

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **ACRES HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Sheffield

LEA area: Sheffield

Unique reference number: 107063

Headteacher: Mrs C Turner

Lead inspector: Mr K Bardon

Dates of inspection: 28<sup>th</sup> February to 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2005

Inspection number: 266276

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
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	254
School address:	Mather Road Sheffield South Yorkshire
Postcode:	S9 4GQ
Telephone number:	0114 244 1512
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs P Gadsden
Date of previous inspection:	15 <sup>th</sup> January 2003

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Acres Hill is an average sized primary school, serving two estates of mainly semi-detached owner-occupied houses, about three miles from the centre of Sheffield. Almost all pupils live close to the school. Although the social and economic profile of the local area is generally below the national average the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average because the majority of parents are in work. A very small number of pupils are in public care. There are similar numbers of boys and girls. Forty-five pupils and two nursery children have special educational needs, mainly for learning or behaviour difficulties, which is average for a school of this size. Three pupils have a statement of special educational needs which is a little below average. Just over one in six full-time pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, predominantly Pakistani, and one in ten is at early stage in learning English. Children's attainment when they first enter the nursery is very low, particularly with regard to their communication skills, and is tending to fall year on year. The school is part of the South East Sheffield Education Action Zone and is involved in a number of local and national initiatives, including the Primary Leadership Programme. In 2004 the school was awarded the Activemark for the work it does in physical education.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11807	Keith Bardon	Lead inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, physical education, special educational needs
8922	Brenda McIntosh	Lay inspector	
19041	Roger Linstead	Team inspector	English, art and design, design and technology, music, English as an additional language
8839	Michael Egerton	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, science, geography, history, religious education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Acres Hill is a steadily improving school** which makes satisfactory provision for pupils' education. The school has a pleasant atmosphere and a positive ethos which encourages pupils to try hard. Many children start school with poorly developed personal, social and communication skills and do not attend regularly enough when they are young. Consequently, despite their satisfactory achievement, a significant proportion of pupils have difficulty reaching national standards for their age. Teaching, learning, leadership and management are sound overall and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- The school promotes good attitudes to learning and gives pupils a sense of pride in their own achievements.
- Despite the improvements made, standards in English, mathematics and science remain below the national average and basic skills of writing and mental arithmetic are weak.
- Although there are examples of very good teaching, the quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent between classes.
- Pupils behave well and make good progress in their personal development.
- The school makes full use of its involvement in the Education Action Zone to enrich pupils' learning but lacks a strategic plan to guide its further improvement.
- Attendance is good in Years 3 to 6 but too low in the reception class and in Years 1 and 2.

Since it was last inspected in 2003 the school has made satisfactory progress and pupils' under-achievement is steadily being eliminated. Staff and governors are working together with a shared sense of purpose, something that has been missing in the past. Pupils' interest and enthusiasm for learning have increased significantly and they apply themselves better to the work teachers set. There has been an increase in the proportion of lessons that are taught well but inconsistencies in the quality of teaching have yet to be eliminated fully. Parental involvement in pupils' education has increased although there is more to do in this area, particularly with regard to levels of attendance.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

**Pupils' achievement is satisfactory.** Although children make clear progress in the Foundation Stage, many start nursery with poor basic skills and by the end of reception are still some way short of the learning targets for their age. The achievement of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory but they have a lot of ground to make up and by Year 2 standards are generally well below average.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	E	D	E	E
Mathematics	E	E	E	E*
Science	E	D	E	E

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average;*

*E - well below average; E\* represents the bottom five per cent nationally*

*Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

A number of factors adversely affected Year 6 pupils' performance in the national tests in 2004, primarily the residual effects of the school's past weaknesses, frequent changes of class teacher and a higher than average proportion of the pupils with special educational needs. The school has made many changes and pupils are beginning to achieve more. Standards in Year 6 are currently below rather than well below average and pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory. Pupils' achievement is at its best when the work involves a practical task, such as investigating in science or constructing in design and technology, but attainment in other areas, such as reading and information and communication technology is also rising. However, a lack of basic writing skills

hinders pupils' progress in many subjects. Too few pupils know their multiplication tables and many have difficulty working mentally. This slows their progress in mathematics.

**Pupils' personal qualities are good.** They are friendly and sensible individuals who take pleasure in their own successes and those of others. Pupils of all ages and cultural backgrounds behave and get on well both in and outside of lessons. **Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good and their moral and social development is very good.** Attendance is good in the older classes but poor in reception and in Years 1 and 2. This adversely affects the achievement of younger pupils.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides its pupils with a satisfactory quality of education. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall** but ranges in lessons between very good and unsatisfactory. Much of the teaching in Years 3 and 4 is good or very good. The best lessons offer a high level of challenge and encourage pupils to think and work hard. Where the teaching is less effective teachers' expectations of the quality and quantity of the work pupils will produce are too low and lessons lack pace. Most pupils concentrate well and readily answer the questions put to them. Teachers give pupils frequent opportunities to discuss their thoughts and ideas but many find explaining their thinking a difficult skill to acquire. The curriculum provides satisfactory coverage of all the required elements. The range of additional activities, visits and visitors is good. The school's partnership with parents is also good. Very effective links have been forged with the community and with other schools which make a very positive contribution to pupils' education. The school provides its pupils with very good care and welfare and monitors their development closely.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory.** The headteacher has been instrumental in improving the school and in laying a foundation from which the school can move forward. This has been achieved despite frequent changes of staff that has made planning for development difficult and, at present, the school lacks an essential long-term plan for improvement. Leadership by other key staff is sound although a lack of opportunity to observe teaching in lessons reduces the influence they can have on classroom practice. The school is managed satisfactorily and runs smoothly day to day. Governance is satisfactory and statutory requirements are met. Governors support the school conscientiously and take a keen interest in its work. Financial management is sound. Senior staff and governors monitor spending carefully to ensure that the school obtains value for the money it spends.

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

Parents hold positive views of the school and are generally pleased with the standard of education their children receive. They support the direction in which the school is moving and appreciate the efforts of staff and governors to bring about improvements. Pupils enjoy coming to school and welcome the changes that have made their lessons more interesting. They find staff easy to talk to and are confident that help is readily available should they have any problems.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do now are:

- Construct and rigorously implement a strategic plan for improvement to raise the standards achieved, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Increase the quality of lessons by ensuring that all pupils benefit from consistently high quality teaching and learning.
- Continue to work with the parents of reception children and Year 1 and 2 pupils to raise levels of attendance.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in the nursery and reception classes and in Years 1 to 6. In the reception class and Year 2 standards are well below the national average. In Year 6 standards are below the national average.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although children make satisfactory progress in the nursery and reception classes, many have not reached the targets for their age by the time they move into Year 1.
- The under-achievement that has dogged pupils' progress in the past is steadily being eliminated but pupils' writing and mental arithmetic remain weak.
- Standards in ICT are rising and by Year 6 are approaching national expectations.

#### Commentary

1. Although some inconsistencies in provision remain to upset the rhythm of pupils' progress, satisfactory improvement has been made in eliminating the under-achievement reported at past inspections. The school has worked hard to motivate pupils to learn and this is beginning to have the desired effect. Because they are trying harder and applying themselves better, pupils are learning more.
2. When they first enter the school, many children lack the basic skills they need to learn effectively. During their time in the nursery and reception class children achieve satisfactorily in all areas of learning but they have a considerable amount of ground to make up. Consequently, many children are unlikely to attain the early learning goals (the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception) and standards as pupils begin Year 1 are well below average.
3. In the 2004 national tests the results attained by Year 2 pupils were well below the national average and not as good as those attained by pupils in schools similar to Acres Hill. These results were anticipated because 40 per cent of the pupils in the cohort had special educational needs, mostly for learning difficulties. In the last five years the trend in school results has been similar to the national trend.

#### ***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004***

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.8 (15.6)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	12.9 (13.0)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	14.4 (15.4)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 33 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

4. Although pupils' achievements are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, standards in the current Year 2 class in English, mathematics and science are well below the national average. As with last year, the cohort contains a large proportion of pupils who, despite making steady progress, work at a level that is below expectations for their age in all aspects of English and mathematics. The composition of different cohorts of pupils varies considerably. Year 1 contains a much more equal balance of higher, average and lower attaining pupils and standards in this class are stronger. However, there is a downward trend in children's



attainment on entry, particularly with regard to their communication and language skills and this is likely to be reflected in future test results. Traditionally Year 2 girls have performed better in the reading and writing tests than boys. The school has put in place initiatives to narrow the gender gap, which appear to be working. While there is still some indication that girls learn better than boys in these two aspects of English, the gap is not as wide as test results would indicate. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls in mathematics.

#### ***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004***

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.4 (25.5)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	24.0 (25.3)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	26.1 (28.1)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

5. As with the younger age group, a significant proportion of the Year 6 pupils who took the national tests in 2004 had special educational needs and results were well below the national average and those of similar schools. In addition to the learning difficulties many of the pupils in this group experienced, their progress had also had been disrupted by frequent changes of class teacher as they came through the school. Over the past few years test results have varied, rising for one or two years and then falling back, and the school missed its targets for Year 6 pupils' performance by a considerable margin in the 2004. Taking the last five years as a whole the trend in the school's Year 6 results has been below the national trend. Although results over time point towards girls attaining better than boys in English and boys better than girls in mathematics and science, no significant patterns of difference are evident from the work boys and girls do in lessons.
6. Pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall. Standards in the current Year 6 class are an improvement on last year but below the national average in English, mathematics and science because relatively few pupils consistently attain at an above average level in these subjects. There are, however, some promising signs of improvement, particularly in the confident way pupils tackle practical tasks in subjects such as science and design and technology. Many pupils still find writing difficult and few have developed a fluent style of handwriting. A lack of mental skills and an inability to recall number facts adversely affects pupils work in mathematics. The school has recognised that Year 6 pupils are likely to do better in the national tests in 2005 and set very challenging targets for their performance.

#### ***Other aspects of standards and achievement***

7. Although, by Year 6, standards in ICT are a little below those expected, pupils' achievement across the school as a whole is satisfactory. Pupils gain a range of knowledge and skills and a solid understanding of how ICT can help them to learn in other subjects. The attainment of most infant and junior pupils in religious education is a little below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and their achievement is satisfactory.
8. Standards in design and technology meet national expectations in both Year 2 and Year 6 and, throughout the school, pupils' achievements are satisfactory. It is not possible from the small number of lessons seen in art and design, history, geography, music and physical education to make secure judgements of how well pupils achieve in these subjects.
9. Due attention is paid to pupils with special educational needs and they make satisfactory progress in line with other pupils. Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those with English as an additional language receive appropriate opportunities to learn and maintain a satisfactory rate of progress. The school makes adequate provision for the very small number of pupils who are particularly high attaining and they also achieve satisfactorily.

## **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)**

Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to school are good. These aspects of the pupils' development have improved significantly since the last inspection. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is also good. Attendance is unsatisfactory overall but punctuality is satisfactory.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good relationships help create a happy learning environment.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils' conduct throughout the school day; the school deals very effectively with all forms of harassment.
- Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good and helps them become mature and responsible individuals.
- Pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness is developed well.
- Levels of attendance have shown marked improvement in Years 3 to 6 but are too low in the reception class and in Years 1 and 2.

## **Commentary**

10. Pupils clearly like coming to school and are very keen to learn and take part in all the activities provided for them. They have a new-found enthusiasm for learning and now find lessons much more interesting and fun. Older pupils have experienced many changes of teachers in the past, often in a short space of time. The current stability in staffing has improved pupils' confidence greatly. Pupils are very well motivated by their individual targets. They respond positively to the challenges set for them and concentrate well on their tasks. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic about practical work and carry out their investigations sensibly.
11. Pupils with special educational needs, those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those learning English as an additional language have equally positive attitudes to learning and take a full and active part in lessons and in all the experiences that the school offers. Foundation Stage staff nurture pupils' personal and social development well, enabling them to form trusting relationships and to learn to co-operate, share and take turns.
12. The school gives a high priority to pupils' personal development. Since the last inspection the school has worked hard on introducing new systems to improve pupils' behaviour. The teachers set high expectations and successfully promote confidence and good standards of behaviour through praise and encouragement. Pupils have a very clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. The 'Golden Time' reward has had a positive effect on improving pupils' behaviour and motivating them to do well. It promotes self-discipline and helps pupils make choices about their own behaviour.
13. The school benefits from being part of the Education Action Zone by receiving generous funds to support the reward systems for encouraging good behaviour and attendance. Bullying is not perceived to be a problem by pupils or parents but they feel that if any form of harassment does occur, it is taken most seriously and dealt with very effectively by staff. The playground friends are on hand to help pupils in the playground and the peer mediators are well trained to sort out minor conflicts that sometimes arise during the school day. One pupil was excluded for two fixed periods last year.

**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	169	2	0
Mixed-White and Black Caribbean	5	0	0
Mixed-White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed-any other background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British-Pakistani	22	0	0
Asian or Asian British-Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Black or Black British-African	1	0	0

14. The school's positive ethos gives pupils a sense of purpose and pride in their achievements. Pupils get on very well together and collaborate effectively in play and work. They are polite and welcoming to visitors. The atmosphere around the school at lunchtime is very pleasant and sociable. The school involves pupils in various initiatives which boost their self-esteem and confidence. As pupils move through the school, they are given increasing opportunities to take more responsibility for the running of the school and contributing to its development. They understand and fulfil their responsibilities of living in a community well. They take on a wide range of roles and tasks such as becoming school councillors and class monitors.
15. Spiritual development is an integral part of the curriculum and assemblies and is well planned around themes that are relevant to pupils. Class discussions give good opportunities for pupils to listen to varied opinions that may not match their own and they show respect for the differing views and feelings of others. It is very apparent that pupils are in an environment where they feel able to share their thoughts and feelings.
16. Pupils have a good understanding of their own cultural traditions and the diversity and richness of other cultures. They are taught to appreciate and respect others' beliefs, ideas and culture and they show a good level of fairness and tolerance. Racism is not tolerated and pupils of different ethnic heritages mix freely and easily at all times. The school raises awareness of the richness of cultures that make up British society well.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 93.7% (2003/04)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.6	School data	0.7
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

17. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are well motivated by the range of class and individual rewards and their attendance is good. In the reception class and Years 1 and 2 the overall attendance for 2003-04 was poor and remains so during the current year. The poor attendance of these pupils interrupts their learning and affects their attainment and progress. Any unexplained absences are followed up rigorously with good liaison between the On Track Worker and the Inclusion Service. Punctuality is satisfactory overall but there are still a few persistent latecomers each day.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides its pupils with a satisfactory quality of education. Sound teaching is combined with an adequate curriculum, very effective care and welfare and constructive links between home and school and with the community.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers forge positive relationships with their pupils and take considerable care to ensure that they all have equal opportunities to learn.
- The level of challenge in lessons varies considerably and at times is not high enough.
- Lessons are planned thoroughly and resourced well although in a significant minority of lessons the pace is too slow to maintain pupils' interest throughout.
- Pupils are well motivated and have good work habits.
- In most lessons teachers provide clear objectives for pupils to work towards.
- Although teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to put forward their ideas, many pupils of all ages have considerable difficulty putting their thoughts into words.
- Teachers generally manage lessons well.
- Pupils' attainment is assessed regularly but not yet with sufficient rigour in writing and ICT.

### Commentary

18. There has been satisfactory improvement in the teaching and learning since the last inspection with an increase in the proportion of lessons that are well or very well taught. This is particularly evident in the lower junior classes (Years 3 and 4) in which the teaching and learning are regularly of a good and, on occasions, very good standard. However, the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching reported at the time of the last inspection remain. As the table below indicates, during this inspection the quality of teaching varied between very good and unsatisfactory which is too wide a range to guarantee that pupils make even progress in all subjects as they move through the school.

#### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 40 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	9 (24%)	15 (39%)	12 (32%)	2 (5%)	0	0

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen. Two additional lessons were seen in which there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the quality of teaching.*

19. The teaching in the nursery and reception class is consistently sound and regularly has good features. Teachers and support staff intervene constructively while children are working, becoming part of their activities and play to extend learning. Teachers plan a good range of activities for the children but these are often too loosely structured to guarantee a sufficiently high level of challenge.
20. Pupils' learning is enhanced significantly by the regular encouragement they receive from staff. Teachers and teaching assistants address them cordially and praise and support their efforts. This gives pupils the confidence to try hard, raises their self-esteem and promotes positive attitudes to school work. When contributing to discussions or answering questions pupils are not afraid to make mistakes because they know their teachers will help them to

work things out. Satisfactory rather than good lessons often progress at a steady pace, but lack the vigour necessary to ensure that all pupils maintain full attention and concentration. Teaching assistants play a positive part in pupils' learning, particularly in supporting those who have difficulty reaching the expected level for their age and those who are at an early stage in the learning of English. Overall the teaching provided for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is satisfactory.

21. The main reason for the wide variation in the quality of teaching and learning lies in the differing levels of challenge lessons offer. In the most productive lessons pupils are set tasks that make them think hard, make decisions, work quickly and meet individual targets that are based on their particular abilities. At the other end of the effectiveness scale are lessons that expect too little of the pupils and in which teachers give substantial praise for very ordinary or in some instances inadequate work and performance.
22. Teachers give due thought to the content of their lessons and lesson plans are clear. Pre-determined objectives are shared with pupils at the start of the lesson to ensure that everyone knows what they are expected to learn. In the better lessons these objectives are used periodically to review progress but occasionally teachers miss this important step. In general, teachers use effective strategies to maintain class discipline and lessons proceed in an orderly manner. Anyone behaving inappropriately is quickly and effectively reminded of what the school expects and there is little disruption to the flow of lessons.
23. Teachers have recognised the need for pupils to develop their skills as speakers and frequently engage them in conversations and discussions. This is steadily bringing about improvements but many pupils still lack the ability to articulate their ideas fully. This adversely affects their learning in subjects such as mathematics and science. It causes frustration when pupils are unable to explain the methods they are using or to illustrate verbally how they think a particular problem should be tackled.
24. There has been satisfactory development of assessment since the last inspection. Teachers make sound use of the information gained from assessments when planning lessons. However, there are weaknesses in the assessment of ICT and of writing which adversely affect teachers' ability to pinpoint what pupils need to learn next. Pupils' attainment is monitored termly and the information used constructively to set curricular targets for improvement. These target-setting procedures are relatively new and while showing promise teachers are still learning how to use the outcomes to full effect to guide their work on a day-to-day basis and to ensure that ongoing assessments are fully accurate. In most subjects the marking of pupils' work is satisfactory and strikes a reasonable balance between praising what pupils have done well and highlighting areas that could have been improved.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is satisfactory with some good features and the school makes good use of opportunities to enrich pupils' learning. The school's accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum makes a positive contribution to pupils' attitudes to school and to their progress but past weaknesses are still affecting pupils' English and mathematics.
- Classroom activities are planned well but insufficient attention is paid to handwriting.
- Pupils are provided with a much improved and stimulating range of extra-curricular activities.
- Arrangements to meet the needs of pupils of different capabilities are good.
- There is good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship.
- There is not enough staffing for children in the Foundation Stage.

## Commentary

25. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and satisfactorily promotes the school's priority to improve achievement, particularly in English and mathematics. Interesting topics, constructive links between subjects and practical opportunities engage pupils successfully in new learning. As a result pupils' attitudes and behaviour have improved and they are applying themselves much better to all aspects of school work. However, past weaknesses in the curriculum are still adversely affecting pupils' attainment. This is very apparent in pupils' lack of mental arithmetic skills and the inability of many older pupils to join letters when they are writing. Children under five are provided with an appropriate range of play-based activities, both in and out of doors, enabling them to make sound and balanced progress in all areas of learning. Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.
26. Well-managed initiatives from the school's involvement in the Education Action Zone strongly support teachers' efforts to develop pupils' language, as well as providing opportunities to enrich and widen the curriculum, for example in an Art week, a mini-Olympics day and through providing extra educational visits and visitors. Through the Education Action Zone the school has also improved the quality and range of the support available to pupils, increasing their access to their curriculum as a whole.
27. Effective use of skilled and experienced support staff, coupled with thorough planning, give all pupils equal access to the curriculum. In most lessons, teachers ensure that work matches the needs of pupils of differing attainment. Pupils who are having difficulty reaching the national expectations for their age and those with special educational needs receive a well-balanced range of learning opportunities, both in the classroom and when withdrawn for additional help. This enables these pupils to participate fully in lessons and to maintain a rate of progress that is commensurate with other pupils. Arrangements to ensure that pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and with English as an additional language have full access to the curriculum are satisfactory. The school provides a number of dual-language texts and the curriculum shows due regard to pupils' cultural heritage. However, the bilingual support available for children in the Foundation Stage, particularly in the nursery, is very limited given the increasing numbers who are at very early stages in the learning of English.
28. A good range of lunchtime and after-school activities gives pupils in Years 2 to 6 opportunities to develop their skills and interests, particularly in athletics, cross-country running, football and rugby. A well-planned programme of visits to the local area, the City of Sheffield and beyond plus regular visitors to the school further enriches pupils' learning and enlivens the curriculum. Looking beyond the National Curriculum, the school is introducing its Year 3 pupils to French. They are making a good start and thoroughly enjoy using a new language in their daily classroom routines.
29. Good curricular links with the local comprehensive school help to bridge the gap between the primary and secondary stages of pupils' education and to provide continuity in their learning. The links that have been forged in physical education with a local sports college have been particularly productive and instrumental in the school achieving the Activemark award. Timetabled lessons make good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, including sex education and awareness of the dangers of drugs, smoking and alcohol. Pupils are given opportunities to help in the running of the school, helping to give them a sense of responsibility and a pride in the society in which they live.
30. The match of teachers to the curriculum is satisfactory, but recent staff changes mean that many are only at early stages of developing subject responsibilities. A strong team of skilled and experienced support staff have given stability to the school during recent times of change, and continue to give high quality help to pupils with the greatest needs. However, there are insufficient trained adults in the nursery and reception class to take full advantage of the opportunities that activities provide to extend children's spoken language. The level and

quality of resources are satisfactory overall and the spacious building provides good accommodation both indoors and out.

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

The school makes very good provision for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. It provides pupils with good support, advice and guidance. There are good arrangements in place to involve pupils in the school's work and development.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a very strong emphasis on the welfare and care of pupils and the school has a number of very successful initiatives to support pupils' personal development.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language are helped and guided well in their learning.
- Pupils have a strong interest in the school because there are good opportunities for them to have a say in how it should be run and where things can be improved.

### **Commentary**

31. Pupils quickly develop very good and trusting relationships with staff and are confident to ask for help if they need it. A notable feature of the school is the positive atmosphere in which all pupils are valued as individuals. The good-natured approach of staff is instrumental in ensuring that pupils feel safe and happy and want to learn. Arrangements for health and safety are good. Staff are ever mindful of the need to safeguard the pupils from harm and they are well informed in matters relating to child protection. Teachers and support staff know the pupils well and are very much aware of their personal and home circumstances.
32. The support for pupils and their families begins early with a good programme for induction into the nursery. As a result, children settle very well into nursery and quickly adapt to the routines. This support continues as pupils move through school. Daily routines are well planned and pupils are very carefully supervised when at work or at play. At lunchtimes clear and well-established systems ensure a continuity of pupils' welfare and safety. The playground friends have a key role in helping and looking after other pupils. Pupils find their teachers kind and helpful and feel they are looked after very well. As a result they are happy in their learning. The concern for pupils' welfare extends to the promotion of healthy lifestyles and the health education in the school is good. Pupils are encouraged to drink plenty of water and to eat fruit often during the school day so they are physically well prepared for learning. The Breakfast Club is very well attended by both pupils and their parents. This encourages good social skills and ensures the pupils start the day with a good healthy breakfast.
33. The school acknowledges pupils' successes well by celebrating and rewarding those who have made good gains in their academic and personal progress. Pupils who may require additional support are quickly identified and given additional help and guidance. The school is particularly good at catering for pupils with severe special or medical needs. The Child Development Worker, funded through the On Track and the Children's Fund, liaises with other support agencies and very effectively co-ordinates the wide range of initiatives which are available to help specific children with personal, social, behavioural or emotional concerns that may be hindering their education. As a result the children are helped to overcome their problems and are able to concentrate on their learning. Provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils with English as an additional language is very good and comparable to that provided for all pupils.
34. Information about pupils' academic achievements is used satisfactorily to guide future learning. Staff collect information about pupils' academic performance regularly and provide suitable programmes to boost their achievement. The older pupils are very positive about the

'Booster Classes' and feel that being taught in these smaller groups is helping them with their learning.

35. Staff are keen to involve pupils in decision-making and the 'Kids Council' provides a regular forum to canvass their views about the school's provision. Pupils have purchased plants to make the entrance hall more welcoming and influenced the school's decision to stop football on the playground before school, for health and safety reasons. Pupils readily participate in decision making and are proud to play a part in the school's development.

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

The partnership with parents is good. Links with the community and other schools are very good and contribute effectively to pupils' learning and personal development.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are supportive of the school and their children's learning but do not ensure that they attend often enough in the younger age classes.
- Very good communication keeps parents well informed about the school, the curriculum and their children's progress.
- While the annual reports to parents are informative they do not identify clearly enough how well pupils are attaining for their age.
- Well-managed involvement in the Education Action Zone has contributed significantly to pupils' learning.
- Adult learning courses help parents' develop their own skills and gain a good understanding of how to help their children learn at home.

### **Commentary**

36. Parents make a good contribution to pupils' learning and to the life of the school. A number of parents and volunteers help regularly in class, listening to pupils read and assisting with small group activities; they accompany school visits and support concerts and other events very well. Some parents make a regular commitment to help with specific tasks, such as running the Fruit Tuck Shop during morning break times. The parents and friends' association is a flourishing group and extremely successful in organising fund-raising and social events. The funds generated are used wisely and have contributed towards the development of the school and the purchase of resources to enhance pupils' learning. Most parents are supportive of the homework scheme. Those parents at the pre-inspection meeting were very appreciative of the new format for sharing their children's targets which encourage parental involvement. Despite parents' positive involvement with the school, children's attendance in the reception class and in Years 1 and 2 is too low. Although the school strongly discourages parents from taking holidays during term time a significant number of families still do.
37. Parents are kept fully informed about school events and issues. They have ample opportunities to meet with staff, both formally at consultation sessions and informally at the beginning and end of each day. The school provides very good detailed information about what is taught and how parents can help. Booklets are provided by nursery staff which are very useful and give parents good guidance. Pupils' annual written reports provide a good summary of what pupils can do but there is not enough information about how well they are performing in relation to their age. The targets for future learning are clear and helpful for parents to guide their children's learning at home. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs are kept well informed about their children's progress. There are frequent meetings with parents to discuss achievements, any problems and guidance on the next steps in learning.



38. The school based worker runs various activities to encourage and facilitate parents being involvement in their children's learning in the Foundation Stage. Adult learning courses give parents and members of the community opportunity to improve their own skills. The school community coordinator, funded through the Education Action Zone, has initiated successfully several activities which promote the school as a place for learning for all ages. A governor has taken on the role of community liaison and keeps the school well informed about local issues. The bilingual assistant provides very good links with families of Asian heritage, increasing their confidence and enabling them to take an active part in school life.
39. The school uses the expertise and experiences of parents to broaden the curriculum. For example, parents of Asian heritage came into school to prepare food and talk about their cultural traditions. The school provides a base for the pre-school Tiny Tots group and this helps to forge links with parents before nursery. Links with other schools in the local area and Education Action Zone have enabled the school to access and learn from the skills and expertise of others.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher and other key staff is satisfactory. Management and the governance of the school are also satisfactory and statutory requirements are met.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has steered the school through a period of difficulty and established a firm foundation for its future development.
- Staff and governors are working together with a shared sense of purpose but have yet to put in to place a strategic plan so as to raise standards and achievement.
- The lack of observation and evaluation of lessons limits the improvement that the key staff can make to teaching.
- The school is steadily improving despite being hampered by frequent staff changes.
- The school's involvement in the Education Action Zone initiatives has been managed well.

### **Commentary**

40. The main priority for the headteacher and governors over the past two years has been to maintain sufficient pace of improvement following the school's removal from special measures and establish a foundation for its future development. With the support of the local education authority this has been achieved. The relatively large number of changes in staff in the last two years has adversely affected the continuity of senior management and subject leadership. Despite this the headteacher has maintained a sense of purpose and kept the school working at a steady pace of improvement.
41. A good team spirit has been created and the headteacher, staff and governors are committed to doing their best for the pupils. The positive results can be seen in the very good relationships that exist, pupils' improved attitudes to learning and the good behaviour in classes and around school. This is now a school in which pupils want to learn. This marked improvement is helping to raise standards and achievement. However, some barriers to learning remain, particularly the low level of attainment with which children start school and the difficulties many experience in communicating with others fully and effectively. The school, through various initiatives, is working to eliminate such barriers but children's attainment on entry is continuing to fall. The school is a place that welcomes all groups of pupils and has a firm commitment to meet their individual needs. Leaders of the school actively and effectively promote equality and respect for diversity.

42. The school is part of an Education Action Zone and has taken full advantage of many of the initiatives on offer in order to enrich pupils' learning. The headteacher has managed this involvement well, carefully selecting the initiatives which will have the most beneficial effect in raising standards and supporting pupils' personal development.
43. In its present form, the senior management team is relatively new. Consequently its role and effectiveness are still developing. However, senior staff are already working well as a team and contributing satisfactorily to the running of the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The national Primary Leadership Programme is helping the senior team members to improve their confidence and leadership qualities. Although subject leadership is satisfactory and senior managers and subject leaders are involved with the headteacher in checking teachers' planning and pupils' work, they have not been trained nor had sufficient opportunities to check the quality of teaching and learning in lessons. This limits the influence they can have on classroom practice to ensure the teaching and learning are of a consistently high quality.
44. The frequent changes of staff have made planning for development difficult. Over the past few years the school improvement plan has been constantly reviewed to ensure the school is moving forward and responding to immediate needs. Senior staff have made effective use of the school's involvement in the Primary Leadership Programme to review and strengthen the school's core values and to commence the formulation of a strategic development plan. However, this is still in the early stages of construction and the school has yet to implement a strategic plan to clearly guide its work over time in raising standards and achievement.
45. The governing body is supportive of the school and ensures that statutory requirements are met. Meetings are held regularly and governors receive detailed reports from the headteacher about the work of the school. As a result, the governing body has a sound understanding of the school's strengths and its areas for development. Governors are prepared to challenge decisions by asking questions to seek further information if they are unclear about a subject.

***Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004***

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	707899
Total expenditure	711817
Expenditure per pupil	2966

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	-1384
Balance carried forward to the next year	-5302

46. Financial planning is sound. The school's budget is managed satisfactorily to support its immediate priorities for improvement and is regularly monitored to ensure that spending levels are within agreed targets. Although the school was showing a deficit at the end of the last financial year this is forecast to be eliminated this year. When the expenditure per pupils is balanced against the gains pupils make, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

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

When children first join the nursery the majority have skills that are very low. Their speech is very poorly developed, they lack self-confidence, have difficulty co-operating with other children, and find handling small tools and co-ordinating their movements very difficult. During their time in the Foundation Stage classes, children, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress. However, by the end of the reception class very few are likely to have reached the early learning goals and the majority enter Year 1 with attainment which is still well below expectations for their age. Provision in outdoor play and its use has improved since the last inspection and overall there has been satisfactory development of Foundation Stage provision.

Although the nursery and reception class are some distance apart, the teachers and support staff work together as a cohesive Foundation Stage team. Through combined planning they have a common approach to the way in which they organise activities. Long and medium-term planning is very thorough with good links being made between the areas of learning. A significant amount of the daily planning, however, lacks the structure to ensure all children benefit fully from the planned activities and that a high level of challenge is provided for all. Children's progress is carefully monitored and cross-referenced to the stepping stone targets. However, too much time is being spent collecting additional information which does not have a bearing on short-term or daily planning. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall with examples of good practice from both the teachers and the support staff. In both classes productive practice occurs when teachers join in the children's activities to improve the quality of their play and their learning. The nursery teacher spends a considerable amount of time providing help for parents and carers so that they can become partners in their children's learning. These include sessions on reading and practical activities where parents share and use a range of creative materials with their children. Leadership and management of Foundation Stage provision are satisfactory with good features.

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

Provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is **good**.

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

- Relationships between children and adults are very constructive and help the children to develop confidence and self-esteem.
- Staff are good role models for the children.
- At all times children are encouraged to have good manners.
- By the end of the reception class a significant number of children still display immature behaviour.

#### **Commentary**

47. Teaching and learning in this area of learning are good, enabling children to achieve well from a very low starting point. The relationship which staff form with the children is one of mutual trust and respect and this encourages positive attitudes and good behaviour from the children. Their confidence and self-esteem grow as they progress through the Foundation Stage; they quickly learn the daily routines and are able to move from one activity to another in a sensible manner. However, a number of children, by the end of the reception year are still quite immature and find being sensible in a large group quite hard. Emphasis is placed on children being well mannered and polite; for example, during snack time children are encouraged to say 'please' and 'thank you' to each other. In the reception class, as they put away the outdoor equipment, they are reminded to help each other and take responsibility as part of a team.

The teachers and support staff show the children, through their own relationship, how enjoyable it is to be friendly and to help each other.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are taught to listen well.
- They enjoy looking at books and hearing stories.
- Children's spoken and written communication is weak.

### **Commentary**

48. Children's achievement is satisfactory in this area of learning, but standards are well below those of children of a similar age, and by the end of the reception the majority will not achieve the early learning goals. Teaching and learning are satisfactory with all staff working together to try to raise the performance of the children, particularly their speaking and listening skills. Throughout the Foundation Stage children are encouraged to listen carefully, both to the adults and to each other. It is the aspect of language where the staff have most success and by the time the children are in the reception class they are attentive and listen with care to instructions and to each other. During registration, for example, they sit and listen to the teacher asking them questions about the days of the week and the weather and talking to them about what they are going to do. The good progress made in developing listening skills is not replicated, however, when it comes to speech. The very poor level of speech the children have when they enter the nursery and their total lack of confidence in speaking mean that progress is steady at best and children leave the reception class well behind children of a similar age. Staffing the Foundation Stage at the minimum level does not help the situation, as intervention by adults in the development of speech is restricted to the time when teachers judge it will have the maximum impact and allows little opportunity for spontaneous intervention. Due to the very poor development of the children's manipulative skills before arriving in school, writing shows a similar very slow rate of progress. Children throughout the nursery and reception class love books and enjoy stories. The minute they see an adult with a book a group will collect around hoping that it is time for a story.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Activities are lively and practical and capture the interest of pupils.
- Teacher led activities do not concentrate sufficiently on developing children's counting skills.
- Children enjoy their number work.
- Poor communication skills affect children's ability to explain what they have done and to learn from the experience.

### **Commentary**

49. Achievement is satisfactory but the majority of children will not reach the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Although the teaching, learning and the curriculum are satisfactory and the activities provided are lively and practical and stimulate the interest of the children, there is some lack of well-structured activities which focus on counting and the ability of children to remember numbers. Children enjoy counting, particularly as a group, and have a positive attitude to numbers. Many children, however, are at such an early stage that they find

it hard to decide whether the horse with four legs should belong in the circle for animals with four legs or the circle for animals with two legs. They enjoy their number songs and take pleasure in being able to count the number of children present each morning. Poor speaking skills continue to be a factor in their learning and when asked questions during mathematical activities children are often slow to respond because they are struggling for words.

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

Provision for pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good use is made of the local environment and visits to places of interest.
- Good links are made with other areas of learning.
- Poor communication skills inhibit the children's ability to record experiences.

### **Commentary**

50. Achievement in knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory although by the end of the reception class children are unlikely to have achieved the early learning goals. Teaching and learning are satisfactory with examples of good teaching in all aspects. Visits play an important part in the children's learning and are also seen as an excellent way of involving the parents/carers in their children's learning. A recent visit to the local wood on a particularly wet and miserable day was accompanied by some 18 parents/carers. Much of the interesting work in this area has strong links with other aspects of children's learning. For example, by taking their classroom exploration of animals into the outside role-play area, children gain a clear impression of what it must be like to live in such an environment. These links make for an interesting, relevant and meaningful curriculum for the children. Once again progress in this area of learning is slowed by the children's poor speaking skills as they find difficulty in finding the appropriate words to describe their experiences.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for physical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision for outdoor play is good.
- Children have poorly developed manipulative skills and co-ordination.

### **Commentary**

51. Although achievement is satisfactory, by the end of the reception year the majority of children will not have achieved the early learning goals due to the fact that they have such poor co-ordination. In activities they find it difficult to manipulate simple tools and so they find activities such as forming letters or numbers extremely difficult. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and in outdoor provision it is good. Here there is a wealth of equipment providing an extension to the activities already in the classrooms. This enables children, who have difficulty painting on an easel, the opportunity to paint with a large brush on a big cardboard wall. The washing line and the basket of clothes take mathematics into the open air as the children put socks into pairs and decide which is longest or shortest. In both the nursery and the reception class the outdoor areas are a rich resource.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for creative development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The creative activities often link well with other areas of learning.
- At times, staff do not target the children's manipulative skills well enough.

### **Commentary**

52. Teaching, learning and achievement are satisfactory. Due to the low level of ability in manipulating tools and co-ordinating their movements the majority of children do not achieve all the early learning goals. Staff link children's creative work productively to other areas of their learning, particularly personal, social and emotional development. Good use is made of the role-play area to engage children in playing with, rather than alongside, other children. In the jungle area in reception the children, without the help of the teacher, organised themselves on the jungle train ready for the tour whilst others took the role of fierce animals. This is a distinct development from the nursery where the majority of children can be seen in solitary play, having yet to acquire the necessary social skills. While teacher's lesson planning for creative activities is sound overall, it tends to lack sufficient focused tasks in which children can learn to use small tools and, with the help of an adult, improve their skills and co-ordination.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers develop pupils' speaking and listening skills well but speech lacks expression.
- There are variations in the quality of teaching and as a result pupils' progress is uneven.
- Provision for pupils' learning in reading is good but there is not enough reading aloud.
- Pupils do not make as much progress in writing as they do in other aspects of English.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work lacks rigour and does not show pupils clearly enough how to improve.

#### Commentary

53. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6. Standards are below average in Year 6, as at the time of the last inspection. This is a higher evaluation than the standards pupils attained in the national tests in 2004 and reflects both an improvement in achievement and that the present Year 6 class is generally more capable than the previous one. In Year 2 standards are well below average, mainly because of the high proportion of pupils in this class with special educational needs. Girls do better than boys in the national tests, following the national pattern. Standards in speech and reading are higher than those in writing. English standards are similar to those in mathematics and science. There has been steady improvement since the last inspection.
54. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, but ranges from satisfactory to very good. Teachers plan lessons clearly, provide good quality resources, ensure good standards of concentration and mostly match tasks nicely to pupils' capabilities. However, while some lessons have fast pace and a high level of challenge, others are more sedate and teachers have lower expectations of the quality of work pupils will produce. As a result pupils' rates of progress vary, depending on the quality of teaching they have received.
55. The present focus on speaking and listening as the way to raise English standards has given pupils' confidence and competence with speech a boost. Pupils learn well from teachers' good examples of expressive speech and reading, and their insistence on good standards of listening. Pupils of all ages enjoy good opportunities to talk with speaking partners about what they are learning. Lively bursts of discussion punctuate English lessons. Drama and poetry performance lessons are also improving clarity and confidence. However, there is not enough reading aloud at the beginning of lessons to help improve expression in speech.
56. Teachers use the National Literacy Strategy well to ensure pupils make steady progress in reading. Interesting and attractive books engage pupils' interest. A high proportion of Year 6 pupils enjoy independent reading at home. Pupils find weekly guided reading sessions improve their vocabularies and understanding of text. The two school libraries, individual reading programmes and diaries and a good match of books to pupils' capabilities, develop skill and independence. Effective small group and individual help with reading successfully addresses the difficulties of pupils who are struggling. However, the reading of less able and average pupils often lacks expression and understanding.
57. Writing continues to lag behind speech and reading. Literacy hour writing sessions teach pupils to work in many different forms and styles, but writing often lacks detail and excitement. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not write accurately or fluently enough because they have not mastered vital basic skills. Scarcely any Year 6 pupils join their letters in words or have the expected range of punctuation. This is because these have not been systematically taught in

the past. Spelling is poor because pupils write mostly as they speak and have not thoroughly learned basic spelling rules. The school does not make enough use of high quality individual computer programs to improve spelling. The majority of pupils are short of words to express their thoughts and feelings fully.

58. Marking and assessment of writing encourage pupils' efforts but lack rigour in identifying areas for improvement and do not make enough impact on standards. The school has begun to involve pupils in assessing each other's writing. This is beginning to raise pupils' understanding of what they can and cannot do well, but they do not yet know how their work compares with the national standards or the steps to take to improve. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has a sound grasp of the direction in which the school needs to move to bring about improvement but has limited opportunities to influence classroom practice.

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

59. Pupils' literacy skills are below average but are applied and extended satisfactorily overall in other subjects, although most pupils find difficulty in using and explaining new ideas and methods in mathematics and science. . Speech develops well in other subjects following good practices set up in English lessons. Pupils speak confidently and thoughtfully to adults, but sometimes struggle to find the words to express their ideas and feelings. The use and development of reading and writing in other subjects are satisfactory. Pupils develop research and report writing skills satisfactorily in geography and history. The use of publishing and word-processing programs improves writing skills in ICT lessons, but the school does not make enough use of ICT to improve spelling. Teachers also give pupils good opportunities to record findings and plan procedures in their own words in science and design and technology.

## **MATHEMATICS**

The provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement is steadily improving.
- Pupils show positive attitudes to mathematics and work hard but their mental recall is weak.
- The quality of teaching is sound but inconsistent and some teaching is unsatisfactory.
- Many pupils lack the communication skills to explain their thinking.
- Pupils find the work interesting because it is set in realistic contexts but have difficulty explaining their ideas.
- There are examples of very good teaching but insufficient sharing of this good practice.

### **Commentary**

60. After two years in which results were showing positive signs of improvement, Year 6 pupils' performance in the national tests in 2004 was well below the national average and poor in comparison with similar schools. In many ways these results were indicative of past weaknesses in teaching and learning compounded by frequent changes of teacher and a relatively large number of pupils with special educational needs.
61. Although pupils in Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress, standards in Year 2 are well below the national average. A large proportion of the pupils presently in Year 2 are low attaining and, despite trying their best, work at a level that is consistently below expectations for their age. Currently, standards in Year 6 are below rather than well below average because the proportion of pupils working at or above the expected level for their age has increased from last year. Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement in the subject since the last



inspection, particularly in stimulating pupils' interest in mathematics and in generating better attitudes to learning. Although many pupils find the subject difficult they try hard and apply themselves well to the tasks teachers set them. As a result pupils' achievement across the whole of the school is satisfactory and the under-achievement reported in the past is steadily being eliminated. This applies to all pupils, including those with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language.

62. Although the teaching and learning across the school are satisfactory overall, pupils make better progress in some classes than others because of variations in the quality of teaching. During the inspection the teaching seen ranged from very good to unsatisfactory. The primary difference in the effectiveness of teaching stems from variations in the level of challenge and in teachers' expectations of the quality and quantity of work pupils will produce. Where these are high, as they were in one particular lesson for Year 4 pupils, very effective learning takes place. In such lessons pupils are given interesting activities which encourage them to investigate numbers and to consider carefully how they form particular patterns. This helps pupils to understand how numbers relate to each other, increasing the accuracy and efficiency with which they calculate. Where the teaching is unsatisfactory the work is pitched at too low a level for many pupils and does not extend their ideas and understanding sufficiently. Key ideas are not transmitted clearly enough and pupils become confused about what they have to do and why they are doing it.
63. The majority of lessons progress at a steady pace and make satisfactory use of the guidance provided by the National Strategy for Numeracy. Many pupils have considerable difficulty solving mathematical problems and this has correctly been made a whole-school priority for improvement. Teachers are providing pupils with regular opportunities to make mathematical calculations in real life contexts and this is beginning to strengthen their understanding of the operations they need to choose in order to arrive at the correct answer. However, the speed and confidence with which pupils work are hampered by poor mental recall. Too many pupils, particularly in the older classes, do not know their multiplication tables well enough and cannot remember number facts they have previously encountered. Consequently they have to recalculate at each stage of a problem, adding unnecessary complexity. In addition many pupils lack the communication skills to explain their thinking and to put into words the methods they are using. This makes it difficult for teachers to evaluate pupils' level of understanding and to act on any misconceptions.
64. Subject leadership and management are satisfactory. In the short time the co-ordinator has been responsible for the subject she has acquired a broad understanding of the areas in which development needs to take place and identified sensible targets for the school, different classes and groups of pupils. She has no opportunity to observe the teaching and learning that are taking place in the different classes or to model lessons and pass on the skills she herself possesses. This adversely affects the co-ordinator's ability to fine-tune strategies for improvement.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

65. Pupils' mathematical skills are below average for their age but teachers make satisfactory use of the opportunities other subjects present to extend pupils' learning in mathematics and to encourage the application of numeracy. For example, measurement and data handling regularly feature in science lessons and teachers make frequent reference to correct mathematical terminology to extend pupils' technical vocabulary. There is some effective linking of ICT and mathematics, particularly in the use of spreadsheets, but there is little regular use of calculation programs for consolidating and extending pupils' number skills.

### **SCIENCE**

The provision in science is **satisfactory**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning.
- Pupils' investigative skills are developing well.
- Planning and resourcing of lessons are good.
- Leadership of the subject is well focused.
- The limited range of pupils' vocabulary inhibits their oral and written responses.

## **Commentary**

66. In national tests in 2004, results for Year 6 pupils were well below both the national average and the average for similar schools. However, from the scrutiny of work and from observations made in lessons there are strong indications that, in line with the school's prediction, standards are rising throughout the school. However, while pupils' achievement in science is satisfactory, standards are currently below the national average in both Year 2 and Year 6.
67. Year 6 pupils speak with considerable interest and excitement about their work in science and can hardly contain themselves when discussing the piece of work they are about to do. They use correct terms when describing aspects of their work, explaining, for example, what photosynthesis is and what it does. Pupils of different abilities explained that they were going to put their knowledge of circuits into practice by making fairground machines that were powered by electricity. They also pointed out that this linked their science work with design and technology, showing a solid understanding of the practical nature of science. Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement in science since the last inspection and, throughout the school, pupils' more positive attitudes to science are making a very positive contribution to the raising of standards.
68. The teaching and learning of science are satisfactory with good features. Pupils experience an appropriate curriculum which provides them with regular opportunities to investigate science ideas for themselves. Teachers show good understanding of the way in which pupils learn best and provide them with suitably practical activities. A feature of all the lessons observed was the high quality of the teachers' planning and the quality of the resources available to the pupils. In the Year 6 lesson involving work on electrical circuits there was ample equipment of good quality so that the pupils could get on with the task free of interruptions because a bulb had failed or a battery was flat. Lesson plans are detailed and ensure a good balance between input from the teachers and pupils answering questions and making decisions for themselves. They particularly enjoy trying to keep one step ahead of the teacher in their investigations. Pupils co-operate well with each other and readily share their findings with each other.
69. Although they gain much from practical work, pupils' progress is often limited by the difficulties they have in explaining their thinking and putting ideas into words. In a lesson in Year 2, when the teacher asked the pupils if they could tell her what a fair test was, no one volunteered an answer. When the teacher began to set up a test with two cars and deliberately made mistakes there was an immediate outcry from the class of, "No, no you can't do that". The pupils knew every requirement of a fair test but did not have the confidence with words to attempt an answer to the question. This prevented the pupils from sharing their thoughts, comparing ideas and rationalising their thinking. Pupils' practical work is often of a significantly higher standard than their written work and the work seen in lessons was often of a higher standard than could be expected from the test results.
70. Leadership in the subject is good. There is a very clear understanding of what the challenges are and what needs to be done to raise standards. Colleagues are well supported and the school has a determined 'science team'. Provision in research and investigative work has improved since the time of the last inspection and this continues to be a priority for the subject

leader, along with developing pupils' ability to communicate fully all they know and understand.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

The provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are rising.
- As they move through the school, pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding build progressively.
- Pupils show very positive attitudes to ICT.
- A significant proportion of pupils do not have access to a computer at home and cannot extend their learning outside of school.
- Assessment does not yet provide the detailed information teachers need when planning lessons.

### **Commentary**

71. There has been satisfactory improvement in the subject since the last inspection and while standards in Year 6 are below national expectations for pupils of this age, they are much closer than they have been in the past. Standards are also rising steadily lower down the school, but a lack of basic skills limits pupils' progress, and attainment in Year 2 is well below national expectations. Differences in pupils' attainment often relate to the access they have to computers at home. Higher attainers are often those who have the opportunity to extend what they have learned in class on their own computers while others are limited to what they gain from lessons. All pupils are given equal access to the learning opportunities the school provides and pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language maintain a similar rate of progress to that of other pupils.
72. Much of the following report refers to Year 6 pupils as this was the only age group seen working at the computers during a designated ICT lesson. The work pupils of other ages have saved on the school computers and teachers' planning indicate that all classes are taught ICT regularly, but often on days not covered by the inspection. A preparatory lesson on databases was also seen in Year 1 which involved the pupils in sorting and classifying objects in the classroom. This provided a sound foundation for work the teacher had planned for future lessons in the computer suite.
73. Across the school as a whole, pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. For example, pupils in Year 6 produce lively multi-media presentations of information they have acquired from the Internet, animating the text and adding sound for additional interest. By Year 2 most pupils have acquired basic skills such as how to switch the computer on and off correctly and what to do to save and retrieve work in their own files. Higher attaining pupils of this age type quickly and control the mouse well but others are much less experienced with the mouse and lack keyboard skills. From this baseline, pupils develop a range of satisfactory skills in many aspects of ICT. They learn to word process in different styles, construct pictures, compose music, import graphics from various sources and convert numerical data into graphs. By Year 6 pupils are using a publishing program well to construct their own newsletters and writing correct formulae for spreadsheet calculations. Although the number of lessons seen was limited, pupils' achievements indicate that teaching and learning are at least satisfactory and at times they are good.
74. Subject leadership and management are satisfactory. Subject development has been correctly focused on broadening the base of ICT across the curriculum and sensible plans have been

formulated to enable further improvement to take place. These include a major initiative on assessment to provide teachers and the school with a more precise picture of the gains individual pupils are making. While the current assessment procedures are satisfactory they only provide a broad picture and do not produce the information teachers need to set targets for pupils' attainment or to fine-tune their lessons.

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

75. Teachers' and pupils' use of ICT in other subjects is satisfactory and improving. This is having a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to the subject. Year 6 pupils in particular regard computers as an important aid to their learning and this aspect of pupils' learning is continuing to improve. In science, data-handling programs and sensing equipment are used to help pupils record and analyse information during investigations and art programs provide an extra medium for painting pictures and constructing designs. Pupils write in many different styles on the computer and regularly use the Internet as a source of information in subjects such as history and geography. However, pupils have very limited opportunities to use programs specifically designed to improve their spelling and calculation skills. The school has recently acquired a number of interactive whiteboards which are beginning to play an effective role in lessons, both as a teaching aid and as a motivational tool. However, some reliability problems have still to be overcome, particularly with the most recent acquisitions

### **HUMANITIES**

Only one lesson was observed in **history** and none in **geography**. Therefore, there is insufficient evidence to support overall judgements about provision, achievement or the quality of teaching and learning in either subject. Teachers' planning was examined, samples of work analysed and discussions held with pupils.

76. Teachers' planning shows that there is a satisfactory curriculum in both subjects. In discussions with pupils, they could recall and talk with great enthusiasm about many of the studies they had undertaken in both subjects, and showed very positive attitudes to learning. It was also very clear that visits to places of interest and the use of the local environment were enhancing their knowledge of both subjects. A positive feature of the pupils' work is the use of ICT to produce images, often downloaded from the Internet, that bring their studies to life.
77. An analysis of pupils' work shows that by the time they reach Year 6 they have covered a good range of topics in **geography**. The younger pupils have used the locality to make their own maps of their route to school, studied how they could make the road outside school safer, and what could be done to enhance the local park. Older pupils study the Hope Valley and the village of Castleton, looking at the different environment. In a good link with work in history the pupils study a village in Mexico as a contrasting environment to their own. This links in very well with their work on Aztecs in history. By the time they are in Year 6 pupils are taking part in an extensive study of mountains, making good use of maps and using ICT to find and record information.
78. In **history** there is a similar range of work to that in geography, presented to the pupils in an equally lively way. Year 6 pupils were full of enthusiasm for the work they had done about the Second World War, many of them talking about the memories of their grandparents. Younger pupils had carried out a study of Britain since 1948 covering a wide range of topics from housing to toys and games. They had used books and artefacts to find out information and studied old photographs to gain an impression of what life was like. Pupils' study of the Tudor period had given them a wide experience of the period from looking at Tudor monarchs to the explorations of Sir Francis Drake.

79. Leadership in the two subjects is good with the co-ordinator being full of enthusiasm for the subjects and very knowledgeable. Future developments are aimed at linking the curriculum more closely to the experiences of the pupils and the school's locality.

## **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have sound knowledge of the key features of different faiths.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of stories from the Bible.
- Poorly developed communication skills inhibit the written recording of the work pupils have done in religious education.

### **Commentary**

80. Although pupils' achievement is satisfactory by Year 2 and Year 6 attainment is below that normally expected for pupils of the same age. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall.
81. Pupils study the major world faiths and they understand the similarities and differences between these faiths. They are aware that each faith has its own festivals, holy writings and special places in which to worship. Teachers make very good use of local places of worship. During their study about the Muslim religion pupils in Year 3 visit a mosque to gain first hand experience of the Muslim place of worship. A similar visit to Sheffield Cathedral then provides the opportunity for them to discuss the similarities and differences between the two religions based on factual knowledge and experience, not just what they have read in books or been told.
82. The older pupils make an extensive study of the Jewish faith looking at the beliefs and the symbols used by the Jews, such as the Star of David. They learn about the importance of home life and food to the Jewish people and study the place the Seder meal plays in their religious belief. During this study they reflect on special places that are of significant importance to themselves and what it means to belong to a family or a group. In identifying what is special about belonging they talk about the importance of giving and receiving. Through work of this nature, religious education makes an important contribution to the personal and social development of the pupils.
83. Pupils have a good understanding of stories from the Old and the New Testament. In a lively lesson looking at the story of David and Goliath, Year 1 pupils showed good recall of the details of the story they had heard the previous week. Although the pupils' confidence in speaking was low, good questioning skills by the teacher and the use of some amusing role-play enabled the pupils to show what a secure understanding they had of the important aspects of the story. As part of their discussion about the story the teacher skilfully raised interesting issues about God being supportive of the good character and when pupils in the class felt they had been brave. Through the use of a story board to help pupils to record the story of David and Goliath, the teacher linked the lessons effectively with literacy. However, a scrutiny of work in pupils' books clearly showed that in each year group, poor writing and communication skills were preventing them from recording fully the knowledge and understanding they had gained.
84. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. At the time of the inspection in 2001 the teaching of religious education was clearly unsatisfactory. This is no longer the case and this marks a sound improvement. The school follows the local authority syllabus and has

a separate curriculum in place for personal and social education, therefore removing the confusion present at the time of the last inspection between the two.

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

Only a small number of lessons were seen in **art and design** (one) and in **physical education** (two). No lessons were seen in **music**. It is, therefore, not possible to make detailed judgements about the provision in these subjects. Further information was gained from discussions with staff and pupils, and from inspecting teachers' planning and pupils' work. Assemblies provided additional evidence in music.

85. There was not enough evidence to judge standards in **art and design** overall. However, standards in drawing, observation and colouring work seen matched national expectations for the age of the pupils. Year 6 pupils show a satisfactory understanding of the characteristics and techniques of famous twentieth-century artists. Their portfolios reflect a satisfactory experience of a good range of artistic media, tools and techniques. Pupils made good progress in portrait work in a highly successful Art week, partly funded through the Education Action Zone. In a good Year 3 lesson taken by the enthusiastic co-ordinator, pupils of all capabilities made good progress in printmaking because of the care with which each step was explained, demonstrated and practised.
86. There was not enough evidence to judge attainment and achievement or the quality of teaching and learning in **music** as no lessons were seen. Conversations with pupils suggest they have satisfactory experience of the composition, performance and appreciation of music. The quality of singing heard in assemblies was hearty but not always accurate in pitch. Satisfactory use is made of computer programs to help pupils learn the basics of musical composition.
87. The two lessons seen in **physical education** were of variable quality. In one the teaching and learning were satisfactory and pupils made steady progress in matching their actions to familiar words. They 'flopped' and 'melted' in response to the teacher's instructions and tried hard to co-ordinate their movements effectively. In the second lesson the expectations of the teacher were too low and teaching and learning were unsatisfactory. Pupils' performance was below that expected of the age group and, because they were insufficiently challenged, pupils misbehaved and made little effort to improve. A lack of teacher knowledge of what to expect from pupils of this age and how to promote good achievement was very apparent. During the inspection a player from a local professional rugby league club visited the school and involved Year 6 pupils in a variety of activities relating to the sport. Both girls and boys participated fully and with considerable enthusiasm in all the games, following the rules closely and demonstrating a clear sense of fair play. Such experiences and the range of extra-curricular activities the school provides make a valuable contribution to the physical education curriculum. The quality of the provision the school makes for physical education was recognised in 2004 when it received the Activemark award. Through the School Sports Coordinator Programme the subject leader has forged productive links with other schools and through her monitoring has recognised that there is a need to increase staff confidence in the teaching of the subject. Swimming lessons are organised well and the majority of pupils can swim at least 25 metres by the time they leave the school.

### **Design and technology**

Provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Well-planned projects help pupils to develop a satisfactory range of skills and methods.

- Teachers link work well to other subjects.

### **Commentary**

88. The subject meets statutory requirements, but was not reported in the previous inspection. It is therefore not possible to evaluate the level of improvement. Teachers choose interesting topics from current national guidance and planning. As a result pupils acquire a range of designing and making skills appropriate for their age and become increasingly competent with different tools and materials. Consequently pupils' attainment meets national expectations and their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils of all ages enjoy the practical challenge and achievement of producing working models and toys. Skilled classroom staff, often supported by parent volunteers, help faster and slower workers, those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language to progress at a similar rate to other pupils.
89. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers enhance learning by linking several subjects in a single project. For example a good Year 1 lesson on designing a face made from fruit and vegetables began with a thorough discussion on hygiene and health and safety issues related to food preparation. Pupils responded well to the challenge in groups, busily cutting and shaping food items to make realistic faces.
90. Conversations with pupils show that they have discovered in design and technology practical applications for their learning in science, for example in making circuits, powered vehicles, pneumatic systems and cam operated models. Teachers use ICT well to stimulate pupils' design work. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Assessment, which is mainly informal at the end of each unit and each school year, provides a satisfactory quality of information.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well.
- Pupils are provided with many opportunities to discuss important issues that affect them both personally and socially and this helps them to mature.

### **Commentary**

91. The school places great importance upon promoting pupils' personal and social development and encouraging them to keep safe and well. Subject leadership is good and ensures that teachers receive the guidance and support they need. Lessons in personal, social and health education and citizenship are carefully planned to allow pupils to talk about their concerns and to discuss how they can become responsible citizens. In a good Year 2 lesson, pupils discussed how they might overcome their feelings of fear. Issues such as sex education and relationships and drugs awareness are included appropriately within the curriculum and taught throughout school. The school places a strong emphasis on pupils learning about how to eat healthily and how they can adopt a healthy lifestyle. Since the last inspection, there has been a review of the behaviour policy and the introduction of an effective system for rewarding good behaviour. For example, 'Golden Time' is well liked by the pupils and encourages them to work hard and behave well. In a very good lesson, Year 3 pupils learned how to deal with situations that might not be fair by acting out various scenarios. Discussions led to an evaluation of Golden Time and the majority of pupils felt it was their own fault if they lost some of the activity time.

92. Citizenship is actively promoted and pupils are provided with many opportunities to play an important part in helping the school to run smoothly and improve. The school is good at providing pupils with responsibilities to help them build their confidence and self-esteem. Playground friends and peer mediators help the pupils to develop a sense of responsibility for others and to understand that others can help if they have difficulties. Pupils express their own views through the Kids Council, and develop their understanding of democratic decision-making.
93. Provision is supported well through the school's involvement in the Education Action Zone and good advantage is taken of some of the many initiatives on offer to enrich pupils' learning. The school also benefits from 'On Track', a government initiative to help those children and young people who for a variety of reasons may fall into a life of crime. The child development worker works successfully with pupils who have specific problems that may affect their ability to achieve at school. Pupils have a high regard for her and appreciate the work that she has done in school.



## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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