

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **ASKWITH COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Askwith

LEA area: North Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 121379

Headteacher: Mr D Parker

Lead inspector: Mr J Brennan

Dates of inspection: 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> November 2004

Inspection number: 266336

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: 4 - 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 78

School address: Askwith  
North Yorkshire  
Postcode: LS21 2JB

Telephone number: 01943 462896  
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Appropriate authority: The governing body  
Name of chair of Mr Jan Osinski  
governors:

Date of previous May 1999  
inspection:

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Askwith is a small primary school that draws pupils from a wide locality, including the village of Askwith and the surrounding area. An increasing number of pupils come from the nearby towns of Otley and Ilkley. Attainment on entry to school can vary considerably from year to year, but for the current year, is a little above that typically found. At present no pupils are in receipt of free school meals and no pupils have special educational needs. Almost all pupils are from a white British background. The school received an Achievement Award in 2002 and is involved in a Talk for Learning initiative.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2109 4	Mr John Brennan	Lead inspector	Art and design
			Design and technology
			English
			Information and communication technology
			Physical education
			Religious education
			Foundation stage
			Special educational needs
			English as an additional language
1944 3	Mrs Nancy Walker	Lay inspector	
2747 7	Mrs Jo Mitchell	Team inspector	Geography
			History
			Mathematics
			Music
			Science

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a very effective school.** The headteacher provides excellent leadership and has successfully developed a staff team committed to self evaluation and the pursuit of excellence. Standards are very high and pupils' achievements are very good. Very close attention is paid to developing pupils' personal qualities. The school gives very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The vision, drive and teamwork of the headteacher, staff and governors ensure that the school is very successful and ambitious for the future.
- The very good quality of teaching and a stimulating curriculum ensures that pupils achieve very well, especially in the Foundation Stage and in literacy, numeracy, science, and history.
- Not enough thought has been given to meeting the needs of pupils with particular talents or gifts.
- The very good quality of behaviour and excellent relationships are marked by the mutual respect individuals have for each other.
- The school puts pupils' welfare at its heart and takes very good care of them.
- The school works very closely with parents and receives excellent support from them.

Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Changes to the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage have been very effective. Better provision is now made for pupil's spiritual development and the school celebrates pupils' work more successfully through display. These were all weaknesses noted in the last inspection. The school has maintained the high standards noted in the last inspection and has increased the proportion of pupils who exceed expected levels in English and mathematics. Standards have also improved in speaking and listening, in science, information and communication technology (ICT) and history. Very good structures are in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the work of the school. The quality of governance has improved. Significant improvements have been made to accommodation.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	A	A	A	A
mathematics	C	A	A	A
science	B	B	A	B

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

**The pupils are achieving very well.** From attainment on entry that is in line with that typically found, children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well in their personal and social development, and in literacy and mathematical development. The vast majority are on course to exceed the early learning goals in these areas by the end of Reception. It was not possible to assess standards or achievement in other areas of learning. Throughout the school pupils achieve extremely well in speaking and listening and

standards are very high. Results in national tests have consistently been very good. In 2004 they were well above average in reading, where they were in the top five per cent of schools, well above average mathematics and above average in writing at the end of Year 2. At the end of Year 6, from a starting point that was average, standards were well above average in English, mathematics and science. Results also compare favourably with similar schools. Inspection findings confirm this picture. Achievement is very good in reading, writing and mathematics so that in the current Year 6 standards are well above average. Standards meet expectations in ICT in Year 2 and exceed them in Year 6. Overall pupils achieve well. Achievement in history is very good, with many pupils exceeding standards expectations in both Year 2 and, especially, at the end of Year 6. Standards meet the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education and achievement is satisfactory. It was not possible to assess standards in other subjects. The school takes decisive action for pupils who show signs of falling behind, who soon catch up. Last year, in Year 2 and Year 6, every pupil attained at least the national average in tests.

**The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.** Pupils show excellent attitudes towards school and behave very well. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a very good quality of education** because the curriculum is very well thought out and is enhanced by a very good range of trips and clubs. **Teaching and learning are very good.** In the Foundation Stage it is based on a deep knowledge of how young children learn best, creating a stimulating classroom and devising challenging practical activities. Teachers are expert at using talk to deepen pupils' thinking, and tasks across a range of subjects are often interesting, thought provoking and promote independence. The teaching of literacy and numeracy are particularly strong because skills are applied well across the curriculum.

The school makes very good provision for pupils' health, care and welfare and provides very well for pupils who are having difficulty. The school works hand in hand with parents, whose support makes a telling contribution to achievement.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Taken overall the quality of leadership and management is very good.** The headteacher provides excellent leadership. He has a very clear vision for the school and this is underpinned by efficient monitoring systems which help the school check up carefully on how well it is doing. The headteacher is joined by the very effective leadership of other key staff in this. There are however, no formal strategies for identifying and meeting the needs of pupils who are especially talented and provision for these pupils is piecemeal. Governors are very effective in their support of the school and join well with it in shaping its future and ensure that statutory requirements are met.

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

Parents and pupils hold the school in high regard. Parents feel that their children enjoy coming to school and that they are doing well. They feel that their views are valued. Pupils feel that lessons are interesting, that teachers help them improve and that they have an adult to turn to when worried. Inspectors agree with these views.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- To formalise the provision for talented and gifted pupils.



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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Standards are high. Throughout the school pupils are achieving very well.

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

- Children in the Foundation Stage make a very good start to school.
- Standards are very high in English, mathematics and science.
- Prompt action helps pupils whose performance is in need of a boost to soon catch up.
- By the end of Year 6 pupils' standards in ICT and in history exceed the levels expected nationally.

#### **Commentary**

1 As a result of the small number of pupils in Reception attainment on entry to school can vary from year to year. Currently children's attainment covers the full range. It is in line expected levels in their personal and social development and in reading and mathematics but a little below average in writing. Excellent induction arrangements and the sharp focus on developing confidence and independence results in a smooth start to school. From the beginning children are expected to take responsibility, and they respond with zest to the rich variety of learning opportunities provided. Children have already made considerable progress towards meeting the early learning goals expected of them by the end of Reception, especially in their personal and social development, in reading and in mathematics. Here the vast majority are on course to exceed them. Although achieving very well fewer numbers of children are on course to exceed the early learning goals in writing because of lower starting point. It was not possible to judge achievement in other areas of learning.

2 Despite the small number of pupils taking national tests, results over time have remained fairly consistent and in most years at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have been well above average. This was the case in 2004, when at the end of Year 2 results were well above average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing. At the end of Year 6 they were well above average in English, mathematics and science. The principle success of the school has been to maintain the proportion of pupils reaching expected levels and, overtime, to increase the proportion of pupils exceeding expected levels. From an average starting point approximately one third of pupils exceeded expected levels in reading and mathematics, with slightly less than this proportion exceeding them in writing in the 2004 national tests at Year 2. As a result of the very good achievement in these subjects, and in science, this proportion builds well as pupils progress through the school. From attainment on entry that was average nearly half of pupils exceeded expected levels in English and mathematics and over half in science in national test at the end of Year 6 in 2004 national tests. Results also compare very favourably with similar schools and, although the overall trend of results has matched improvements nationally, results have consistently been high. The school has set its sights high and invariably meets the challenging targets it has set for itself. Parents feel that their children are doing well.

3 Inspection findings confirm this very positive picture. Concentration on developing speaking and listening as a means of deepening thinking is paying dividends. Not only are standards here very high, they are having a knock on effect to other areas of study as pupils become able debaters and thinkers across a range of subjects. Pupils' ability to read and carry out research is very high and, by the end of Year 6, standards in writing are also well above average. Pupils' ability to think logically is also evident in mathematics where many pupils have an easy facility with number and apply this well to problem solving.

4 The very prompt and decisive action taken at the first sign of underachievement is working extremely well, and because of this, last year every pupil who took part in the national tests in Years 2 and 6 reached at least the nationally expected level in each subject. The school's innovative approach serves the needs of pupils who are in need of a boost extremely well, so that currently no pupils are on the special educational needs register.

5 The rapid acquisition of the key skills of literacy and numeracy stands pupils in very good stead. Pupils are eager to record their thoughts on paper in such subjects as science and the humanities. Similarly, the systematic teaching and reinforcement of basic number skills and their application in a good range of problem solving and investigative work are having a very positive impact on pupils' ability to think logically.

6 The school's well considered and thoughtfully constructed curriculum provides a helpful structure for learning. Pupils are achieving very well in history and achieve well in ICT, so that by the time they leave the school standards exceed national expectations, especially in history. This represents an improvement since the last inspection in both history and in ICT. In religious education standards meet the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. It was not possible to analyse the depth and quality of pupils' work in other subjects to arrive at an overall view of standards.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	18.4 (18.1)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.6 (17.4)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.6 (18.9)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 10 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

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

Pupils' attitudes to school are excellent, their values and other personal qualities are very good. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' excellent attitudes and very good behaviour, helps them maximise the opportunities the school gives them to learn and develop as individuals.
- The very good ethos of the school sets the scene very well for pupils' personal development.

- Attendance is well above the level found in schools nationally, reflecting pupils' enthusiasm for school.

## Commentary

7 Pupils' excellent attitudes make a telling contribution to their achievements. Pupils are eager to learn, and concentrate diligently during whole-class teaching and group work. Even in the early years, they are beginning to develop good levels of concentration and show a very good attitude to learning. Following the high expectations of teachers, pupils sustain concentration and persevere with tasks even when they are quite challenging, as is usually the case. From conversations with pupils, it is clear that they enjoy coming to school. Much of this is down to the interesting level of teaching and the high level of participation that teachers engender by valuing pupils' opinions. Parents also confirmed that their children enjoy coming to school and they make great efforts to ensure that their children attend. During the last year for example, there have been no unauthorised absences. Attendance levels are well above those found nationally and lessons start promptly.

8 Pupils are very well behaved, polite and courteous, responding well to the high level of pastoral care provided by the school. Staff members deal quickly and effectively with the rare incidents of inappropriate behaviour. No significant incidents were seen during the inspection. There were no exclusions last year.

9 An ethos which stresses care and consideration, and one in which staff set a very good personal example, does much to create fertile conditions for pupils' personal development. The school continually promotes a very high level of moral, social and cultural awareness. Since the last inspection the school has improved its provision for spiritual development which is now good. Pupils learn about the wonders of the natural world and human achievement in many subjects and areas of the curriculum. Assemblies though remain more effective in fostering pupils' social and moral development than their spiritual. Moral principles are consistently promoted through all aspects of school's work. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong and have a clear understanding of the impact their behaviour has on others. Pupils are increasingly given more social responsibility as they progress through the school. For example, older pupils help the younger pupils, especially at lunchtime in the dining hall. Staff also join in with this and help serve pupils' dinners, so that these times form an important 'family' occasion. Pupils are eager to accept any amount of responsibility that is offered to them. Cultural awareness is built very effectively into the curriculum especially in subjects such as history, geography and art and design, as well as French and Latin. A very good range of visits and visitors help to broaden pupils' cultural experience. Pupils are able to appreciate the traditions of a variety of other cultures and faiths and the school welcomes the contributions made by families of religions represented in the school.

## Attendance

### *Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (96.9%)*

Authorised absence	
School data	3.1
National data	5.1

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

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

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Pupils benefit from very good teaching which challenges their thinking. The curriculum is very well organised and is added to by a very good range of other activities. The school takes very good care of pupils and works very closely with parents.

### **Teaching and learning**

The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good. The quality of assessment is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Excellent relationships create a very good climate for learning.
- The value teachers place on pupil talk deepens thinking.
- Tasks are often interesting and make demands on pupils thinking and develop independence.
- Teaching assistants make a telling contribution to pupils' learning, especially in the Foundation Stage.
- Teachers have a detailed knowledge of pupils' needs and abilities.

### **Commentary**

10 The excellent relationships that exist between teachers and pupils lead to highly productive and engaging classrooms. Teachers are quick to praise pupils' efforts and in turn they rise to the challenge which much of the teaching sets. Discussions are open and frank and pupils work very well independently. Little time is wasted and teachers are able to concentrate on the task in hand rather than on the control of pupils. All in all therefore, classrooms are calm and pleasant places for pupils and teachers to work in.

11 The extremely positive learning climate has proved to be a fertile ground for the school's involvement in Talk for Learning. This has had a marked impact on the quality of teaching and learning, initially in English but more latterly in other subjects. Teachers have responded with enthusiasm to the principle of using speaking and listening to deepen thought, so that this forms a guiding principle for teaching throughout the school. In the Foundation Stage, for example, the teacher will remind pupils what good listening entails so they make eye contact with the speaker, show interest in what is being said and are ready to have something to say in reply. In many classrooms the use of talk partners for pupils to bounce ideas off and white boards to map out their thinking are commonplace. This leads to high levels of participation and sets up future learning very well as pupils have to clarify their thinking. Teachers are skilled at using these times to assess the readiness of pupils to move on and so pupils are very well prepared for independent work.

12 When teaching is at its best it sets imaginative and thought provoking tasks for pupils. This is often the case. Teaching in the Foundation Stage accomplishes this by engaging pupils in practically based activities that often encompass learning indoors and out. Through Years 1 to 6 teachers look for links between subjects. These often act as vehicles for pupils to apply key skills. In an excellent lesson in Year 5 and 6, for example, the teacher made subtle, but thought provoking links with mathematics, as pupils sought to look for Greek influence in British architecture. Amongst other things they looked at the ratio of pillars to the height of the buildings to determine if they had 'perfect geometry,' a

guiding principle of Greek architecture. The attention given here to learning not only provides a context for pupils' efforts but also ensures that pupils enjoy school and develop very positive attitudes to education. Much of the teaching in the school is characterised by this degree of challenge but it is less commonly found in Year 2 than in other year groups. Here, there are examples of pupils learning in interesting ways, for example, by making sweets and biscuits as a way of learning to write instructional text. However, on other occasions learning can be less demanding. This was the case in science and religious education lessons where pupils were not given enough scope to make choices and decisions for themselves or required to work in a thought-provoking manner.

13 The quality of teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that all play a very important part in the learning process. The role of teaching assistants goes well beyond ensuring that lessons run smoothly. They join very effectively with the teacher in planning, teaching and assessing learning. This is particularly effective in the mixed Reception and Year 1 class, where the very thoughtful use of teaching assistants ensures that the teacher is able to plan and teach a curriculum to suit pupils' diverse needs. Care is taken to ensure that assistants know what the intentions of lessons are, and times when the teacher is talking are used to very good effect to assess pupils' abilities. The quality of teaching by assistants to groups of pupils is very good and is consistent with the approach to teaching as set out in the school's teaching and learning policy. Teaching assistants also have a significant impact on the achievement of pupils in need of a boost. The early identification of pupils' needs ensures that precisely targeted catch-up units of work are taught by assistants and this helps bring pupils back on track.

14 The carefully considered system for tracking pupils' progress is one facet of the school's very good procedures for assessing pupils. The bedrock of assessment is the detailed knowledge teachers have of pupils' needs and abilities. This is helped by the relatively small class sizes in the school which help teachers give pupils personal attention. This is often done in subtle ways. The difficulty level of questions, for example, is altered to suit the differing abilities of pupils. Marking, especially in the juniors, engages pupils well in learning. It lets them know how to improve performance and in the best instances elicits a response from pupils to the comments. The school's system of setting key learning targets is working well. Pupils are well aware of these and say that it helps them improve. The best teaching refers to targets in the course of lessons but, as yet, this is not yet a common feature of teaching. There are a few occasions when teachers fully exploit the extremely positive and mature attitudes pupils have to learning by engaging them in assessing their work but on the whole the school is not making the most of this. The best example of this was evident in a very good art and design lesson in a mixed Year 3 and 4 class. Here the teacher asked pupils to critically analyse and jot down their findings about how well they had used tone to show shading. This added an extra dimension to learning in which pupils reflected on the quality of their efforts against distinct success criteria.

#### ***Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 18 lessons***

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	8	5	4	0	0	0

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

### **The curriculum**

The very good quality of the curriculum is added to by a very good wide range of clubs, visits and visitors. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- An innovative approach to curriculum thinking enhances learning.
- The curriculum is enriched both during and beyond the school day.
- The school makes best use of limited accommodation.

## **Commentary**

15 The outward thinking approach of the school has led to important areas of development in the curriculum since the last inspection. These have a common theme of making learning more challenging and interesting. Central to this is the emphasis placed on talk that now forms a thread woven into most subjects. The school has also responded very positively to the changing agenda for early years learning and has transformed the curriculum to place learning through practical activities at its heart. Rather than viewing a mixed aged class of Reception and Year 1 pupils as a problem, the school has looked upon this as an opportunity to smooth out the transition from one year to next. Year 1 pupils, who need it, are able to access the Foundation Stage curriculum.

16 A wide range of clubs are run on a rota basis, this broadens the range of opportunities the school can provide. Where it can the school responds to pupils' interests and requests. This makes the most of the limited number of staff available to run clubs. A full range of sports are represented and pupils take part in local tournaments organised for them by the local secondary school. Pupils also say they enjoy the French and Latin classes the school offers pupils; these are effective in broadening the curriculum and in enlarging pupils' cultural horizons.

17 The accommodation has improved since the last inspection with the building of an attractive hall, which was made possible by the considerable support of the parents. The quality of display has also improved so that pupils' work is now celebrated and the learning environment especially for the youngest children is rich. The school uses its limited classroom space well, and with flexibility, according to the numbers of pupils in each class. Although the school is without a field it has pursued a number of different remedies and with the help of parents is currently negotiating over the use of a nearby area of grassland.

## **Care, guidance and support**

The very good quality of care support and guidance has been maintained. The school values pupils' views highly and involves them very well in the life of the school.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Induction procedures for pupils in the Foundation stage are excellent.
- Staff know pupils very well. They seek and act on their views and pupils enjoy trusting relationships with adults in school.
- Innovative and vigilant tracking systems spot and remedy underachievement very promptly.
- Governors take their responsibilities for pupils' care very seriously.

## **Commentary**

18 The school has put together a very comprehensive induction package for when children start school. Parents are fully involved in this and great consideration is given to ensuring children settle in well. As a result, children are very happy to come to school and make the most of what the school has to offer. Parents are very happy with the school's arrangements.

19 Although the school does not have a formal school council the size of the school makes it possible to seek pupil's views in alternative ways. Pupils feel that they are listened to and that the school takes account of their views. The school has a very open attitude to listening to pupils and does so through regular formal consultations, often in the form of a questionnaire. These are acted upon by the school, for example, drama and gardening clubs have started in response to pupils' views. Asking pupils what they think is one way in which staff get to know pupils. Very good tracking of data and easy going relationships ensure that staff know of pupils' concerns. As a result, pupils strongly feel that they have an adult to turn to when needed, and feel valued by staff.

20 The close eye kept on pupils' progress is seen at its best for pupils who need additional help. Needs are identified very early, with the special educational needs co-ordinator responding speedily to any concerns raised by class teachers. Prompt assessment, including observations of the pupils are carried out. A plan of action is drawn up, with pertinent suggestions for the teacher and teaching assistant to try out. When necessary, additional help is given and performance information is used very well to deploy teaching assistants to teach catch up programmes. Should needs persist outside help is called in and procedures in line with code of practice for special educational needs implemented. However, because of the vigilance of staff, the comprehensive planning of action and the careful management of procedures, this is currently not needed for any pupil in the school.

21 Governors are very active in promoting pupils' health and safety and this leads to a very good standard of daily care. Risk assessments are particularly detailed and are used to guide everyday actions. Statutory obligations are well met. Child Protection procedures are satisfactory. Regular meetings between staff enable concerns to be raised but records overtime are not kept to the same high standard as risk assessments.

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

The school's very good links with parents, the community and other schools have been maintained and have a positive impact on pupils' achievements.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents receive very good information about how they can help with their children's learning.
- Parents' views are valued and they are supportive of the school.
- The local community is used very well to promote learning and to join with the school in seeking improvements.
- Collaborative work with other local schools has impacted very well on management systems and teaching.

## **Commentary**

22 Parents are given a wide range of very good quality information to assist them in joining in with their child's education. Before their children start school parents are encouraged to share with school their perceptions of their children's capabilities and needs. This sets a very good tone for a continuing partnership, which the Reception teacher builds on extremely well through lengthy consultation meetings and advice about how to help with such matters as hearing pupils read. This

marks the beginning of a mutually supportive partnership through which parents join with the school in educating their children. Throughout their time at school parents receive enlightening information about the key work of the school, especially for English and mathematics. This puts parents in a position to help at home and to understand what the school is trying to do, for example, in its approach to speaking and listening. Systems, such as reading records, act as an effective way of communicating with parents on an individual basis. The reports parents receive about their child's progress are highly evaluative and report comprehensively on progress and achievements and include key targets for improvement.

23 The school is very open in seeking and acting on parents' views. Surveys of parental opinions have led to improvements, for example, in the range of clubs offered to pupils. Parents say that they appreciate this and point to how the governors draw the local community and parents together into campaigning and raising funds for a new school hall. This stands as a symbol of what the school has achieved through working with parents. As well as raising large sums of money for projects such as this, parents support the school by ensuring children come to school, that homework is completed and in some instances offering their expertise. They are presently lobbying with the school to solve the long standing issue of a suitable school field. This active and wide ranging partnership makes a very strong contribution to pupils' achievements and in the main, leads to a high level of parental satisfaction with the school.

24 Governors, many of whom are members of the local community, are in a good position to enlist the support of the community for projects such as the school hall. The school is seen as an important part of the village and in turn makes good use of the locality to stimulate study, particularly in geography and history.

25 The school has a very good relationship with its family of small schools. The headteacher, together with other colleagues, has considered how management systems might best work in a small school and has sought joint solutions to common problems. The success of this can be seen in the current strength of management in the school. In a similar way the schools have generated ideas about how to make improvements to writing, which was identified as a common area of concern. This has led to joint training, the implementation of common principals and improvements in writing at Askwith.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The overall quality of leadership and management are very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is aided very well by other staff and the very good quality of governance. The quality of management is very good. The school has been effective in overcoming barriers to success, particularly in relation to accommodation and in making best use of management time.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The empowering and ambitious leadership of the headteacher has drawn all into shaping the school's future.
- Careful attention has been given to management systems that direct quality assurance practices and the ability of staff to carry them out effectively.
- The school is alert to opportunities that enhance the quality of provision it can offer pupils.
- The school lacks a policy for the identification and provision for pupils who are gifted and talented.
- Governors achieve a very good balance between supporting and challenging the school.

### **Commentary**



26 One of the key factors behind the success of the school is the vision and drive the headteacher brings to his work. The school is ambitious for the future and has been tenacious in pursuing key improvements, for example, in the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels of attainment. The consultative style of leadership has ensured that all are drawn into shaping the future so that a very strong sense of common purpose directs the work of other staff and governors. Regular consultation with parents and pupils ensure that their voice too is added to the debate about the future. With management time at a premium this puts the school in a very good position to identify a realistic and highly appropriate list of key priorities. Planning behind the implementation of these spells out the role of key staff and criteria by which the headteacher, staff and governors can evaluate success and therefore acts as a good steer to the work of the school.

27 The school has made very well considered decisions about the ways in which it checks up on the quality of teaching and learning. Aided by the clarity of the improvement agenda and taking account of the pressures which managing several roles places on staff, the headteacher has targeted quality assurance work very well. A simple but informative system of tracking pupil performance is underpinned by minimum expectations of pupil progress. This puts the school in a good position to identify areas of the curriculum, particularly in key subjects, in need of attention. It also allows management to make the best of the work of teaching assistants by directing their efforts to where they are most needed. The headteacher has worked hard to establish a culture of professional debate amongst staff. This has resulted in an outward looking attitude in which staff are prepared to search for best practice. This is evident in the innovative procedures the special educational needs co-ordinator has put in place for pupils showing signs of underachievement.

28 Performance management objectives unite staff in searching for common areas of improvement and enable the headteacher to tailor training accordingly. A very good balance is struck between meeting the needs of staff and serving the school improvement agenda. The upshot of this is that staff feel valued and esteemed and are willing to learn from the practice and ideas of others. The headteacher has mobilised the assistance of outside consultants to join with staff in training. These have been used to very good effect in addressing key priorities, such as revising the school's approach to the provision for Foundation Stage children. A key feature is the way consultants have worked alongside staff, to, for example, carry out dual observations of teaching. This has helped equip co-ordinators with the skills needed for effective management. Key priorities are also supported by ensuring that these are allocated an enhanced amount of monitoring time. Governors have, of late, fulfilled their role of monitoring very well therefore the impact of past actions has been thoroughly evaluated. As a result, the cycle of actions necessary for sustaining improvements is firmly in place.

29 The school has an eye to latching onto opportunities that enhance learning. This is used to very good effect and has helped forge the outward looking nature of staff and to bring outside expertise into school to add to their skills. This is perhaps best illustrated by the Talk for Learning initiative the school has taken part in. Here, the delegation of implementation to a key member of staff has enable her to develop considerable expertise in using talk and listening to aid pupils' thinking. Her work with other staff has been very effective so that speaking and listening has become a key feature of teaching and a platform from which the school has challenged pupils, thinking.

30 The school has gone some way to meeting the needs of pupils with particular talents and gifts. For example, some older pupils attend additional classes for English and mathematics. Also clubs, entry to competitions and events organised by the school provide an outlet for those with particular interests. However, the school is yet to devise ways of identifying all talented and gifted pupils and so some pupils can slip though the net. Although training is planned to help take provision forward, there is currently no formal

policy or overall strategy that forms a co-ordinated approach to meeting the needs of this group of pupils.

31        Governors have a very good overview of the work of the school and play a full part in shaping the future and in determining how successful it has been. Detailed reports from the headteacher, added to by their own monitoring, puts them in a good position to judge success. They have, for example, looked closely at the impact of speaking and listening first hand by visiting classrooms. They bring a varied expertise to the school and ensure that statutory duties are well met, for example, by monitoring the implementation of the school's successful Race Equality Policy. Governors have been particularly tenacious in pressing for improvement to accommodation and, because of the close links they have forged with parents and with the wider community, have enlisted their help in this to extremely good effect. Governors have made very good use of the funds available to them to protect class sizes and have put the school on a firm financial footing by anticipating some areas of future spend, such as the need to implement workplace remodelling reforms.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	243610
Total expenditure	237392
Expenditure per pupil	3124

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	22124
Balance carried forward to the next	28343

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

### AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent induction procedures help children settle quickly into school and help forge a very effective partnership with parents.
- Teaching assistants work very effectively with the teacher to plan a stimulating curriculum based on a wide range of practical tasks.
- Very good assessment procedures ensure that activities closely match children's needs and abilities.
- Close attention is paid to children's personal development.
- Key skills in literacy and numeracy are woven into all areas of learning.
- Best use is made of the limited outdoor play facilities.

#### Commentary

32 The extensive induction programme, which begins in the term before children start Reception, and culminates in a week long experience, prepares children very well for school. As a result, they quickly settle when they start full time in September. Induction also marks the beginnings of the relationship between home and school. This gets off to a very profitable start with parents completing a detailed information booklet which puts the school in a good position to meet the needs of children from the off. Shortly after starting school, lengthy individual consultations help iron out any problems at an early stage and further develops the dialogue between home and school. Parents are also given very good information about how they can help at home. Perhaps the most impressive aspect of the partnership with parents is the individually tailored homework programme the teacher plans for children. A home school booklet, which parents conscientiously join in with, ensures that work at home is well matched to children's abilities and allows for an ongoing dialogue between home and school. Parents say they find these arrangements particularly useful.

33 The school has done much to rectify the shortcomings of the last inspection which pointed to the needs for more practical tasks. Much improved classroom organisation and, crucially, the extremely effective way in which the teacher and teaching assistants work together ensure that practical learning is at the heart of children's' experiences. This is the hallmark of the very good quality of teaching and the very good quality of management which impact directly on achievement. Consequently from a starting point which varies considerably from year to year but which for the current year matches those that typically found, children achieve very well. In the short time they have been in Reception children have already made considerable progress. The philosophy of practical learning can be seen in the 'hands on' tasks for developing children's' **knowledge and understanding of the world**. Whether it be spinning discs to see how colours merge or smelling various objects to learn about senses, interesting tasks stimulate a desire to learn and make it fun. Children are always to be found at the 'science' table where they can engage in several experiments that they have a hand in choosing. Varied opportunities are also provided for children's **creative development**. These encompass a variety of pretend play scenarios and include a very good junk modelling area in which children can invent their own models.

Careful thought is given to the range of tools and media provided. Children's work is given value through the permanent 'Art Gallery' in which they can display their work. This boosts children's self esteem and motivates them to try hard.

34 Adults have a very good knowledge of children's needs and abilities and keep careful track of how well they are doing. Observations made by the teacher and teaching assistants contribute to very detailed personal records of pupils' experiences across all areas of learning. Staff use these very well when working with groups of children or when questioning individuals to pitch work at just the right level. Exemplary planning also arises out of assessment and ensures that the teacher is able to cater very successfully for the needs of Reception and Year 1 pupils by having a common starting point which is developed in different ways depending upon the maturity and ability of the child. Records are also used to good effect to ensure children, who often make choices about the activities they wish to pursue, experience learning across the full range of the curriculum.

35 The teacher and teaching assistants pay very close attention to children's **personal, social and emotional development** and make very good provision for this. They take every opportunity to emphasise the importance of good manners and appropriate behaviour. The very positive ethos of the school creates a caring and calm learning environment. The children's self-esteem is good because staff use praise and encouragement to promote their confidence. Staff engage in very good quality conversations with children and enhance their learning by joining in with their play activities. This promotes the children's interest and enables them to concentrate for extensive periods of time. Almost all of the children follow instructions well and know what is expected of them. In response to the teacher's high expectations, they settle well to planned activities and persevere with tasks. The children share and work together very well. They enjoy making choices and are eager to learn new skills. Relationships are excellent and because of very good achievement all children are likely to exceed the early learning goals for personal, social and emotional development by the time they enter Year 1. Many already present themselves as social beings, able to work very well together, to confidently try out new ideas and show respect for the wishes and feelings of others.

36 The teacher is very skilled at weaving children's **communication, language and literacy development** and **mathematical development** into everyday activities and provides very well for these areas of learning. A very good balance is achieved between short sessions in which key skills are taught and activities which children choose to do for themselves which have elements of literacy and numeracy built in. Direct teaching about the sounds letters make are very well taught and children have fun with rhymes and words they can think of that start with similar sounds. Writing skills are fostered at every turn. Imaginative role play areas hook children to writing. So whether it be ordering pizzas or making notes on the clipboard in the construction area, there is always something to write about. Such times also foster children's speaking and listening skills, with children often to be found chatting away to each other as the customer, waitress or waiter, for example. A similar approach is taken in mathematics with short counting sessions emphasising one more, for instance, and other informal opportunities planned into the activities children choose for themselves. Teachers are quick to spot the opportunities such times present, and will join with pupils so that they can prompt learning with questions. In both these areas of learning children are achieving very well. Children who started in September that were unable to write their name can now accomplish this well and simple sentences are beginning to emerge that communicate meaning. In reading the more able can confidently read simple words and children who began school recognising a small number of sounds

are now picking out rhymes and have added considerably to the letters they now recognise. In mathematics most children count with confidence and a few more able children can add one more. The emphasis on speaking and listening ensures that children have picked up and use a very good range of mathematical terms and apply these very well to a variety of situations. A very high proportion of children are on course to exceed the early learning goals, some have already met them in reading and mathematics. However, because the children started from a slightly lower base in writing, fewer are likely to exceed expectations in this area by the time they start Year 1.

37 The teacher has worked very hard to develop learning outside and this is much improved since the last inspection. Although children do not have a dedicated play area, the teacher, with the help of teaching assistants, nevertheless sets up a good range of learning experiences that cut across areas of learning. The animated retelling of 'We're all going on a Bear Hunt' led to children following 'bear footprints' with bated breath until they got outside, where they went on their own bear hunt. Clues and props, previously set up by the teaching assistant, helped children sequence the story with the teacher joining in to test children's memory and to promote talk about feelings and description. Other opportunities are planned outdoors for children to build using large construction and to pedal tricycles. This serves children's **physical development** well and is added to by sessions taking place in the hall.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### English

Provision in English is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent relationships and perceptive questioning give pupils every opportunity to explain and deepen their thinking.
- Pupils receive a rich and varied reading diet.
- Pupils are given interesting contexts for writing.
- Teachers have a very good idea of what pupils need to do next.

#### Commentary

38 The recent concentration on developing speaking and listening skills is paying dividends. Very effective leadership, utilising the Talk for Learning project, has helped teachers develop great expertise in how they promote speaking and listening. To this end questioning is very effective. Lessons are littered with questions that require pupils, either individually, with a partner, or in small groups to give their opinion, to respond to the ideas of others or to justify their views. Comfortable relationships pervade classrooms, so that pupils feel that their views are of worth. The level of participation in discussion is high. The teaching of speaking and listening is very good, standards are very high and pupils' achievement very good. Many pupils are able to hold extended debates and listen with interest to the views of others. Older pupils join debates with counter views of their own. Not only are standards in speaking and listening higher than they were at the time of the last inspection, work in other aspects of English benefits from the emphasis given to speaking and listening. The school has maintained the high standards evident in the last inspection at the end of Year 2 and 6 in reading and writing. However, from an average attainment on entry, pupils' very good achievement, given impetus through speaking and listening, has led to an increasing number of pupils reaching higher than expected levels at the end of Year 2 and 6. This reflects ambitious and innovative leadership and very good quality teaching.

39 Standards are very high in reading and pupils' achievements are very good; because of this they have an extensive vocabulary to aid speaking and listening and writing. Since the last inspection the school has developed a well stocked supply of books. Although lack of space means that these are housed in several different areas, pupils, nevertheless, have easy access. The computerised system and extensive selection of books are used very well to promote personal research skills and pupils learn to see books as important learning tools. Older pupils say that this helps with study at home. The carefully considered choice of good quality texts also helps pupils to develop very positive attitudes to reading. They enjoy reading and can talk very well about a range of authors. In addition, pupils have daily opportunities to read in class and the school strikes a good balance between hearing individuals read and teaching reading to groups of pupils. Pupils pick up key phonic skills very quickly, and this allows teachers to concentrate on meaning, understanding and the structure of stories. In a very effective session in the mixed Reception and Year 1 class, Year 1 pupils used the story of 'We're all going on a Bear hunt' to look at how the author sequenced the story and added their own thoughts as the story

line progressed. Here, very good teaching provided an interesting context for writing and clearly linked the study of reading with the study of writing.

40 The link teachers make between reading and writing is a key factor in the high standards pupils reach in writing and their very good achievement. The work of other authors presents both a model for pupils to learn from and a stimulus for pupils to write. This is often done in imaginative ways. In an excellent lesson in Years 5 and 6, the teacher made use of past pupils, writing to study how metaphors worked in poetry. This cumulated in a highly stimulating use of the Interactive Whiteboard to show a clip for the Blackadder television series in which pupils looked at how writing is crafted to fit purpose. Such teaching prepares pupils very well for their own writing, which is often imaginative and vibrant but which also is well considered and coherent. Teachers of younger pupils prepare the ground very well for the quality of writing evident in older pupils by ensuring that basic skills are quickly acquired. In some joint work with other local schools, the school has changed its approach to the teaching of spelling and handwriting, which are now much more closely linked to each other. This is working well. Spelling is very good and pupils' handwriting is by and large fluent and legible. The use of whiteboards to note thoughts and draft writing is put to good effect, so that pupils know that it is important on some occasions to formulate thought without the hindrance of concentrating on neat handwriting. This, they save for best copies. Some of the pupils' best work is 'published' in books and, as is the case in Year 2, added to the class or school library. Pupils are able to use these during reading sessions. Pupils, therefore, feel that their work is of worth and say that this makes them feel that their writing is important.

41 Very good tracking of progress and attainment and the flexible deployment of teaching assistants, ensure that pupils who need a boost get the help they need. In this way problems are quickly identified and nipped in the bud early. As a result, there are currently no pupils who have special educational needs for English. However, provision for pupils who have a particular talent for writing has not been given the same level of thought. Teachers do their best to meet their needs within class, and a small number of pupils benefit from work with the local secondary school and others are encouraged to enter national competitions. All pupils are given every indication about how to improve by the perceptive and evaluative comments teachers make on their work. In the best instances these set suitable targets for improvement and pupils are clear about what it is they need to do to improve. Although many pupils possess an analytical eye for examining writing, and take a very responsible and mature attitude to their work, opportunities for them to critically examine their own work and to join with the teacher in assessment are underdeveloped.

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

42 This is one of the strengths of provision. Times for deliberate debate and discussion are planned across several subjects and have a distinct speaking and listening focus. Several subjects, but especially history, are used to very good effect to teach writing. Pupils are also given ample opportunity to carry out research, with older pupils in particular putting in much time at home to produce informative and well written booklets on a variety of themes. This is helped by the very good use the school makes of educational visits to teach and practice writing.

## **MATHEMATICS**



Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers accommodate the needs of mixed aged classes very well.
- Pupils are given very good opportunities to explain their thinking.
- The use of assessment to raise standards is very good.
- The emphasis on problem solving and using mathematics in other subjects makes learning interesting.

### **Commentary**

43 From a starting point of typical standards pupils' achieve very well and standards that are well above average in Year 2 and Year 6 are the result of high expectations and making mathematics meaningful. The school has maintained the high standards evident in the last inspection but has increased the proportion of pupils reaching higher than expected levels. Teaching is very good and teachers plan thoroughly for both mixed ability classes and classes that contain mixed year groups. Teachers are skilled in both challenging and supporting pupils and this results in all pupils achieving well. Achievement is particularly good by older pupils because a fascination of mathematics is developed. Here, pupils are encouraged to delve into the history of numbers to, for example, appreciate the work of Pythagoras and his 'friendly' and 'unfriendly' numbers.

44 The role of talk is important in their achievement. Work in mathematics goes well beyond 'knowing how to do' and requires pupils to know why they are using a particular method. Pupils are required to think and explain methods and reasoning when working with numbers or solving problems. Pupils' understanding of what they are doing and learning is therefore very good. For example in Year 1 pupils were set the task of making a trap door that had to be big enough for a 'bear' to go through. Through the promptings of the teacher pupils soon realised that they needed to measure both the height and width of their bear and construct a door to match. In a similar way, as part of their work on probability pupils in Year 5 and 6 were continually challenged to explain and discuss their emerging results and to predict what further patterns may occur. Participation in lessons is therefore, very high and throughout the school pupils have very good attitudes to mathematics because it is made fun and they are encouraged to think.

45 Day to day assessment is very good, as staff know pupils extremely well. They can therefore adapt, support and challenge to meet the needs of all pupils. Effective leadership has put together a very good tracking system that ensures that pupils' progress is closely monitored from the time they enter the school. Action is therefore taken at an early stage to provide help to groups of vulnerable pupils. Although the school is yet to devise strategies to identify all pupils with a particular talent for mathematics, some older pupils benefit from 'master' classes run by the local secondary school. This is a very useful addition to the curriculum for these pupils.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

46 Teachers are good at forging links between different areas of the curriculum. The use of mathematical skills is evident in science. In Year 6, experimental work on measuring heart rate against exercise was carried through to plotting graphs showing

increases in rate during exercise and recovery times. Work on Ancient Greece included the study of Greek architecture and the mathematical proportions of classical buildings.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is expert at drawing out pupils' understanding of scientific concepts.
- Pupils have ample opportunities to experiment.

### **Commentary**

47 From attainment on entry that in which pupils' abilities matched those typically found, very good achievement has led to a rise in standards since the last inspection. These are now well above expectations in Year 2 and Year 6. Effective leadership, which has included recent observations of teaching, has ensured that a strong corporate approach is taken to teaching science. One of the key strengths in the very good quality of teaching is the opportunity for discussion teachers build into planning, with the precise aim of increasing pupils' understanding in science. As a result, pupils can talk with authority about science and demonstrate a very good understanding of key concepts. The effect of this is seen clearly in the older pupils as they discuss the planning of experimental work to solve a problem or to test a theory.

48 The school's practical approach forms a common thread to science in all classes and ensures that pupils quickly develop the ability to work and think as scientists. Pupils say they enjoy the practical nature to science lessons. In a very good lesson on investigating the effect of exercise on pulse rates in Years 5 and 6, the teacher gave pupils a great deal of scope to make decisions. Pupils decided the best ways of testing and recording results. Not only were they talking animatedly about how to set about their work, but they learnt the importance of collecting reliable data. This gave pupils scope to draw upon their very good mathematics skills as they went on to plot results on a graph. The emphasis on experimental work, discussion and analysis of what is happening resulted in pupils who are articulate in the explanations of their work. A similar emphasis can be seen in Year 2 as pupils set about making a simple electric circuit. However, teaching gave pupils fewer choices to make and so, although they learn to insert a switch into a circuit, opportunities for pupils to come up with their own methods of making switches were missed. As a result, the majority of pupils relied on the teacher's demonstrated method. This can be contrasted with the freedom the teacher gave to pupils in recording their work. Here, pupils eagerly came up with suggestions of how to simplify drawings, thereby taking early steps towards scientific diagrams.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The co-ordinator has ensured that there has been good improvement since the last inspection.

- The well planned curriculum ensures that due attention is given to the development and application of key skills.
- Projects taught in Years 5 and 6 are particularly thought provoking.

## **Commentary**

49 Improvements in provision have resulted in higher standards since the last inspection. Pupils now achieve well, especially in Years 5 and 6, where imaginative tasks tax pupils' thinking. Standards meet expectations in Years 2 and exceed them in Year 6. Improved facilities mean that pupils now have more access to computers and training has boosted the confidence of teachers. The recent addition of an Interactive Whiteboard in Years 5 and 6 is used to good effect by the teacher in a wide variety of lessons and makes it easier to demonstrate key skills than in other classrooms. Here teachers have to rely on using a standard sized screen for pupils to gather around. They are helped in this by the small number of pupils in each class. The co-ordinator has put together a thoughtful scheme of work, which stresses the use of ICT in other subjects and the application of skills to a variety of contexts. The addition of a visit to a centre specialising in ICT adds to the curriculum for older pupils and acts as a springboard for work back at school.

50 Too little teaching was seen during the inspection to make a judgement about its overall quality and so evidence arises out of an examination of pupils' work to date, including discussions with pupils and the co-ordinator, and scrutiny of planning. Planning indicates that key skills are taught to groups of pupils or the class as a whole. Once taught pupils are given good opportunities to put these skills into practice. Teachers keep track of progress through a simple but effective record system that is displayed next to computers which is filled when pupils demonstrate the use of a particular skill. In this way teachers are able to see who needs more practice or time at the computer. In some classes, as is the case in Year 2, pupils fill these in themselves and so take some responsibility for assessing their own learning. Careful thought is given to practicing key skills in useful contexts. In Year 2 for example, pupils were learning to write in a text box as they described what they had been doing in design and technology. All in all therefore, pupils develop a good range of skills to draw upon that are added to well as they progress through the school.

51 Teaching in Years 5 and 6 makes best use of improved facilities by using the Interactive Whiteboard to teach skills. However, the bulk of the work is tackled through special projects, which, over the course of the year, cover the ICT curriculum. These are very interesting and testing. To date, for example, pupils have put together a school website and are skilled at building links into this, so that the site has been put together with a clear sense of audience in mind. Along with other schools, they access online radio stations to broadcast interviews and events that happen in school. Pupils say that they find this work very stimulating and they provide a vehicle for problem solving using computers and opportunities for independent and creative thought.

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

52 ICT is used well in other subjects. Pupils have easy access to the computers in their classrooms and they are often in use in a range of lessons and for a good range of purposes. Other equipment is also well used in other subjects, with pupils in Year 2 for example, using the digital camera to take pictures of the locality to aid work in history and geography.

## HUMANITIES

53 No lessons were seen in **geography** and so no overall judgement of provision can be made. Work was examined and discussions held with pupils and the co-ordinator. The school has put in place a suitable scheme of work. Youngest pupils know where they live and can give directions from school. Holiday destinations provide suitable contrasting locations. Pupils in Year 6 confidently link history, geography and religious education together as they discuss different cultures, religions and places around the world.

### History

Provision in history is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching helps pupils to think as historians and makes learning interesting.
- History is used well to foster skills in other subjects.

### Commentary

54 Standards have risen since the last inspection. From an average starting point, pupils now achieve very well to exceed expectations in Year 2, and in Year 6 in particular, a large majority of pupils are working at a level that is in advance of that normally expected. Much of this is down to the way in which teachers help pupils learn the skills of an historian. Confident leadership has helped staff achieve a good balance between learning facts about history and carrying out historical detective work. It is the latter that makes teaching very good overall. In Year 2 for example, pupils were asked to look at similarities and differences in postcards spanning the last hundred years. Very effective questioning prompted pupils to consider the motive of the sender. So one child, for instance, was able to appreciate that a soldier was sending a picture postcard of himself home in case he was killed. Such sensitive teaching uses history well to promote pupils' spiritual development and by the end of Year 2 many pupils have a growing sense of chronology and are aware of some of the major ways in which we find out about the past.

55 Interesting ways of teaching history are also found in the juniors. As a result pupils say they enjoy history and develop very positive attitudes to the subject. In Years 5 and 6, for example, pupils practiced the skills of archaeology as they rose to the challenge of putting back together the fragmented shards of a Greek urn. In an excellent lesson pupils searched for evidence of Greek heritage in today's world, leading to exploring such subtle links as democracy. This was only possible because of the teacher's own knowledge and the emphasis put on talk. The recent work on speaking and listening is clearly seen in the way teachers value talk as evidence of learning and as a vehicle for thinking. As part of a project on Ancient Egypt the teacher in Year 3 and 4 has set up a role play area in which pupils act as historical travel agents, putting together package deals for the ancient traveller. All in all therefore, pupils enjoy a rich and varied curriculum and have very good knowledge of the reliability of source material, how historians piece together information about the past and how things that happened in the past have important implications for life today.

56 Teachers make good use of history to aid study in other subjects. Older pupils in particular are given plenty of opportunities to carry out research, including searching on the Internet. This not only helps with the development of research skills but adds to the factual knowledge they have of history. Writing skills are well promoted with pupils often writing from the point of view of others, as, for example, in Years 5 and 6 when they wrote as a Spartan child. Good use is made of the locality and of people who have memories of the past to add a local flavour to the study of the village. Art work and work in design and technology adds interest to history and in turn history acts as a way of putting into practice subject specific skills.

## Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The emphasis given to talk and reflection, aids pupils' spiritual development.
- The study of other faiths helps pupils develop respect for other faiths and cultures.

### Commentary

57 As at the previous inspection standards meet the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The quality of teaching and achievement is satisfactory overall. Leadership has been effective in encouraging teachers to use talk to good effect in lessons, with sensitive teaching using religious education well to provide for pupils' spiritual development. This is an improvement since the last inspection. For example, in response to probing questions older pupils were able to talk about the importance of belief in the lives of worshippers. This resulted in mature reflection with, for example, pupils talking about whether belief in one faith outweighs the beliefs of another. This aspect of teaching is good. However, there are relatively fewer opportunities for pupils to write about religious education. On occasion good openings fostered through discussion, are not always followed up in demanding enough ways. A well intentioned task of sending Eid cards to a Muslim to mark the end of Ramadan was let down by some missed opportunities for pupils to use the knowledge they had gained of the Muslim faith to design a suitable card. Instead pupils' efforts were largely restricted to cutting out patterns from wrapping paper that had no particular reference to the Muslim faith.

58 The strength in religious education lies in the good contribution it makes to pupils' cultural development. Younger pupils, for example, are introduced to the festival of Diwali as a festival that is special to Hindu people. Here, a visit by a practicing Muslim helped make learning real and helped pupils develop respect for other people's beliefs and customs. In a good lesson with a mixed Reception and Year 1 class, the teacher constantly stressed the importance of respect as pupils made Diwali lamps from clay. A suitable emphasis is also given to Christianity, with key times in the church's year used to help pupils develop an appropriate understanding of Christianity.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

59 It was not possible to inspect these subjects in sufficient depth to arrive at an overall judgement on provision. Lessons observed have been supplemented by an examination of planning and pupils' work, plus discussion with pupils and co-ordinators.

60 The scheme of work for **art and design** achieves a good balance between using art and design in other subjects and using the work of other artists to help pupils develop a range of techniques. Provision is also enhanced by a well-attended art club. In the one lesson seen standards exceeded expectations with very good teaching demonstrating clearly to pupils how to use shade and tone to add depth to their observational drawings and to critically evaluate their efforts. There are good examples of pupils' artwork on display. This represents an improvement since the last inspection.

61 In **design and technology** pupils have the opportunity to use a range of tools and learn about a suitable range of mechanisms. For example, pupils in Year 2 built good quality vehicles by learning how axles work. On other occasions work is linked well to other subjects, with work pupils have completed in Year 6 in relation to history themes being of good quality. The school has put together a scheme of work, which ensures appropriate coverage of the curriculum.

62 The only evidence available for **music** was taken from a hymn practice during the inspection. Pupils enjoy singing, which was accompanied by recorded piano. The recorder group is flourishing and pupils confidently accompanied one of the songs, even though some pupils had only been learning this term. The school lacks a music specialist on the staff but takes advantage of the good will of peripatetic teachers to help with music productions during the year.

63 The school ensures that, despite pressures placed on the **physical education** curriculum by the lack of a suitable field, the scheme of work covers the full range of the curriculum. Teachers draw on a variety of information to help them plan the curriculum around a set of key themes that map out the year. Pupils have regular opportunities to go swimming and provision is supplemented by a good range of extra curricular experiences that add interest to learning.

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

64 Insufficient teaching and learning was seen to arrive at an overall judgement on provision for pupils' **personal, social and health education**. Evidence was gathered by talking to pupils and the co-ordinator. The school has added to pupils' experiences since the last inspection and ensures that pupils have regular opportunities to discuss a range of sensitive issues. This is seen by the school as a key way of enabling pupils to reflect on what animates them and others and to help add to the spiritual development of pupils, a relative weakness noted during the last inspection. In one short session seen pupils were encouraged, through sensitive teaching, to put themselves in the place of a fictional lonely child who was being left out of games. This helps pupils to see how they should behave towards each other when they are playing. The school has in place suitable procedures for sex and relationship education and for drugs education. Outside expertise is used to supplement the school's expertise.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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