

INSPECTION REPORT

ASTON FENCE JUNIOR AND INFANT SCHOOL

Sheffield, South Yorkshire

LEA area: Rotherham

Unique reference number: 106859

Headteacher: Mr D M Clegg

Lead inspector: Mr G Cooper

Dates of inspection: 04 – 06 October 2004

Inspection number: 266338

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:	139
School address:	Sheffield Road Woodhouse Mill Sheffield South Yorkshire
Postcode:	S13 9ZD
Telephone number:	0114 269 2688
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Fargher
Date of previous	01/03/1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Aston Fence Primary is a small school set in a village context but adjacent to the South Yorkshire conurbation and within sight of the M1. The school has grown to admit its permitted maximum of 140 boys and girls with a waiting list for the admission of other pupils. Most houses are owner occupied and the social and economic context is broadly average. However, fewer pupils are entitled to a free school meal than in schools nationally. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including those who have a statement of educational needs, is similar to that found in schools nationally. Almost all pupils come from a white European background. Three pupils come from a range of other backgrounds but none are identified as learning English as a new language.

Attainment on entry to school is broadly average. Pupil¹ mobility is low. Among its awards the school has the Basic Skills Quality mark (re-awarded in May 2004), a school achievement award and the Football Association Charter Standard.

¹ Mobility: the incidence of pupils joining or leaving the school at times other than the usual time of joining or leaving.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23647	Mr G Cooper	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Special educational needs English as an additional language
13450	Mrs J Madden	Lay inspector	
11419	Mrs J Underwood	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Physical education Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage
32831	Mr T Walker	Team inspector	English Geography History Religious education

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	15
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	17
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE AND SUBJECTS KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	30

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Aston Fence Primary is a **very effective** school providing very good value for money. Standards are well above average in mathematics and above average in English and science. Pupils achieve well, with no differences in the achievement of different groups of pupils. Teaching is good overall with a substantial proportion of very good teaching. Pupils learn well as a result. The school is well led at every level. The headteacher's very good leadership gives a strong sense of direction and purpose to the work of the school. There are no significant barriers to learning, although the accommodation restricts the development of the school. Aids to learning are the long term stability of the team of adults working in the school and the high reputation that the school enjoys locally.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards have risen since the previous inspection, especially since 2001.
- Strengths in teaching identified at the previous inspection have been maintained and improved.
- The school provides a caring and stable environment for learning; relationships are excellent.
- A rich and well focused curriculum gives momentum to learning and achievement.
- The many strengths of the school stem from the positive leadership.

Very good improvement has been made since the previous inspection. The many areas for action at that time have all been addressed. In particular, very strong progress has been made in standards and in the use of assessment information to promote progress. Provision in the Reception class is good and does all that is necessary to meet requirements. All the strengths identified at the previous inspection have been maintained and intensified. The school has continued to make progress in many other areas of its development, including building maintenance, provision of resources, strengthening teaching and classroom support, providing for the welfare of pupils and in developing leadership qualities throughout the school.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Achievement in the school is **good** and very good by the end of Year 6. The results above are for the group of Year 6 pupils who left the school in 2003. The validated results for the most recent group of pupils are not yet available but the indications are that the trend of improvement has continued. In the work seen, standards are well above average in mathematics and art and design. They are above average throughout the school in English and science. On the available evidence, standards are better than expected for pupils' ages in design and technology, information and communication technology (ICT), history, geography and physical education. Standards are as expected in religious education. There are no areas of the National Curriculum where standards are judged to be unsatisfactory. Children in the

Reception Year make good progress and most are well on target to achieve the goals set for the end of the year. Many children will exceed the goals set for them. Aston Fence is an inclusive school, ensuring that all pupils achieve well.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **very good**. Pupils have a strong sense of valuing self and respecting others but the spiritual dimension of the school is not as strongly provided for as the provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards their learning and behave extremely well in lessons and outside in the playground. Attendance is now very good but unauthorised attendance is a little higher than in most schools nationally. The increasing number of pupils removed from school for holidays during term time is a matter of concern for the school. Pupils arrive promptly and ready to get lessons off to a good start.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good**. The teaching is **good** overall. This leads to the rapid learning of basic skills that promote the achievement of all pupils. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is consistently very good. Teachers plan effectively and teach briskly. They cater well for all their pupils and this assures efficient learning for all. Effective strategies for keeping track of pupils' progress enable teachers to identify what needs to be learned next. The school is in the early stages of identifying how pupils can have a better understanding of how to improve. Good use is made of teachers' subject knowledge. The invaluable support of learning support assistants is a positive factor in pupils' learning. The school's very effective links with parents and strongly developed strategies for caring for and supporting pupils make a positive contribution to the overall quality of education. Teaching, the curriculum and the care of pupils combine to ensure that all achieve well and are included in the very rich range of opportunities the school has to offer.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is **very well** led and managed. The headteacher gives a very strong sense of direction which pervades the school. A mark of this is that even the younger pupils identify the aim to provide quality in all aspects of school life. Management is very good, enabling the school to function smoothly and to provide a systematic environment for learning. Governors are very committed to the school. They have a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development. However, they have no formal strategy for gathering first hand information about the school's work. The combined strengths of the leadership of the headteacher, other key staff, the governing body and very effective management, ensure that pupils are provided for very efficiently and that they get every opportunity to achieve well.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The response to the pre-inspection meeting and questionnaire for parents was very positive. Parents' confidence in the work of the school was confirmed in discussion with parents during the inspection. They identify a school with many significant strengths. A very small number have some concern about their understanding of how to help their child's learning at home and about their knowledge of their child's progress. Inspectors believe the school does all it can to resolve these concerns. Pupils are very settled and confident about their school life. They relish the opportunities given to them to have a voice in the future direction of the school, particularly through the meetings of the school council.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

In this very effective school, there are no major issues to resolve. To intensify the school's strengths it should:

- Work with the relevant authorities to see how school development can be enhanced by improvements to the accommodation.
- Consider how regular focused visits by governors can enhance their decision making.
- Continue to develop strategies for pupil self evaluation.
- Make the provision for the spiritual aspect of school life more obvious.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is **good** throughout the school and **very good** by the time pupils are in Year 6. Standards are well above average in mathematics by that year group. Standards in English and science are above average at the same age. Standards in ICT, design technology, geography, history and physical education are better than expected by Year 6. Standards in art and design are well above average throughout the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Whole school development has seen achievement improve throughout the school.
- Because provision in the Reception class has improved well since the previous inspection, many children in that class will exceed the goals set for them.
- The strengths of the school combine well together to ensure above average, and sometimes, well above average, standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
- Especially in Year 6, pupils' National Curriculum standard test results are on a trend of significant improvement.
- The quality of pupils' work in art and design is a strength of the curriculum and a key element in achievement across the curriculum.

Commentary

1. Achievement and provision in the Foundation Stage (Reception class) were issues for improvement at the time of the previous inspection. Provision has improved a great deal and now children achieve well across the recommended areas of learning. Very early in their time in school, children in the Reception class are well settled and get on well with each other and the adults working with them. They enjoy sharing books with adults, are prepared to initiate conversation and relish opportunities for the exploration of early writing skills. Number rhymes and songs confirm their growing understanding of numeracy. A range of different media and musical instruments stimulates their creative development, while energetic outdoor play is a regular feature of their activities. Staff provide ample opportunities for children to develop their understanding and knowledge of the world.
2. The table below illustrates the results pupils in Year 2 achieved in the National Curriculum standard tests in 2003. Although these results showed a decline compared to the previous year's results, the school's standard remains above the national standard. The results for 2004 are not yet validated but the school identifies improvement on the 2003 results. Compared to all schools nationally and to schools in a similar social and economic context, standards were above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. Results vary quite significantly from year to year and this is usual with a year group as small as this. However, the overall school trend in results is one of improvement above the national trend.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.4 (17.3)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.4 (16.0)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.4 (18.6)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 19 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. In the work seen in Years 1 and 2, achievement is good overall. Standards of work seen are above average in English and science and better than expected for pupils' ages in design and technology, geography and history. Standards are average in mathematics and match the expected level in ICT and religious education. Pupils learn good basic skills and apply these well to their work across the curriculum.
4. The table below illustrates the result of National Curriculum standard tests for pupils in Year 6 in 2003. These results are both an improvement on the previous year's results but also better than the results of all schools nationally and schools in a similar social and economic setting. Although the results for 2004 are not yet validated, the school is confident that significant improvement has been made and has described the 2004 results as 'the best ever in the school'. In the 2003 results, standards were above average in English and well above average in mathematics and science when compared to all schools and when taking pupils' prior achievement into account. The school's improvement is in line with the national trend but this is a measure of how far the school has improved in relation to its poor results in the past.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.6 (25.5)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	28.5 (25.8)	26.8 (26.7)
science	30.9 (27.4)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 21 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

5. In the work seen pupils achieve very well. This is the result of a number of factors: pupils' attitudes to their activities and tasks, very good teaching, a full and rich curriculum and dynamic whole school leadership and management. Standards are well above average in mathematics and well above expectations for pupils' ages in art and design. They are above average in English and better than expected in design and technology, ICT, geography, history and physical education. In religious education standards match the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. A particular feature of achievement across the curriculum is the way in which art and design is used very effectively to reflect what pupils know, understand and can do in a wide range of subjects.
6. The school is inclusive in that all pupils achieve well whatever their original background or potential. Pupils with special gifts and talents are provided for well. Those who find learning difficult get good support to keep them motivated and engaged in their learning. Both boys and girls benefit from the full range of activities available, including those happening out of normal school hours. There are no significant differences in the achievements of boys and girls. Nor are pupils in mixed age classes disadvantaged despite the complexities involved in planning for them. The school manages this well. Pupils also achieve well in ICT. Weekly lessons ensure progressive development of

skills. There are regular opportunities for pupils to use these skills in a range of other subjects, although it is difficult to provide Internet access for pupils housed outside the main school building.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour, both in and out of lessons, are **very good**. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Attendance has improved significantly recently and is now **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils consistently behave very well because teachers have high expectations of them.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and involve themselves in a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- The ethos of the school promotes excellent relationships in which pupils take responsibility for their actions.
- The school effectively develops pupils' appreciation of other cultures and beliefs but spiritual awareness is under-developed.

Commentary

7. Pupils are very keen to come to school where they feel secure and develop in confidence. They demonstrate very good attitudes to all aspects of school life and work co-operatively. The teachers promote an atmosphere where pupils respond very well to the challenging targets set for them and know that their contributions in lessons will be valued. Throughout the school, the enriched curriculum stimulates an enthusiasm for learning, allowing pupils to make good progress.
8. Relationships within the school are excellent. Pupils respect their teachers and during the inspection pupils were, at all times, kind and courteous towards each other. They benefit from the very good teamwork demonstrated by the stable and very well-organised teaching and support staff, which epitomizes the school. On more than one occasion, in lessons, pupils were observed engrossed in activities which required them to help each other refine and perfect the task in hand.
9. There is a strong emphasis on personal development with many children, including all of Year 6, taking on roles of responsibility. Elected members of the school council work very well as a team and reach a consensus. Views arising from the council are taken seriously by the school. Recently, members' suggestions have led to improvements in litter control and toilet facilities.
10. Both in and around the school pupils behave very well and live up to the high expectations their teachers have of them. Very little time is lost in having to correct inappropriate behaviour in lessons and involvement in a wide range of extra-curricular activities ensures that pupils are fully occupied. In the playground older pupils show compassion for younger ones and support those whose behaviour lapses, by encouraging them to join in. Boys and girls play harmoniously together showing that the strategies the school has for promoting good behaviour are very effective and indicating a significant improvement in standards since the last inspection.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	5.0
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.7
National data	0.4

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

11. Pupils arrive promptly and ready to get lessons off to a good start. Attendance is now very good but the level of unauthorised absence is a little higher than in most schools nationally. It is a matter of concern to the school that the number of lessons missed by pupils taken out of school for holidays during term time is on the increase. There have been no recent exclusions.
12. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well promoted overall. The school ethos facilitates the promotion in the pupils of a strong sense of self worth and self confidence, but the spiritual dimension is not as strongly provided for as the provision for the other areas of personal development. Daily acts of collective worship, for example, contribute much to pupils' moral, social and cultural growth but less to their spiritual development. Pupils demonstrate that they know what is right and what is wrong. They are encouraged from the onset to consider their actions carefully, as each action has a consequence. The older pupils are good role models for the younger ones and have developed their own sensible school rules. The school council has had a high impact which is manifest by the way in which pupils take on responsibility for each other and for their own actions. Very clear moral codes of a high standard are reinforced during lessons, in assemblies and in the playground and, as a result, pupils' behaviour is consistently very good. Social skills are considered important by the school and many opportunities are offered within the school community and beyond.
13. One of the issues raised at the last inspection was the lack of a firm foundation on which pupils could develop their understanding of the beliefs and values of different groups in society and around the world. This is no longer the case as the evidence now shows that pupils have a very good knowledge of a variety of other faiths, backgrounds and traditions. A range of visits and visitors to the school enhances this aspect. A notable success was the 'Islamic Awareness Week' which involved role play, making booklets, symbolism and rituals. The school has 'adopted' a child from Ethiopia which provides a very good way of involving the pupils in African culture by talking about family life, health issues and coping with extreme difficulties. The school's multi-cultural aspect is therefore strong and represents good improvement from the previous inspection.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good** and **very good** in Years 3 to 6. The curriculum is good and excellent in its enrichment. Very good arrangements are made for the care and welfare of pupils. Effective links with parents, the community and other educational establishments have a positive effect on achievement. The accommodation is a limiting factor in the future development of the school.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** throughout the school and very good for the oldest pupils. Procedures for assessment are good and the information is well used to promote achievement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers make very good use of their strong subject knowledge.
- Teaching methods are used very effectively.
- Learning support assistants contribute significantly to overall achievement.
- Adults working in the classroom are skilled at ensuring all pupils are involved in their learning.
- Pupils acquire a very good range of skills, knowledge and understanding which they use to good advantage.
- While assessment of pupils' work is significantly improved, pupils are not consistently aware of what they need to do in order to improve even further.

Commentary

14. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection. This is the view held by parents and confirmed in the lessons seen during the inspection. Almost all lessons were judged to be good or better and none was less than satisfactory. The school has made good use of the observation of lessons and performance management to improve teaching overall. This is the impact of very good leadership and management of provision.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 30 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	15	13	2	0	0	0

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

15. There are many strengths to the teaching and no significant weaknesses. Literacy and numeracy are well taught and pupils acquire a good range of basic skills. They put these to good use as they reflect what they know and understand in science, geography and history. As much of religious education is taught through story-telling and role play, basic skills are used less effectively in this area. Teachers have good subject knowledge which they use to very good effect, making lessons frequently vibrant and interesting. This is a strong support to learning and helps pupils achieve well. Teachers have a good understanding of what works in the lesson. For example, they ensure that tasks meet the need of the different groups in the class. They share learning objectives at the start of lessons and ensure that pupils know what they are looking for to be successful. Good use is made of 'talking partners' where pupils discuss what they know and understand before committing themselves publicly or before beginning written tasks. This confirms and secures their understanding effectively. Pupil example is well used and there is effective use of praise where it is merited.
16. A significant element of most lessons is the powerful support given by learning support assistants. They are well skilled. They know very precisely what is expected of them. Particularly with pupils identified as having special educational needs, they motivate and engage them so that pupils concentrate well and stay in control of what they need to learn. This is a significant element in the achievement and learning of all pupils, whatever their prior achievement and potential. Teachers plan effectively for difference, including in mixed age classes for the needs of both younger and older pupils.
17. Because of the significant strengths of the teams of adults working in the classroom, pupils learn well. They are interested and well motivated. They co-operate well where this is a requirement. Especially in science and ICT lessons, small groups and pairs work very effectively, each supporting the achievement of others. This is a significant feature of physical education, too, and quality team work is noted on the football field in out of school activities.
18. One or two lessons are not as vibrant and brisk as others. On very rare occasions, the teacher finds it difficult to prevent pupils from calling out at the wrong time. Occasionally, less mature pupils find it difficult to work independently without more noise than is necessary. This has the effect of slowing down the pace of the lesson. Sometimes pupils do not listen sufficiently well to understand what they need to do. However, this is in a very small minority of lessons in a picture of overall good practice in the classroom.
19. Since the previous inspection, the school has worked hard at ensuring assessment is used effectively to promote further learning. It has done this successfully. Teachers mark work well, and involve pupils well in the lesson through challenging questioning that clarifies what pupils know and understand. However, while teachers are careful about discussing learning objectives and making it clear what is expected of the pupils, pupils are less adept and used to evaluating their own work. Nor are they aware as a matter of

course what their personal targets are. The school has already begun to take steps to develop this side of assessment and its use in promoting more progress.

The curriculum

Curriculum provision is **good** for all pupils in Years 1 to 6 and for children in the Foundation Stage. Staffing, resources for the school and the accommodation for the Foundation Stage are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Enrichment of the curriculum is excellent, with an impressive range of visits and visitors.
- Planning for the Foundation Stage curriculum is improved and now appropriate to the children's needs.
- Accommodation for the Reception children is good, providing a welcoming environment.
- Lack of space for the main school inhibits the further development of the school.

Commentary

20. The curriculum meets the requirements for all subjects including those of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Children in the Foundation Stage now enjoy a good curriculum with an appropriately wide range of activities in all areas of learning. National literacy and numeracy strategies have been successfully implemented. Teachers provide a broad programme for personal, social and health education including sex and drugs education. The school is inclusive, offering all pupils access to activities and equal opportunities. The links made across subjects that make learning relevant and meaningful are a particular strength of the curriculum. These links are powerfully reinforced by an impressive range of visits out of school and visitors into school.
21. The school has effective strategies for identifying the needs of pupils who find learning difficult. The management of these special educational needs is efficient. The targets on individual plans for learning are specific and clear. These targets are drawn up in discussion between classroom staff with the involvement of parents and sometimes of pupils. The procedures and the support given during lessons ensure that all pupils who have learning needs stay in contact with the work their peers are doing and enjoy the privileges of the full and rich curriculum provided by the school.
22. A dedicated and enthusiastic team of teachers and support staff work very well together. All adults are well deployed to meet the demands of the curriculum and to give effective support to pupils' learning. Accommodation for the Foundation Stage is good, providing the children with a spacious, well organised and attractive environment, including a secure outdoor play area which has been developed since the previous inspection. This area is used effectively as an extension of the classroom but during inclement weather use is restricted because of lack of shelter. The accommodation for the main school is inhibiting the further development because it is small and limits expansion. The school is well resourced in most areas except for large wheeled toys in the Foundation Stage.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils in the school are very well cared for, guided and supported. Pupils are very well involved in the school through staff seeking, valuing and acting on their views. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The welfare, safety and child protection arrangements for pupils are given very high priority.
- Recent developments in consulting pupils ensure that they become fully involved in their learning and in school developments.
- Assessment and tracking of pupils now ensures their personal and academic well-being is a priority of staff.
- There is good induction of children into the school and they are similarly well supported in their move to the secondary school.

Commentary

24. All the health and safety aspects of school life are very well covered by an active partnership involving governors, staff, pupils and the local authority. The Healthy School initiative ensures that pupils' physical and mental welfare is an integral part of any planning, and the school is now providing fresh fruit for the pupils. An emphasis on pupils being aware of their own safety is clearly demonstrated in physical education. In Year 6 the school has two pupils designated as Road Safety Officers. Following an initiative by these two pupils regarding the high speed of vehicles passing on the road outside the school, the police introduced speed traps. The penalties imposed by police as a result of this were the usual fine and points or a discussion with the pupils! Most offenders chose the latter, including the father of one of the children in the school.
25. The school is now putting great emphasis on the involvement and opinions of children in running the school. The school council has made a very good start and is developing into a powerful influence in the school; pupils are keen and sensible. Teachers are discussing pupils' learning styles and subject leaders discuss their subject areas with pupils. Circle times ensure that pupils have an opportunity to discuss areas of difficulty in the school and for individual pupils. Pupils also now attend one of the three open evenings with their parents to discuss progress but they are not yet involved in the setting of their own targets for learning and personal development.
26. As a result of the assessment procedures in place pupils are now set work that is appropriate to their skills and individual needs. In the classroom pupils are well supported by teaching assistants and teachers who give individual guidance and work so that they are all achieving and growing in self-confidence.
27. The school takes children from many different settings into the Reception class and as a result it offers three afternoon visits for children to become familiar with the setting. This helps parents, the children and staff to begin on their learning partnership and for the assessment process for each child to begin. The move to secondary school is similarly supportive and begins in Year 5. These close links enable pupils to get to know teachers, especially in the science, physical education and modern language faculties, and meet the liaison officer on a group and one to one basis.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school and parents have a very strong partnership, based on mutual trust.
- The curriculum is well supported by community links.
- Teachers' professional development and the school's strategic development are well supported by the contacts with other schools.

Commentary

28. The school works very effectively with all parents and one of the main findings in the regular consultation undertaken by the school was that parents view this as a very friendly school. Many parents are involved on a daily basis with the better reading project, which they can plan around their other commitments. The school is very aware of the increasing commitments of parents and the need to accommodate this in plans. The overwhelming majority of parents are very supportive of the school and attendance at termly open evenings is very high. They are well informed by these meetings and by the annual reports on their child's progress. In addition they have easy access to teachers at the beginning and end of the day. The school tries to involve parents in their children's learning through regular curriculum evenings, although these are less well attended than open evenings.
29. The school is outward looking and has formed effective partnerships with the Aston Recreational Council, which supports the non-curricular aspects of the outside facilities, and the Parish Council that uses the school and contributes to the office equipment. There is very little local industry but the school does use the local shops and clinics to support the curriculum for the youngest pupils. Local sports clubs, including Sheffield Wednesday Football Club and Rotherham Titans, are very much part of school. Visits by and to public services such as the police and fire service are incorporated into the curriculum. Most of all however, the school uses the wider community to extend the horizons of its pupils by regular visits to a wide range of sites, for example in Whitby and the Railway Museum.
30. The school has constructive links with other schools to support its provision for pupils. The close relationship with the secondary school is especially supportive of those pupils who have special needs. The partnerships in physical education and dance expand the curriculum and help teachers develop their skills. This extends to all ages in the school where a sports specialist works on, for example, hockey, netball and gymnastics with the result that pupils are all very keen and enthusiastic about sport. The fact that the headteacher supports other schools has a positive impact on strategic development by enabling him to look closely at alternative practice and introduce positive aspects into the school. Teaching staff are encouraged to visit other schools to look at good practice and further develop their skills. As a result, teachers are enabled to have a much better understanding of what works well in lessons and what does not work well, thus improving the quality of their pupils' learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good** overall. The school is managed very effectively. Its leadership is strong and resolute. Governors play a significant part in deciding its future direction.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The effective leadership of the school has been responsible for improving provision and thus raising standards and achievement.
- Efficient management strategies make for a smooth running school where pupils are encouraged to learn.
- The leadership of the curriculum and teaching is excellent, making a profound impact upon pupils' achievement.
- The vision of the school is shared very effectively among leaders, other staff and pupils; a characteristic strength of the school is that all identify with its high aspirations.
- Governors know the strengths of the school well and use the information effectively for their decision making; however, they have no formal strategy for visiting the school to gain first hand knowledge of the effectiveness of their spending decisions.

Commentary

31. At the time of the previous inspection the school was found to have shortcomings in standards and achievement, provision for the children in the Reception class and in the way assessment information was used to plan for future progress. It is the strongly expressed view of parents that the school has made a great deal of improvement since that inspection. The inspection team agrees wholeheartedly with that view. All the issues for improvement found at that time have been successfully turned into school strengths, and existing strengths have been maintained. The success of the school is the result of very effective leadership and management. It stems from the leadership of the headteacher who has a strong sense of the quality he requires of pupils' work, of lessons and of the curriculum. Staff are agreed that he leads by example, and, in response, they act as very good role models for pupils. The pupils themselves remark, 'We do quality work here', and it is so. The headteacher is very well supported by all members of staff, not only those who work in the classroom, but also those who work behind the scenes ensuring that the school office is run efficiently and that the school is a clean and tidy environment for learning. It is a hallmark of the school's success that all pupils are included in all the opportunities it offers and that staff are united in their efforts to continue to make improvements.
32. The very good leadership of the school is supported by a range of management strategies that are very effectively embedded in its work. School improvement planning has been instrumental in identifying what needs to be prioritised and how success is going to be achieved. The continuous professional development of staff has been a priority in exploring good practice in the curriculum and the classroom and adapting it to school use. Performance management of staff is a key strategy in ensuring that they are given praise for their successes and encouraged to find ways to further development themselves and find job satisfaction. It is no surprise that job vacancies are a rarity in the school and that staff are successful in promoting pupils' achievement. Financial management has been wise and effective. The accommodation, although it has limitations, has been brought up to acceptable standard. Despite this, parents and pupils agree that the school needs more and bigger classrooms. Governors agree that the school could be successfully expanded were accommodation available. The school has to turn prospective new pupils away from the doors on a regular basis. Pupils and staff appreciate the careful management that has ensured good quality resources for learning. Governors have been able to provide sufficient finance to maintain a good quality of teaching and learning support staff.

33. Governors have a good understanding of their role and are effective in ensuring that their legal requirements are fulfilled. They are experienced and committed to the school. However, their information gathering is reliant on public information, the reports of the headteacher and informal discussions with those involved in the work of the school. They have no current strategy for gathering first hand information through regular focused visits to the school. It is difficult for them to judge the effectiveness of the spending decisions they make.
34. The principles of best value and rigorous self-evaluation are used very effectively to ensure that the school grows confidently in stature. Given its size, relatively little is spent on the education of each pupil. Taking into account this amount of finance, the strengths of the school and its context, the school provides very good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	328,385
Total expenditure	333,442
Expenditure per pupil	2,382

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	21,569
Balance carried forward to the next	16,512

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

35. Provision in the Foundation Stage is effective and gives the children a good start to their education. This has improved greatly since the previous inspection when it formed one of the key issues: all these issues have been successfully addressed. Admission into the Reception class is in the September of the year the child has their fifth birthday. The majority of children have had some pre-school experience. Attainment on entry is broadly average but this varies considerably from year to year depending on the number of higher attaining children or those with special educational needs. By the end of the Reception Year most children are on course to attain the national goals for early learning and a significant number will exceed them. All children, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and make at least good progress, with some doing better than this.
36. The quality of teaching is consistently good. It was satisfactory at the previous inspection. The class teacher has a well developed understanding of the needs of this age group, which leads to the provision of a wide and appropriate range of worthwhile activities. This provision is closely linked to the national stepping stones for early learning leading to the early learning goals.² Tasks are carefully matched to the relevant learning needs of each child, another improvement since the previous inspection. This has a positive effect on their learning and helps them to concentrate. A strong emphasis is placed on developing all aspects of language and number skills. Questioning is used effectively to extend or reinforce learning. Very good relationships give children the confidence to respond to adults and to share their thoughts. There is a good balance between directed and self-chosen activities. Assessment is used effectively to ensure children are appropriately challenged, but tracking of children during free choice is an area for further development.

Personal, social and emotional development

Provision in this area is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The welcoming environment helps children settle quickly into the routines of school life.
- The adults' high expectations of behaviour have a beneficial effect on children's learning.
- A wide range of opportunities encourage children to develop appropriate skills and achieve well.

Commentary

37. Achievement is very good as in this area as the majority of pupils are on course to exceed the national goals for early learning by the end of the Reception Year. The welcoming environment and understanding adults contribute positively to ensuring children settle quickly and adjust to the routines of school life. The majority of children

² The nationally recommended goals set for the achievement of children by the end of the Reception year.

live up to the high expectations of good behaviour. Even the youngest children who have only been in school a couple of weeks quickly learn what is expected of them. Children have a positive attitude towards their tasks and activities. They are interested and remain well focused on their tasks. A calm working atmosphere pervades the classroom. Children are happy and confident, willing to respond to adults' questions. They know they must take turns and listen to each other but do not always do so. Some are so keen that they call out at inappropriate times. Many opportunities are provided for children to develop good personal and social skills. The very good teamwork of the adults provides the children with good role models of co-operation. Children were observed playing together in the water and sand, sharing equipment, helping each other change for physical education and tidying up with little adult supervision.

Communication, language and literacy

Provision in this area of learning is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults use every opportunity to develop children's communication skills.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good, giving a high priority to developing reading and writing skills.

Commentary

38. Because of good teaching and the emphasis on developing relevant skills in reading and writing, the majority of children are on course to attain the expected levels with a few exceeding the national goals by the end of the Reception Year. All children achieve at least well and make good progress, with some doing better than this. Many opportunities are provided for children to develop speaking and listening skills and to explore letter sounds, word recognition and writing. Questioning is used to stimulate verbal responses and many children are articulate confident speakers who answer in sentences. Although early in the year, many children can recognise letter sounds and answer questions about their reading books. The higher attainers are beginning to recognise simple words. The adults in the classroom encourage children to have a love of books, and sharing a book is an important part of a literacy lesson. Children are asked to write for many different purposes, for example, to retell a story, give instructions, write a letter and keep a diary. The work seen from last year's Reception children, shows clearly the development of writing skills across the ability range from simple mark making to complete sentences written by the higher attaining child.

Mathematical development

Provision in this area of learning is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Every opportunity is taken to extend children's confidence in understanding number through counting and number rhymes.
- Good teaching is leading to enthusiasm and interest.

Commentary

39. Effective teaching is leading to good achievement. Most children are on course to attain the expected level and some will exceed their goals by the end of their Reception Year. In the one lesson observed children were challenged to count in 10's to 100 and back again: many were successful. They know "one more and one less" than a given number. Mathematics is made exciting through number rhymes and counting activities, which children love. Because of their enjoyment they learn well and make good progress. As well as systematic and planned teaching of numeracy skills, staff take every opportunity to reinforce children's learning, for example, when counting those present and working out the number of absentees, or when lining up, making informed decisions about 'shorter' and 'tallest'.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Provision in this area of learning is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good variety of visits, visitors and practical experiences is offered to the children.

Commentary

40. Children are on course to attain the expected levels by the end of the Reception Year and they achieve well. Photographic evidence and work from last year's Reception class illustrate the many experiences provided to enhance and broaden children's understanding of the world around. Teaching is imaginative. In one lesson, the teacher had a novel way of introducing children to likes and dislikes in the immediate environment, through using photographs of a teddy. Children's interest was immediately stimulated and their imagination captured.

Physical development

Provision in this area of learning is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- An attractive outdoor area has been laid out, which successfully addresses a key issue from the previous inspection.
- There is a lack of large wheeled toys which impinges on the children's physical development.

Commentary

41. Children enjoy their sessions in the hall and many are on course to achieve the expected levels by the end of the Reception Year. The quality of teaching in this area is satisfactory. This is in part due to the fact that there is no additional support for children, particularly those who are less confident when in the hall. Also because it is a new experience for some of the children, their listening skills are not very good. Despite this, children are beginning to develop spatial awareness and body control. An attractive

outdoor area has been established and is used as an extension for the classroom activities but lack of shelter limits its use during inclement weather. The school is aware that it needs to provide large wheeled toys to resource the area appropriately. Opportunities are provided for children to use scissors to improve their cutting skills, to practise colouring within lines or letter formation. These skills are developing slowly as some struggle to cut along the lines or colour within the lines.

Creative development

Provision in this area is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children explore a variety of media to develop an understanding of music, art and drama.
- Every opportunity is used to recite rhymes or sing action songs.

Commentary

42. The small amount of teaching seen in this area of learning was good and many children are on course to achieve the early learning goals by the end of their Reception Year. They enjoy exploring percussion instruments and their sounds, and sing a variety of rhymes with enthusiasm. Displays of children's work show the different media used. Although there is a role play area no children were observed using it. However children were encouraged, as part of a literacy activity, to re-enact the story of the Three Billy Goats Gruff, using small puppets. Children found this difficult and were not successful because in this case no adult support was given to guide them.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership and management of the subject have led to a substantial improvement in provision.
- Good teaching has contributed significantly to raising standards.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of very good support and planning for their needs.
- Effective assessment procedures identify groups and individuals for whom additional support is provided.
- Very good cross-curricular links help to reinforce English language and literacy skills.

Commentary

43. Validated data up to 2003 indicates that overall, attainment in Year 2 is above the national average in reading and writing. The trend over time shows that attainment has risen since 2000. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils in Year 2 are overall attaining higher than nationally expected standards and that the available data for 2004 (which does not yet have any national comparisons) indicates a continuation of the

upward trend. Results for the Year 6 pupils who left the school in 2003 show a substantial improvement in English from 2002. In comparison with all schools nationally and schools in a similar context, attainment is above the average. The validated results for the most recent group of pupils are not yet available but the indications are that this improvement has been continued.

44. At the time of the previous inspection there were a number of issues raised in English. The school has addressed these through positive leadership and very good management. The whole school has worked together as a team to identify priorities, target resources and take action. The English subject leader regularly monitors lessons and evaluates teachers' planning and pupils' work, feeding back the outcomes to staff and, where appropriate, contributing to the school improvement planning. An example of this has been more effective assessment which now helps to provide a sharper focus for planning.
45. Classroom staff work hard to ensure that English is an inclusive subject, by providing Individual Education Plans for pupils with special educational needs and implementing different support strategies. As a result all pupils achieve well and no consistent pattern of different achievement emerges across particular groups of pupils. At present there are no children in the school for whom English is not the first language so there is no provision.
46. Beyond the school, the subject leader has fostered links with other schools and the community. Involvement with leading literacy teachers, visits to see examples of 'good practice' and help for reluctant boy readers from the Northern Sports Academy have been notable successes. Regular homework is set for the older pupils to improve their skills, particularly in spelling and writing. Parents are invited to special events like the 'Bev Booker' evening and literacy open mornings, and some participate in initiatives such as the family learning programme and better reading.
47. The standard of teaching is consistently good and often very good. This has had a significant influence on the school's quest to raise standards in English. Teachers provide a good level of challenge appropriate to the mixed abilities and ages within the classes and pupils respond well to this. Teachers have good subject knowledge and encourage the pupils to use the correct vocabulary from an early age, thereby enhancing pupils' learning. Some able Year 2 children, for instance, using letter fans for spelling, said to the teacher, 'the consonant cluster is in the initial position', which is very impressive. Teachers use their skill to bring out the best in their pupils by perceptive questioning, providing a positive and encouraging atmosphere, being thoroughly prepared and having high expectations of every child. Clear learning objectives are shared with the class at the beginning of each lesson and the pupils know the criteria against which their learning will be judged at the end of the lesson from discussion about 'what I will be looking for'. Thus, in the end of lesson summary session, teachers and pupils successfully assess much that has been achieved.
48. Within the lessons, activities are clearly adapted according to pupils' abilities. Pupils with special educational needs and the less able are often very well supported by the teaching assistants throughout the session, by encouragement to participate and provision of extra help. Pupils of all abilities enjoy reading and achieve success. The increased opportunity for regular guided reading is having a positive impact and most pupils in Year 6 show understanding of significant ideas, themes, events and characters

in a range of texts. More able pupils use inference and deduction to select essential points. Most pupils know how to use the library classification system to find non-fiction books and how to extract information using the contents and index pages. Pupils in Year 2 show a range of reading skills across the ability levels. Throughout the school handwriting is neat and legible as pupils are encouraged to take a pride in their work. There are opportunities for extended writing and work shows an increasing complexity of grammatical skills. The school has identified speaking and listening as an area to be developed. Pupils generally listen carefully and make valid contributions in discussion.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

49. Cross-curricular links are well established in the school and teachers develop literacy skills in many of the other subject areas. In information and communication technology, for instance, older pupils are expected to cut and paste their internet research then edit the work with their own words. Work on display shows the development of pupils' recount skills, in well presented writing about the visits made in history and geography. In the marking of topic work teachers find opportunities to reinforce grammatical and linguistic skills, as when pupils are describing historical events and characters. Good use is made of drama and role play as observed in a religious education lesson. Other subjects are also an integral part of literacy lessons, building on the interest generated and developing subject knowledge through language. During the inspection computers did not form part of the morning literacy lessons, but they are used particularly successfully in group activity sessions.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in mathematics in Year 6 are well above average.
- The achievement of pupils is good and for a significant number it is very good.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good or better, with appropriate tasks set, closely matched to the needs of all pupils.
- Teachers' marking does not consistently provide pupils with constructive comments to help them improve.

Commentary

50. Standards in mathematics are average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6. In the 2003 national tests in Year 2, 89 per cent of pupils attained at least the expected level with 26 per cent exceeding expectations. The results are in line with the national average when compared to all schools and similar schools. Current standards in Year 2 are average, which is an improvement since the last inspection. In the 2003 national tests in Year 6, 90 per cent of pupils attained at least the expected level with 33 per cent exceeding expectations. The results are well above the national average when compared to all schools and similar schools. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection when standards were just average. Current standards in Year 6 are on course to remain well above average. However, as the year groups are small, fluctuations in the number of pupils with special educational needs can affect the comparisons with schools nationally.

51. Given the broadly average attainment on entry to the school, all pupils, including those with special needs, are achieving well. All pupils make good progress and the significant number attaining the higher levels, particularly in Year 6, make very good progress and achieve very well. Throughout the school there is an emphasis on learning and handling numbers, so pupils are confident to use this knowledge to solve problems. The work of lower attaining pupils is of good quality because of the very good support given and tasks carefully matched to their needs. The setting of appropriate tasks for all pupils, including the higher attainers, provides a very good level of challenge for the different abilities.
52. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and some is better than this. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic, so pupils are well motivated and keen to succeed. The brisk quick-fire mental activities at the beginning of each lesson capture the pupils' interest and they are then well focused on the tasks set. Questioning is used effectively to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding, challenging them to explain how they arrived at the answer. Very good relationships give pupils the confidence to respond even if their answer is incorrect. One of the strong features of teachers' planning is the appropriate tasks set to match closely the needs of all pupils. The very good support provided by the teaching assistants benefits all pupils with special educational needs and helps them have equality of access to the curriculum. All teachers share the lesson objectives with the pupils but more could be made of the pupils' own self evaluation of their success in achieving the objectives. Assessment data is well used to highlight weaknesses in pupils' understanding and to inform planning. However, some marking does not provide pupils with constructive comments to help them improve, and this is the case where work is just ticked.
53. The subject is well led by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic subject leader. Her monitoring role has been successful in helping to raise standards in mathematics and improve the quality of teaching.

Mathematics across the curriculum

54. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is very good. Every opportunity is taken to use mathematics in other subjects. Successful examples are found in data handling in science and geography, the use of time lines in history and measuring in both science and design technology. There are examples of pupils using co-ordinates well in geography when drawing or interpreting maps.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A full and secure curriculum makes effective provision that supports pupils' achievement well.
- There is a good sense of direction to pupils' investigative and experimental skills which has a strong impact on standards.
- Good teaching ensures pupils' progressive development of knowledge and understanding.

Commentary

55. Standards of work seen are above average by the time pupils are in Year 2 and Year 6. They achieve well. Because there is a strong insistence on the development of practical skills, all pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils. Standards achieved in recent National Curriculum standard tests have shown an ever rising trend. This is especially the case in Year 6 where in 2003 all pupils achieved the level expected and many exceeded that level. With good reason, the school anticipates that the validated results for 2004 will be even better.
56. Pupils achieve well because a number of key factors work well together: pupils are keen and interested in their work, teachers have good subject knowledge and ensure pupils learn well, the curriculum is well organised and leadership effectively focuses on main school priorities for development. In the work seen, pupils of all ages show an increasingly mature understanding of the nature of science. They are encouraged to think and work as young scientists, working collaboratively and discussing with confidence the nature of fair testing, how some factors can be kept the same and others varied, and predicting what the outcome of an investigation will be using their prior learning. The school has a clear strategy for ensuring that pupils know how to conduct an investigation in order to ensure reliability and viable results. Interesting tasks are well calculated to ensure that both boys and girls see their relevance.
57. Teaching and learning are good overall. Some teaching seen was very good, showing a very secure understanding of both scientific principles and how pupils learn best. One lesson showed very good scientific understanding but was slower in pace, and therefore rather less effective, because of the restless nature of some pupils who found listening to the teacher and working co-operatively with others difficult. However, the teacher did well to inject pace and insist on pupils achieving the learning objectives. Strengths in teaching generally, that enable good learning are: the effective sharing with pupils of precise aims and objectives for the lesson, good organisation of activities and resources and effective summing up sessions. In most lessons, the very good behaviour and attitudes of pupils make a very considerable impact on their learning and achievement.
58. The subject is well led by an experienced and skilled subject leader. The curriculum is well managed and a good policy gives a strong sense of direction to the subject. Assessment is used effectively. The subject leader has opportunities to see colleagues at work teaching science and this gives her a good understanding of how the subject needs to be developed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are now achieving good standards by the time they are in Year 6.
- Improvements in the use of resources are supporting pupils' good achievement.
- The subject is well organised and managed and this helps to raise standards.
- ICT is sometimes used effectively to support learning in other subjects but there remains room for further development of this.

Commentary

59. Standards are as expected by the time pupils are in Year 2 and above expectation when they are in Year 6. Achievement is good overall. The interest that pupils show in the use of computers enables all pupils to achieve well, regardless of prior attainment and irrespective of gender or culture. Pupils in Year 2 enjoy a program designed to support their knowledge of number bonds. Pupils in this year group have useful mouse control and keyboard entry skills. The stored work of older pupils reveals that they are adept at developing multimedia skills creating a presentation combining moving graphics, photographs, text and sound. There is also good evidence of pupils using sensing equipment to measure changes in light, sound and temperature.
60. Although limited teaching was seen, the lessons observed were very good or better. The range of pupils' work shows that they learn well. A particular feature of work in ICT is the way tasks are designed to reflect what pupils are learning in different areas of the curriculum. For example, stored work shows the combination of history transport topic with design and technology, as the floor turtle is converted into a locomotive and directed through the tunnel. A mark of pupils' achievement is the eagerness they show for ICT, which is evident in the lessons seen, in their stored work and in discussion. There is good use of the computer suite, although it is difficult for younger pupils to have informal access to computers as they are in a different part of the school. Increasingly teachers are becoming familiar with the interactive digital whiteboards and use these effectively for presenting lessons. Pupils sometimes use these whiteboards but the opportunities for them to use this new technology are limited at present. Nor do pupils use the digital microscope to promote learning in science. However, digital photography is used well to display pupils' work and experiences across the curriculum.
61. The curriculum is efficiently organised, with appropriate strategies for assessment to reveal what needs to be done to develop the subject. The subject leader is relatively new to the post but is enthusiastic and skilled, with a clear action plan for further development.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

62. The use of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory. There are some examples of good use of ICT to promote learning in other subjects, however, the use of ICT is not consistently obvious in all that pupils do. For example, it is hard to find pupils' writing presented through word processing. While there is some evidence of pupils presenting scientific and mathematical data graphically using the computer, the evidence of this is limited. However, the Internet is being well used, for example, to research historical fact. There is no current evidence of ICT being used to support learning in religious education.

HUMANITIES

History and Geography

63. As only one lesson was observed in **history** and none in **geography** it is not possible to make an overall judgement on provision. On the basis of the evidence collected from analysis of pupils' work and interviews with subject leaders and pupils, standards and

achievement are good. There is good coverage of the curriculum which is enriched by a wide range of day and residential visits. The latter has had a profound effect on pupils' understanding and resulted in some very good follow-up work. Both history and geography are well led and managed, with staff willingly giving up their own time to give children valuable experiences. Resources are continually being developed and cross-curricular links fostered, particularly with literacy, art and information technology. For example, in an art lesson pupils from Years 4 and 5 consolidated their understanding of an historical period by making clay figures, with the learning support assistant appropriately dressed as their model. In an ICT lesson pupils were well challenged to research 'Henry VIII' using the Internet as part of their in-depth study of the Tudors.

64. From the onset, pupils are taught to describe both the human and physical features of different localities. In Year 1, for instance, they compare Aston to Filey, identifying similarities and differences. Older children compare and contrast different localities as part of an investigation into the reasons for settlements. Pupils' literacy skills are developed by recounting visits made and by specific comments made by teachers when marking pupils' work such as: "... you have used the wrong person, choose 'they' rather than 'you' or 'me'...". Pupils develop a sense of chronology by learning to place different events on a timeline. Through the extended programme of visits and visitors to school they are exposed to a variety of primary and secondary sources of evidence. By Year 6, pupils are beginning to think like young historians and are encouraged to consider the validity of the evidence presented to them. They can, for example, explain the reasons why portraits of historical figures do not necessarily either give a true picture of the appearance of the individual or reflect the full social spectrum of the period.
65. The evidence suggests that historical and geographical skills develop progressively as pupils move through the school as a result of the effective implementation of a well thought-out and detailed programme of study, supplemented by meaningful extra-curricular activities. History, in particular, is celebrated through very good displays exhibiting well presented written work and quality art.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' moral, social, cultural and, to a lesser extent, spiritual development.
- Pupils acquire a good factual knowledge of different religions, resulting in a significant improvement in standards since the last inspection.
- The assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress is not yet fully developed.

Commentary

66. The provision of religious education meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. As a result of satisfactory, and sometimes good, teaching, the pupils' learning is satisfactory overall. Consequently, their attainment by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is in line with expectations. The subject leader has introduced a new scheme of work and led in-service training, which have helped to raise the profile of religious education and

facilitated better coverage of comparative religion. It is an inclusive subject with all pupils, regardless of their ability, having full access to the curriculum.

67. From lesson observations, analysis of pupils' work and discussions with pupils in Year 2 and Year 6, it is evident that they study at least four major religions - Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and Judaism - and their knowledge increases sequentially. They identify the main features, name the holy books and talk about the different rituals. Artefacts are used and displayed in a sympathetic way, ensuring that pupils understand the special significance of, for instance, holy books, which are elevated on a stand. Previous inspection findings indicated that pupils did not understand symbolism and were unsure about places of worship but, since then, there has been an improvement. Pupils have a good subject vocabulary as illustrated in a Year 2 lesson where they recalled 'mosque', 'church', 'God', 'Allah', 'Holy Bible' and 'Qur'an' as well as the names of some messengers and prophets.
68. The teaching of religious education plays its part in developing the excellent relationships that the pupils enjoy. The use of puppets and drama promotes social interaction and makes lessons interesting. This is well illustrated by the younger children participating in a successful drama session, re-enacting the story of Jesus and the Stilling of the Storm. The teacher, supported by the teaching assistant, ensured that every child had a role to play as an actor or as a musician producing sound effects while another pupil recorded the performance on camera. Pupils respond well to the high level of behaviour expected of them. In addition to the study of religion in lessons there are further opportunities for pupils to develop their cultural understanding. The school has held an Islam awareness week and plans to develop more whole-school celebrations and multi-cultural festivals. There are a number of visitors to the school who, through assemblies and lessons give the children the perspective of different religions. Daily acts of worship are used, together with opportunities arising in religious education lessons, to establish moral principles. Pupils know the difference between what is right and what is wrong, as shown in their topic books, with older pupils presenting their views to justify the way Robin Hood reputedly 'stole from the rich and gave to the poor'. Pupils have visited the local church but, compared to history and geography, the use of places of worship as stimuli for creative work is limited. Valuable first-hand experiences are missed to gain from a visit to a mosque, synagogue or temple to enrich the curriculum and promote deeper understanding. Pupils' attitudes to religious education are good and they grow in self confidence as they accept greater challenge.
69. Although religious education lessons are not formally monitored, teachers' planning and pupils' work are, giving some indication of progress and standards achieved. The subject leader has recently completed a series of unit specific assessments which, when implemented, will help to develop the levelling process. It is vital that pupils know how well they are doing and what they can do to improve. The policy for the subject is currently under review and is to include assessment arrangements, as this is a school priority.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

70. No lessons in **design and technology** were seen during the inspection. No overall judgements can be made about provision, standards or the quality of teaching. However, a significant part of the work from the previous year was available to

scrutinise. It is clear that the school teaches a thorough design and make process. Pupils' artefacts are well constructed. Pupils work to a design brief, frequently connected to work in a current topic, with very good links across a range of subjects. Artefacts are finished to a good standard, indicating both pupils' pride and teachers' insistence on quality work, both of which are hallmarks of the school.

71. During the inspection no **music** lessons were observed so it was not possible to make any judgements about standards, although good, enthusiastic singing was heard in assembly. However, evidence from an interview with the subject leader showed that provision has improved since the previous inspection. A new scheme of work supports and guides teachers as they deliver music and once a week a specialist teacher takes lessons across the school. There are opportunities to learn a range of instruments and to perform for the parents.
72. Although **physical education** was not a focus of the inspection there was good evidence of the importance the school puts on provision and standards. Standards across the school are above expectations as pupils demonstrate very good ball skills, observed during a Year 5/6 hockey lesson and Year 1/2 football session. They also have good body control and can be inventive in the way they move around the hall and on the apparatus. Teachers are confident, knowledgeable and enthusiastic thus motivating the pupils to succeed. The co-ordinator is responsible for raising the profile of sports and has been the inspiration behind the teachers' and pupils' enthusiasm and commitment. Coaches from local football, rugby and cricket clubs along with games teachers from the high school support the school in its desire to develop sporting activities.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Because art and design has a very high profile in the school, achievement is very good.
- A combination of thorough coverage of the curriculum, a richness of pupils' experiences, very good use of teacher knowledge and quality subject leadership result in very good standards of attainment.

Commentary

73. The strength of teachers' subject knowledge, the well resourced curriculum and able subject leadership results in standards that are well above expectations for pupils' ages. Their work is displayed very creatively throughout the school. It is clear that the pride pupils take in their completed tasks is reflected in the pride shown in displays. The school insists that art and design should be an integral part of other areas of the curriculum, especially history, and that pupils demonstrate the value of their visits to places out of school with good quality art work. Pupils' skills benefit from a wide range of styles, media and materials to work with. Collage, work with clay, fabric and threads claim equally important places with work in a range of paint and crayon. Pupils are taught to look at texture in detail, and, for example, some of the large scale highly detailed work resulting from their visit to York Railway Museum is remarkably mature. In

discussion with pupils about the curriculum, many say that art and design is their favourite subject. Their interest and enthusiasm exude from the work seen. Not only do pupils generate their own work but also they study and analyse the work of famous artists and produce their own works of art in the style of, for example, Picasso and Van Gogh. For some, their writing about artists' styles and technique reveals a great maturity of thought and understanding.

74. In all the lessons seen, teaching was very good. It was characterised by powerful use of subject knowledge, very interesting and challenging tasks, well managed pupils who concentrated well on the job in hand and a very positive attitude to what was to be learned. Pupils are clear about their learning objectives. These factors enable pupils to learn and achieve well. The subject is very well organised and managed. Staff have benefited from good subject leadership that has raised their expectations, and consequently pupils' expectations, of art and design in school. The subject has been given a very significant place in the curriculum and standards have risen as a consequence to well above those expected for pupils' ages.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

75. No lessons were seen in **personal, social and health education (PHSCE)**. However, there is a well structured curriculum and pupils benefit from regular lessons. The school believes that the outcomes of the lessons are clear in the way pupils conduct themselves around school. Behaviour and attitudes are very good. Pupils handle themselves and each other with dignity and maturity. Staff attribute much of this to the curriculum in PSHCE. Circle time lessons give pupils good opportunity to discuss matters of importance to them in their personal life. Visitors to the school such as the school nurse and the community policeman, provide pupils with an insight into adult life. This area of the curriculum is well led and well organised.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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