject are covered well and pupils' enthusiasm is shown by the waiting lists for the various art and craft clubs. Standards throughout the school meet national expectations and are improving. The quality of drawing is particularly good. Pupils, including those with special learning needs, achieve well throughout the school in relation to their attainment on entry. As a result of her monitoring of the subject, the very knowledgeable subject leader has a good overview of its strengths and weaknesses and a clear vision for its development. A teacher from a local high school with specialist art status is currently teaching pupils in Year 6. These lessons are raising pupils' standards and providing training for the class teacher. Resources, which include a specialist art room, are very good.
88. Pupils enter the school with very little experience of using such tools as scissors or of baking at home. Consequently, their average attainment in **design and technology** at the end of Year 6 represents very good progress and an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils with special learning needs are well supported in lessons and this allows them to participate fully and make similar progress to the rest of the class. The knowledgeable subject leader has ensured that all aspects of the subject are well covered and is working towards an innovative link with control technology to motorise some of the moving constructions that pupils make. There are already good links with other subjects. Pupils in Year 6 make a Greek temple when studying the Ancient Greeks in history and those in Year 2 make moving vehicles when studying forces in science. Resources are now good, which has addressed a criticism from the last inspection. The popular club for pupils in Years 5 and 6 is attracting more girls each year.
89. No **music** lessons were seen during the course of the inspection. Discussions were held with pupils and the subject leader and singing in assemblies was observed. From this evidence it is clear that pupils' singing ability is well developed. Both infant and junior pupils sing sweetly and melodically and pay attention to diction, posture and breathing. This produces a good quality well-rounded sound. The school choir wins acclaim when it performs in a range of music festivals. This increases pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Pupils develop a sense of belonging to a wider community when they take their music into Todmorden to support charities such as Help the Aged. The school makes full use of specialist instrumental tuition for pupils who have specific musical skills. Music is well led and managed and the new co-ordinator has already developed plans to improve teachers' confidence and expertise. Pupils' achievements are carefully recorded and work is adapted to meet their needs. Resources, books and instruments are plentiful and of good quality. This makes a positive contribution to pupils' skills and is an improvement since the previous inspection. The school has a designated music room. This was not able to be used during the inspection because it was temporarily occupied by pupils from another school.

## Physical education

Provision for physical education is **very good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching leads to very good learning and high achievement.
- A wide range of extended learning opportunities promotes high achievement.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and their behaviour is very good.
- Very good leadership and management have ensured very good improvements since the last inspection.

## Commentary

90. Standards across the school are broadly at the levels expected for the pupils' age, and pupils' achievements are very good because teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have high

expectations for learning, they make good use of well-chosen resources and lessons are always brisk and lively. As a result, pupils are always focused and work hard in lessons, constantly trying to improve their performance. By Year 2, pupils are quick and agile on apparatus, balancing, climbing and landing safely. They throw, bounce, roll and catch a ball with confidence, and in dance they move imaginatively to music. By Year 6, pupils create and perform gymnastics sequences with due regard to safety, combining different levels of speed and direction. Pupils try hard in games, such as netball, football and cricket showing their competitive nature. Pupils also receive graded awards in swimming.

91. A number of outside agencies and specialists are involved in the physical education curriculum. These include Burnley Town FC, Halifax Town FC, Todmorden Cricket Club, Todmorden Tennis Club and Swimming. As a result, the number of trophies the school has gained in recent years has increased and pupils frequently achieve positions as runners-up in regional qualifying events such as football, rugby and cricket. The school football team regularly takes part in competitions with other local schools and has won more games than it has lost. Extended learning activities also include Asian dance sessions provided by the Kirklees Asian Dance Group. Pupils participating in Asian dance were invited to perform at the 'East meets West' celebration evening, which makes a very good contribution to pupils' cultural development. Very good use is made of the school grounds for such activities as orienteering, and pupils in Year 6 acquire a range of new skills in outdoor and adventurous activities during their residential school trip.
92. Pupils thoroughly enjoy physical education and behave very well in lessons. Pupils also enjoy playing sport and games during break times and lunchtimes using balls and a variety of small apparatus from well-resourced playground boxes. The uptake on out-of-school-hours clubs is very high and pupils participate in a variety of sports, such as rounders, fit-skips, girls' games and judo in their own time. Pupils show a mature outlook and growing confidence as they move through the school in abiding by the rules of fair play and paying due regard to health and safety.
93. Very good leadership and management have resulted in very good improvement since the previous inspection. A new policy and scheme of work ensure that pupils' skills are developed progressively as they move through the school. All staff now have regular training and this has led to greater confidence and improved teaching in all aspects of the subject. The subject leader ensures that health and fitness is well promoted throughout the school with good involvement of the community for activities such as archery, yoga and judo.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

94. Provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) permeates through all aspects of the school's life. Pupils' representatives are elected from each year group to serve on the school council and regular class council meetings are held. Together, these promote pupils' sense of responsibility in decision making for the benefit of the school community. For example, in the one class council meeting seen, pupils discussed their ideas to extend snacks at break times, listening carefully to different opinions and making suggestions for those who would act as monitors. Pupils' sense of citizenship is also promoted very well in assemblies and in religious education lessons where they learn to care for others and respect different cultures and beliefs. Adults throughout the school provide very good role models for pupils and, as a result, pupils develop a mature outlook to learning, caring attitudes and very good relationships. Through charitable fund-raising events, pupils also learn to consider those less fortunate than themselves.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

| <i>Inspection judgement</i>  | <i>Grade</i> |
|--|--------------|
| <b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>                       | <b>2</b>     |
| How inclusive the school is  | 2            |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 2            |
| Value for money provided by the school                               | 3            |
| <b>Overall standards achieved</b>                                    | <b>2</b>     |
| Pupils' achievement  | 2            |
| <b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>        | <b>2</b>     |
| Attendance   | 4            |
| Attitudes  | 2            |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions                        | 3            |
| Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development            | 2            |
| <b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>               | <b>2</b>     |
| The quality of teaching  | 2            |
| How well pupils learn  | 2            |
| The quality of assessment  | 2            |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils needs                           | 2            |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities     | 2            |
| Accommodation and resources  | 3            |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety                             | 2            |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils                              | 2            |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views                  | 1            |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents                 | 2            |
| The quality of the school's links with the community                 | 1            |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges                   | 1            |
| <b>The leadership and management of the school</b>                   | <b>2</b>     |
| The governance of the school   | 2            |
| The leadership of the headteacher                                    | 1            |
| 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).*



