

INSPECTION REPORT

GOMERSAL FIRST SCHOOL

Gomersal, Cleckheaton

LEA area: Kirklees

Unique reference number: 107666

Headteacher: Miss Kay Boothroyd

Lead inspector: Barbara E Doughty

Dates of inspection: 15th – 18th November 2004

Inspection number: 266881

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: First school
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 4 to 9
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 278

School address: Oxford Road
Gomersal
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West Yorkshire
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Telephone number: 01274 335220
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of Mr P O'Hara
governors:

Date of previous 22nd February 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a large first school for pupils aged four to nine years. There are 278 pupils including 25 children attending part-time in the Early Years Unit. There is a fairly even mix of boys and girls. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs, mostly moderate learning difficulties, is below the national average at about eight per cent; three pupils have statements of specific need. Most of the pupils are from English-speaking families, with nearly three per cent from mixed race backgrounds. None are learning English as an additional language. Pupils' backgrounds are broadly average in socio-economic terms. Attainment on entry to the Early Years Unit at the age of four is typical for children of that age. The school has the Investors in People award, the Artsmark Silver award, and a School Achievement award. There is some significant building work going on which is due to be completed in December 2004. This will give the school a computer suite, and new offices and kitchen. Four of the teachers have been newly appointed since the last inspection – one of whom has only recently qualified and one who is newly qualified. In addition, a new deputy head teacher was appointed in September 2003 and a new head teacher took up post in September 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22261	Barbara E Doughty	Lead inspector	The Foundation Stage curriculum English
32678	Kathryn Dodd	Lay inspector	
33236	Kevin Dodd	Team inspector	Science History Geography Religious education
18703	Christine Canniff	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a sound school with a number of significant strengths; it gives satisfactory value for money. Up to the end of Year 2, standards are above average and pupils achieve well, but learning slows in Years 3 and 4 and this means that pupils make only sound progress from starting school to leaving. However, effective leaders and managers, convincingly focused on improvement, are pursuing the weaknesses and starting to eradicate them.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children get off to a very good start in the Early Years Unit and their learning is built on well in Years 1 and 2.
- Pupils reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2, but standards in writing are not good enough by the end of Year 4.
- Very effective support for pupils with special educational needs means that these pupils do well, especially given their learning difficulties.
- Pupils do not do as well as they could in Years 3 and 4 because teachers' expectations are too low in Year 3 and assessment information is not used well enough in Years 3 and 4.
- Pupils enjoy this school and have established very good relationships; they behave very well and work extremely hard.
- The head teacher and senior management team are busy tackling the weaknesses, but subject leaders have had insufficient time yet to get to the heart of what is happening in Years 3 and 4.

This school has improved satisfactorily since its last inspection. It has dealt with most of its key issues and achieved a firm upward trend in standards at the end of Year 2. However, standards at the end of Year 4 remain much the same as they were. Attainment in religious education and reading has improved, and information and communication technology (ICT) and literacy are promoted more effectively in other subjects. Improvements to curriculum planning and minor omissions in the governors' report to parents have been dealt with. Assessment has improved significantly in the Early Years Unit and Years 1 and 2, but remains unsatisfactory in Years 3 and 4.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
Reading	A	B	A	B
Writing	A*	A	A	B
Mathematics	A	C	A	A

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

Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Achievement is satisfactory overall; it is very good in the Early Years Unit and good in Years 1 and 2. Because of this, children exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the Reception Year and standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Pupils' satisfactory achievement in Years 3 and 4 is enough to help them maintain above average standards in speaking, listening, reading, and mathematics and average standards in science. However, progress in writing is unsatisfactory, particularly in Year 3, and standards are only average. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs achieve well, and the gifted and talented pupils make sound progress. Standards in ICT and religious education are in line with national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 4 and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils do well in art and design to reach above average standards by the end of the school. Pupils' personal qualities, including their attitudes, behaviour, and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. Attendance is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Teaching is sound overall, but very good in the Early Years Unit and good in Years 1 and 2. From starting school to the end of Year 2, pupils learn well through exciting and purposeful tasks that are tailored well to their abilities and challenge them to achieve more. However, the overall quality of teaching is diminished by satisfactory teaching in Year 4 and teaching that is barely satisfactory in Year 3. In Year 3, expectations about what pupils can reasonably be expected to achieve are too low and in Years 3 and 4 teaching has insufficient regard to what pupils already know, understand and can do to set work that meets their needs. The support for pupils with special educational needs is good, and it is sound for the gifted and talented. Overall, good learning opportunities are enriched well through after-school clubs, visits, and visitors. The school has good regard to pupils' care, welfare and safety, but the guidance and support pupils in Years 3 and 4 receive are insufficient to help them to improve their work. The school's partnership with parents is very good; its links with the community are good, and its links with other schools are satisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. Leadership is good; management and governance are satisfactory. The head teacher is very effective in her work and is supported well by a very able deputy. From their thorough and rigorous school review, they have very clear ideas about what is and is not working. They have very quickly put in place systems to bring about improvement, and have implemented short-term strategies to bring immediate improvements to pupils' learning in Year 3. But these all need time to bite, which is why management is not yet as well established as leadership. Although subject leaders have had limited time until now to pursue what is going on in their subjects, they have a clear sense of purpose and high aspirations. They are being enabled by the head teacher to get to the heart of the strengths and weaknesses so that they can make things happen to bring about improvements. Governors have a secure idea of what is going on because they are kept well informed by the head teacher. They support senior managers and staff well and fulfil their statutory duties fully.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very happy with what the school offers and does for their children. They enjoy effective relationships with the staff and appreciate their openness and honesty. Pupils are happy with the school and enjoy coming. They say that there is always an adult to whom they can go if they are worried about anything and that any inappropriate behaviour is always dealt with quickly and fairly.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in writing in Years 3 and 4.
- Build pupils' learning more effectively from Year 2 to Year 4 by improving the use of assessment information in Years 3 and 4, and raising teachers' expectations in Year 3.
- Ensure subject leaders have sufficient opportunity to pursue what works well and not so well in Years 3 and 4, and Year 3 in particular, and help colleagues to eradicate the weaknesses.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is satisfactory overall and by the time the pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4, standards are broadly in line with national expectations. However, they and the progress pupils make are variable between year groups and subjects. Most pupils do well from starting school to the end of Year 2 to reach above average standards. However, some ground is lost in Year 3, which the school does not have time to make up by the end of Year 4 and standards are broadly as expected nationally by the time the pupils are ready to move on to their next school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Early Years Unit achieve very well because of very effective provision.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 do well in reading, writing and mathematics because work is exciting and tailored well to meet their needs.
- Although some ground is lost in Year 3, pupils do well enough in speaking, listening, reading, mathematics, and art and design by the end of Year 4 to reach above average standards.
- Pupils do not achieve well enough in writing in Years 3 and 4.
- Pupils with special educational needs do well.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.3 (16.9)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	16.1 (16.6)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.9 (16.7)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 55 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. After the last inspection, Year 2 standards in reading, writing and mathematics rose above those expected nationally and have stayed above the national average. However, the good progress pupils make between starting school in the Early Years Unit and the end of Year 2 is not sustained in Years 3 and 4. Pupils lose some ground in English, mathematics and science in Year 3, and particularly in writing, which is not always made up as well as it could be before the end Year 4. This is, however, a First school, that does not have the same opportunity as primary schools have to pull standards back up to a higher level by the end of Year 6.
2. Most children exceed the goals they are expected to reach in all areas of learning by the end of the Reception Year and they are already doing work from the first level of the National Curriculum programmes by the time they start in Year 1. This is because children get off to a very good start in the Early Years Unit. Most of the Reception Year children talk with developing confidence and are secure learners. A few of them

can already read familiar phrases and words in isolation, like 'the', 'he' and 'then'. They can write the first and last letters of words, such as 'wt' for 'went' and form letters using the correct sequence of strokes. Their mathematical skills are developing very well and many of the children can already recognise numbers and count accurately up to 20.

3. These good standards are built on well in Years 1 and 2, where pupils add well to their learning and make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 2, about half of the pupils usually reach above the nationally expected level in all three subjects because of effective teaching and work that challenges them well. Most of the pupils use interesting words in their writing and read with accuracy and fluency. They show good understanding of mathematical ideas and have good calculation skills. Their science skills are developing securely and standards in this subject, and in ICT and religious education, are broadly as expected by the age of seven and nine.
4. However, pupils lose ground in Year 3, partly because of a natural slowing in their learning as they make the move from a Year 2 curriculum to a Year 3 one. This is exacerbated further by some weaknesses in teaching that the senior managers are currently pursuing and dealing with through providing more support. This means that past underachievement in mathematics has been dealt with by the end of Year 4; pupils are making satisfactory progress and are now on course to maintain above average standards by the time they leave the school. Similarly in reading, pupils do well enough and standards too are above the expected level, reflecting the pupils' attainment at the start of Year 3. However, pupils do not achieve well enough in writing because too much ground lost in Year 3 is not made up in Year 4. This is due to some fundamental weaknesses in teaching that have yet to be dealt with. Whilst their poetry writing is good and pupils use some good vocabulary to say what they mean, their stories and report writing lack structure and organisation. Ideas are not sustained logically or developed in interesting enough ways. Pupils do not use grammatically complex sentences, opting instead to use short ones that lose impact.
5. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because this aspect of the school's work is well managed and these pupils get very effective support from the teaching assistants. The opportunity to work in small groups outside the classrooms means that the pupils establish very good relationships with the adults helping them, have good self-esteem, and develop the confidence to have a go. They maintain very good concentration and are completely focused on their work.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to learning, their behaviour, attendance and punctuality are all very good. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy coming to school, reflected in their very good attendance.
- Pupils work very hard and are successful in meeting the school's very high expectations of their conduct.
- Pupils show a keen sense of awareness of the differences between right and wrong.

Commentary

6. Pupils of all ages enjoy coming to school, have very good attitudes to work and are keen to do well. Parents, rightly, see this as a strength of the school. Provision for pupils' social development is good and their moral development is very good. Pupils of all ages are usually very friendly towards one another and behave very well in lessons and around school. This is because of the consistently high expectations held of them and the very good role models provided by all adults in school. Pupils have a good grasp of the differences between right and wrong, and there is a strong emphasis on the need for setting and abiding by sensible rules. Pupils are involved very well in agreeing codes of behaviour.
7. Pupils work in a calm and purposeful learning environment, with good opportunities for furthering their personal development. Even the very youngest children learn to show respect for the opinions of others, listen to one another, wait very patiently and take turns. Older pupils have good opportunities to help to ensure that the school is a happy place, including through their work on the school council. They take on responsibilities with enthusiasm, speak confidently, act maturely and enjoy helping one another in lessons. Staff reinforce these skills consistently by providing many opportunities for pupils to work together. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to school; they enjoy very good relationships with teachers and support staff.
8. The school values pupils' achievements very well and pupils feel valued themselves. Pupils agree that the clear and consistent systems to reward them for high achievement, good work and behaviour motivate them to work and to try harder. Individual achievements are celebrated well and the strategies for this are popular with pupils. For example, they are especially pleased when they have their names entered into the 'Gold Book'.
9. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Assemblies and circle times provide good opportunities for pupils to think deeply, share views and reflect on a range of issues affecting their lives and those of others. In lessons, teachers use effective strategies to focus pupils' thinking and encourage them to reflect on what they have learned. Pupils' cultural development is promoted well by the school, especially through work in subjects, such as art and design, history and religious education. The school makes good use of its relationship with the few minority ethnic families in the school, and its links with a local school with pupils from a broad range of cultures help to raise further pupils' awareness of the multicultural nature of the society in which they live.
10. Since the last inspection, and up until now, attendance has been consistently good. Nevertheless, the school is not complacent, and has continued to work particularly hard to improve attendance figures further. As a result, both attendance and punctuality are now very good, and attendance is well above the national average. This is because pupils are very keen to attend school, and also because parents are supportive and understand the need to make sure their children come daily and arrive on time. Additionally, the school has adopted very effective and rigorous procedures for monitoring attendance patterns and for taking appropriate action when necessary, thus discouraging non-attendance.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	3.1
National data	5.1

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.4
National data	0.4

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

11. The school tackles unacceptable behaviour appropriately; including making sure that any difficulties are dealt with by supporting pupils to improve their behaviour. With the exception of one pupil, all pupils excluded in the last reporting year have now left the school. Due to effective behaviour management strategies, there have been no exclusions this school year.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Asian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Chinese

No of pupils on roll
270
3
2
1
1
1

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
4	0
1	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory overall, but there are variations between year groups and subjects. Provision is very good in the Early Years Unit, good in Years 1 and 2, and satisfactory in Years 3 and 4. The breadth of learning opportunities is good overall, as are the procedures for pupils' care, welfare and health and safety. Links with parents are very good, which means that parents make valuable contributions to their children's education.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but there are some fundamental weaknesses in Year 3, which slow pupils' learning. The school's assessment arrangements are satisfactory overall, with variations between year groups; they are very good in the Early Years Unit and good in Years 1 and 2, but unsatisfactory in Years 3 and 4.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- From starting school to the end of Year 2, pupils are taught in an atmosphere of high expectation.
- Throughout the school, the management of pupils' behaviour is very good.
- Good promotion of subject vocabulary means that pupils explain well what they are doing and how they are doing it.
- Very effective support for pupils with special educational needs means these pupils learn well.
- The leadership and management strategy to put additional teaching support into Year 3 is starting to have a positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning in science and mathematics, but teachers' expectations are still too low.
- The teaching of writing is unsatisfactory in Years 3 and 4 and teaching is barely satisfactory in other subjects in Year 3 because of teachers' low expectations.
- In Years 3 and 4, assessment information is not used well enough to tailor the work to meet pupils' needs.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 26 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	3	12	8	3	0	0

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

12. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. This is because, although teaching is very good in the Foundation Stage and good in Years 1 and 2, it is let down by some ineffective teaching in Year 3, where the three unsatisfactory lessons were seen, and ineffective use of assessment in Year 4. The main difference in the effectiveness of the teaching in year groups is mostly due to the inconsistent way in which teachers use assessment information to tailor the work to meet the needs of differently attaining pupils. In addition there is a lack of drive in Year 3 to raise standards because of a misguided understanding about how far pupils should progress in one year.

13. In the Early Years Unit, teaching is very good. Activities are exciting and purposeful, work is tailored very well to children's needs, and adult intervention guides learning extremely well because all adults know what children are to learn and they constantly test their understanding. If necessary, they revisit an idea or plan the next step. Staff are deployed very effectively, and induction is very good so that children settle quickly and become confident and secure learners.
14. Good gains in the children's learning made in the Early Years Unit are built on well by good quality teaching in Years 1 and 2. In these year groups, teaching makes good use of assessment information and, because of this, the teachers know the pupils well. They constantly probe pupils' understanding during lessons and adapt their teaching appropriately. They plan work that is relevant to meet the pupils' needs, inspiring them to learn and engaging them well. They challenge pupils to do better than could reasonably be expected and push them as quickly as possible on to the next step because they are conscious of the need to drive up standards. They support individuals who need it and challenge all pupils well.
15. In all year groups, teaching makes high demands on pupils to behave well, to which they rise very well. This means that learning is enhanced because pupils maintain very good concentration and work hard, even when, as sometimes happens in Years 3 and 4, the work is not always suitably adapted to meet their needs. Teachers and support assistants use subject language well and, because they encourage pupils to use it when talking about their work, pupils' explanations are precise and accurate. Pupils with special educational needs are provided for well and because of very effective support their learning is good.
16. Whilst teaching in Years 3 and 4 is satisfactory overall, there are weaknesses in the use of assessment information. This affects learning in all subjects, but has the most detrimental impact on writing – and is more marked in Year 3. In this year group too many pupils make insufficient gains in their learning because teachers do not have a clear enough grasp of what pupils can be expected to achieve. They focus on pupils moving up one sub-level instead of the nationally expected two, and do not have good enough strategies to help those pupils who are not on course to do as well as they should. Although the senior managers have taken the step of putting an additional part-time teacher into Year 3 to support teaching and learning, this is not a viable long-term solution because of the financial implications. Although subject leaders are working hard to get to the heart of what is not working well enough, their attempts have been thwarted up to now because of the lack of time they have had to observe teaching at length and the opportunity to focus on one particular subject at a time.
17. Learning is slowed further in Year 3 and also in Year 4 because teaching does not build pupils' learning step by step. It focuses on teaching units of work in the order they are listed in the teaching guidance, rather than concentrating on what pupils already know and need to learn next. Although teachers have information about what pupils already know, understand and can do, and in Year 4 they make some good assessments of how well pupils have done, for example in writing, they do not use this information to adapt the plans to suit the needs of the pupils. This slows learning in most subjects, but in writing it means that the good standards reached at the end of Year 2 are not maintained by the end of Year 4 and reduces learning in this subject to unsatisfactory.

The curriculum

The school provides a good curriculum, which meets statutory requirements. However, whilst it is very good in the Foundation Stage and good in Years 1 and 2, there are weaknesses in Years 3 and 4. There are good opportunities throughout the school that enrich the curriculum well and enhance pupils' learning. The quality of accommodation and resources is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is well planned from the Reception Year to Year 2; throughout the school there is a good range of interesting and inter-linked activities and a good range of after-school clubs, visits, and visitors to enrich pupils' learning experiences.
- The curriculum for children in the Foundation stage is very effective at meeting the needs of these young children.
- There are good learning opportunities for pupils with special educational needs.
- The way in which teachers in Years 3 and 4 use the national teaching guidelines is not always relevant to meet the needs of the pupils.
- The school deploys its teaching assistants well.

Commentary

18. The school provides a good range of worthwhile learning experiences for pupils of all ages, but especially for those in the Early Years Unit and Years 1 and 2. This is because the curriculum is well planned and organised so that subjects are interlinked in order to promote efficient use of time by using skills learnt in one subject to support work in another and make learning more coherent. For example the text, *Katie Morag*, which is studied by Year 1 in literacy links well to pupils' learning about island life in geography. These links are well managed without losing their distinctive character.
19. Provision for the enhancement of the curriculum is good. Expertise within and outside the school is used imaginatively to enrich the curriculum and promote pupils' personal development. The introduction of events, such as the 'Arts Week', makes a significant contribution to the development of pupils' skills and broadens their perceptions of the world. The school organises a wide range of visits and visitors, which enriches the curriculum and greatly enhances the breadth and quality of pupils' learning experiences in many subjects. The very good opportunities for pupils to take part in practical workshops, for example in dance, art and music, and to work with visiting specialists, bring about new insights, helping them to make sense of their world and realise their individual talents. Teachers make good use of the local places of interest such as the Red House Museum and Oakwell Hall to increase pupils' understanding of the historical and environmental features of the area in which they live. Pupils can pursue their interests at a wide variety of after-school clubs that further extend the skills they acquire in lessons. These clubs are very popular and very well attended. They make a significant contribution to pupils' personal development as well as to their academic learning and are the main provision for gifted and talented pupils.
20. In contrast, the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very effective and these pupils make good progress. This is because there is a strong, shared commitment to doing the best for them. Their difficulties are identified early in their school life and the effective special needs co-ordinator works closely with teachers and support staff to ensure timely, matched provision. Teachers produce detailed individual education plans to support pupils' learning and ensure that they take a full part in all school activities.
21. Teachers in parallel classes plan together so that pupils of the same age, but in different classes, have the same learning opportunities. Practical work ensures that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding have secure foundations. Individual subjects are generally effectively planned. However, planning in Years 3 and 4 is weak because it does not take enough account of what pupils already know. Teachers take more notice of the requirements of the teaching guidance than they do of the pupils' needs and, because of this, pupils' progress is slowed and standards are not as high as they should be.
22. The school has a strong team of well-trained teaching assistants and learning mentors. These people have a good understanding of their role and give good support to pupils who need additional guidance and, in particular, those with special educational needs. They work well with teachers throughout the school in supporting individual pupils as well as groups and within the class generally. They are deployed very well to support

pupils during ICT sessions so that time is used very effectively to integrate different subjects.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes good provision for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Support and guidance, based on the monitoring of the pupils' academic and personal development, are variable, but satisfactory overall. The school has good procedures to involve pupils in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils feel very safe and secure at school because of the very good relationships between pupils and adults.
- The very good arrangements for starting in the Early Years Unit ensure that children settle quickly into school.
- Good deployment of well-trained support staff enhances pupils' learning well, especially the progress of pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils' learning targets are insufficiently clear in Years 3 and 4 to allow them to understand what and how they need to improve.

Commentary

23. Parents are, rightly, confident that their children are well cared for. Relationships between pupils, teachers and other support staff are very good. Staff give high priority to caring for pupils' well-being and, as a result, pupils feel that they have a sympathetic ear to turn to when they are worried. Good communication between teachers, support staff and lunchtime supervisors ensure the day-to-day individual needs of pupils are known by all staff and are sensitively met. The very positive atmosphere makes pupils feel happy, secure and valued at school.
24. Children starting in the Early Years Unit, and their parents, are very well supported through a very carefully planned programme of induction. Parents appreciate the efforts made by staff to get to know them and their children – even before starting school – and they say that this helps their children to settle quickly into their new surroundings.
25. In lessons, teachers deploy support staff carefully and effectively in order to ensure that pupils make good progress. This is especially evident in the provision for pupils with special educational needs. In the Early Years Unit, teachers assess and monitor children's development well, ensuring early identification of difficulties for which children may need extra support. Provision of additional learning support across the school is a strong feature. Pupils needing help with reading, for example, participate in the 'Jump Start' programme, during which well-trained support staff ensure that pupils enjoy their work and take a pride in their good achievement.
26. Teachers set individual, group and class targets for pupils' personal and academic development. In Years 3 and 4, however, the number of targets is unrealistic and they are not specific enough to give pupils a clear knowledge of what they need to do to improve their learning, or how they will know if they have achieved their goals. Furthermore, procedures to involve pupils in setting and reviewing their own targets for learning are insufficiently developed.
27. Procedures for ensuring that pupils work in a healthy and safe environment are good overall. Careful consideration is given when administering medicines to pupils and recording accidents. Risk assessments are carried out for educational visits and governors fulfil their duty to complete an annual risk assessment around the school. However, insufficient consideration is given to identifying risks to pupils for specific activities in school or for individual pupils. The school has satisfactory procedures to safeguard pupils using the Internet.

28. The school fully values the views of pupils, who know that their views matter. Staff give careful consideration to the structure of the school council so as to ensure that it seeks the views of all pupils in school. Pupils' ideas are taken seriously and acted upon where possible, for instance concerning the organisation of activities and equipment at lunchtimes in the playground.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has very good links with parents. Links with the community are good and links with other schools are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good communication between parents and the school results in a high level of parental satisfaction.
- Parents are very well consulted about the work and development of the school, and play a very effective part in supporting pupils' learning at home and school, encouraged by the good quality information and guidance provided.
- Annual reports to parents on pupils' progress do not consistently identify what pupils need to learn next.

Commentary

29. The partnership between home and school has improved since the last inspection, and it is now very good. The school promotes this partnership very well in a number of ways. These include good quality information about the school, and very good efforts to involve parents and to consult them about the school's work and development, along with an atmosphere in which parents feel very happy to approach the school with concerns. As a result, parents show a genuine interest in pupils' learning and an eagerness to become involved in school life.
30. A good number of parents regularly give practical help in classrooms, and others help with educational visits. Staff give parents good guidance to help them to do this effectively. A few parents of Year 1 pupils participate in activity-based sessions – known as the 'Share Project'. Many parents attend curriculum evenings, and a good range of high quality guidance booklets and newsletters sent out each term informs all parents about what their children will be studying and how they can support learning at home. A small but active 'Friends of Gomersal' group organises well-supported social and fund-raising activities and events for both pupils and parents.
31. Formal consultation with parents about the work and development of the school is achieved through an annual questionnaire to parents. This is very well supplemented throughout the year, as and when required; for example, the views of parents of newly admitted children are sought about improving induction arrangements. The school responds well to parental views and takes appropriate action; for instance, the governors' annual report to parents has recently been revamped to become more 'parent friendly', and is now of a very high quality.
32. The school organises a range of well-attended curriculum evenings, and a very good range of regular information sent home to parents helps them to understand what their children will be learning about next. Although the mainly good quality information contained within pupils' annual reports to parents meets requirements, the reports are inconsistent in the amount of detail they include about how well pupils are doing in relation to national expectations. Also, targets for pupils' future learning are sometimes too vague to help parents to understand what their children need to aim to achieve next.

33. The school makes good use of the locality as a resource to support pupils' learning through visits to places of interest, including the Red House Museum and Oakwell Hall. These visits considerably enrich pupils' learning, particularly in history, where pupils say that they can really appreciate what it was like to live in the past. There are good links with the local church and other community groups, such as the senior citizens. Links with other schools are satisfactory overall, including the arrangements to ensure a smooth transition for Year 4 pupils to Gomersal Middle School. Current practice is under review by the staff of the schools involved in order to improve arrangements in the future.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. Leadership is good; that of the head teacher is very good. In contrast, management is sound because systems and procedures have yet to become embedded and make an impact. The governance of the school is satisfactory and governors fulfil their statutory duties fully.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The head teacher is a very good leader and is well respected by staff, parents and governors alike.
- The newly appointed senior management team has a clear vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations for the school, and is well focused on raising standards.
- The analysis of assessment data is in its infancy and as a result, the management systems are only just starting to impact on bringing about improvement.
- Subject leaders are insufficiently involved in lesson observations to check on the consistency of pupils' progress and guide teaching improvements.
- Governors give good support to the school, but have limited influence on school improvement.

Commentary

34. Staff enjoy working in the school and morale is high. This is because the new head teacher is a very good leader who has worked tirelessly and effectively to establish a very good climate for learning by providing an enriched curriculum in line with the government's agenda for excellence and enjoyment with an appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' basic skills. This has been achieved through involvement with several national initiatives including Investors in People and Investors in Pupils, and the Artsmark Silver Award.
35. The head teacher already has a good grasp of what is going on and her school evaluation accurately matches the inspection team's judgements in most aspects of the school's work. This is because she has used performance data well to identify relevant priorities. However, she has not been in post long enough yet to take action, along with the senior management team, which is why management is not as well established as leadership. Nevertheless, her accurate analysis of the school's performance has already enabled her to rightly focus on raising standards in writing and improving the quality of teaching and learning in Year 3. She has established an effective senior management team to support her in addressing these issues and has allocated time for its members to meet and develop an action plan. These people work together well and have already monitored teachers' planning in writing, looked at timetables and pupils' work, undertaken some lesson observations, and provided staff with feedback. They have supported teaching in Year 3, but mostly through additional staff deployment, which is proving effective in improving pupils' learning, but not in eradicating the weak teaching. However a longer-term strategy for supporting, developing and improving the Year 3 teaching is being considered.
36. Subject leaders are committed to improvement and know already where in their subjects the strengths and weaknesses lie. However, they have seen too few lessons yet to work out precisely what it is that is not working as well as it should in Years 3

and 4. Neither have they yet had the time to analyse the outcomes of their monitoring or the assessment data rigorously enough in order to ensure that the support they give to colleagues is effective in the long term.

37. The head teacher has established very good relationships with governors, many of whom are new to the role but are keen to become more involved in the work of the school. They are aware of the current improvement priorities including the need to raise standards in writing throughout the school and improve teaching and learning in Years 3 and 4. They know the school's strengths well, including those in the Foundation Stage and relationships, and are currently restructuring their committees to take account of the priorities and expertise of governors.
38. Governors challenge and support the school effectively and are eager to develop their professional skills through attendance on a variety of courses. These professional development opportunities have enabled them to take a more active role in performance management and in aiding the school with workforce reform. Governors have used the expertise of consultants from the local authority well in dealing with staff recruitment and retention and have made some good appointments recently, particularly in the deputy and head teacher. They have addressed the short-comings in their annual report to parents identified in the last inspection report and now fully comply with statutory requirements. They are knowledgeable about how well the school performs through reports from the head teacher and local authority consultants but are not yet fully involved in the development of the school improvement plan and the setting of the budget linked to the school's priorities, weakening their influence on school improvement.
39. The school's finances are dealt with efficiently. The school has responded effectively to the points raised in its last financial audit and due attention is paid to best value principles. The finance committee is led by a governor experienced in banking, enabling governors to question expenditure thoughtfully and secure an effective system of monitoring the budget through monthly reports. The head teacher ensures that school developments are supported through careful financial planning and although the school is carrying a slightly higher than desirable contingency fund, this is ear-marked to enhance learning resources in the new building extension.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	667962
Total expenditure	663712
Expenditure per pupil	2335

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	39677
Balance carried forward to the next	43927

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

40. Children get off to a very good start in the Early Years Unit, attending each morning for two terms prior to attending full-time at the start of the term in which they reach five years of age. They are taught in the mornings by two qualified teachers, a trained nursery nurse and a trained support assistant and in the afternoons by one qualified teacher and one trained nursery nurse.
41. The quality of teaching is very good and, because of this, children achieve very well in all of the areas of learning and most of them exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the Reception Year. The reason for this is that staff have an excellent understanding about how children learn through observation, exploration and first-hand experience. Learning is reinforced and consolidated through interlinked activities that are exciting, well planned and purposeful, and that stimulate children to want to learn.
42. Adults know the children very well and, because they have a good grasp of what individuals already know, understand and can do, they know what to teach them next. This means that work is tailored precisely to suit the children's needs, learning is built systematically over time and, just at the right moment, children are taught the next step.
43. Provision in the Early Years Unit stimulates children's language and mathematical skills well; it is a bright and exciting place and a hive of activity. Teachers and support assistants work excellently together, deployed very well by the extremely effective Foundation Stage team leader. They join children in work and play, interjecting just at the right moment to promote secure and effective learning. The team continually evaluates the success of what it does and is constantly looking for new methods to try out. Supported and encouraged by the head teacher and senior management team, it has a strong drive to improve provision and raise standards and, because of its innovative approach to curriculum development, succeeds and is used by the local education authority as a model of good practice for other schools in the area.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are many opportunities for children to play and work together and develop independence.
- Children approach new activities confidently, listen to and follow instructions very well, maintain very good concentration, and become extremely secure learners.
- Adults encourage children to get on with and show sensitivity towards each other.

Commentary

44. Children achieve very well in this area of learning to exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the Reception Year. This is because very effective teaching results in children being excited, interested and motivated to learn. Excellent relationships mean that children are confident to try new things and initiate ideas, and a good balance between taught and self-chosen activities means that independence is taught very well. For example, in one session, children had been taught how to make an animal mask by cutting out the shape, colouring it in, and taping the mask to a stick. They took this idea and the skills they had acquired, and made, independently, their own stick puppets, which they then used to make up a puppet theatre play for their classmates.
45. Children understand right from wrong and learn how to behave appropriately. They get on extremely well together because they are encouraged by the staff to think about their personal qualities and what they like about others. For example, in one session, each child was asked to name his or her friend and say one positive thing about them. By sitting children in a circle and linking them with one long piece of string as each one named their friend, the class teacher showed the class how friendship is seamless and how everyone can be friends together. This means that children already take turns and share fairly, building together with the wooden bricks, for example, and sorting shapes into colour sets.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's learning is built in appropriate steps and because of this individuals learn the right skill at the right time.
- By the end of the Reception Year most children achieve very well to exceed the goals they are expected nationally to reach, and are secure and confident readers and communicators.
- Whilst most adults model handwriting very well, some do not.

Commentary

46. Children's reading, writing and speaking skills are taught extremely well through a mix of play and teacher-focused activities. Talk is valued and children soon learn to become confident speakers and listeners because of this, excitedly sharing their thoughts and experiences with each other and the adults. They use talk to negotiate, for example, where to put the furniture in the dolls' house and to recreate character roles well, such as in the class surgery when 'the doctor' asked 'the patient', "What's wrong with your baby?" "He's got a poorly mouth," brought the response, "Take this medicine and he will get better".
47. Children love looking at books and enjoy discovering what lies between the covers. They 'read' quietly on their own, sometimes mimicking the teacher reading aloud to the class. For example, one child was seen with a book open on a stand, pointing to each word whilst 'reading' the story to a pretend audience. This is because teachers, support assistants and parent helpers promote a love of reading and encourage

children to browse through books in the attractive classroom book area. They show children how to use their knowledge of letter sounds to read unknown words, which also helps with their writing. A good number of the full-time Reception-age children can already write the first and last letters of words, such as 'wt' for 'went' and 'ct' for 'cut' and a few of them can hear the middle sounds when the teacher says the word slowly. Their letter formation is developing well, even though some adults do not model this well enough, so that by the end of the Reception Year, most children write independently in well-constructed sentences, putting in full stops and using capital letters correctly.

48. Children are constantly challenged to achieve more, but importantly, they are not pushed to try new skills too early. For example, they are encouraged to learn to write letters only when they can draw recognisable pictures, and to scribe under adults' writing only when they have the skills and ability to succeed. Much of their learning is through play and well thought out activities, to which individuals are encouraged to go to as and when they become relevant to them.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Mathematical ideas are taught well through play.
- There are lots of things around the room to count, sort, measure, weigh, and put in order.
- Activities are set in meaningful contexts so children see the point of what they are doing and so enjoy their learning.

Commentary

49. This area of learning is taught very well and, because of this, children achieve very well and most exceed the goals they are expected nationally to reach by the end of the Reception Year. Many of the children can already count up to 10 and beyond and by the end of the Reception Year, most can add and subtract numbers up to and from 20. They compare weights of objects and recognise two- and three-dimensional shapes. This is because they are given an array of opportunities to experience mathematics in the world around them, such as when looking at shapes in the environment and filling containers full and half-full with sand and water. There are many opportunities for children to explore mathematical ideas in their play, for example when two children dropped objects into the bucket of a toy digger and squealed with delight when the bucket crashed to the floor because of the excessive weight.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's ICT skills are developed very well.
- There are good opportunities for children to observe and care for living things, as well as to explore materials and objects and explain how they work.
- Children are well prepared for their subject work in Year 1, such as ICT, science, and geography.

Commentary

50. Teaching in this area of learning is very good and, because of this, children achieve very well to exceed the goals they are expected to achieve by the end of the Reception Year. Living things in the classroom that children can watch grow give them a good understanding of the natural world. For example, hatching stick insects caused great excitement and interested one child so much that he looked at an information book to find out more about the creatures. By looking at them through magnifying glasses, Nursery and Reception-aged children learnt how these creatures change over time and pondered how they survived in their natural world outside the classroom. By collecting and then looking at similarities and differences between slugs and snails,

children learnt that living things are different, but that they have similar requirements to their own in order to survive.

51. Children have many opportunities to ask questions about why things happen and how things work. For example, when designing and building a bridge strong enough to carry the weight of the Three Billy Goats Gruff, and tall enough to hide a troll underneath, children learnt how to try out things and change them as necessary. They learnt how to construct for a purpose and how to add strength to their constructions by using stronger materials, such as plastic bridge towers instead of cardboard ones. Early mapping skills are taught well. For example, children plotted Little Red Riding Hood's walk through the woods to her grandmother's cottage, marking on their maps significant features that she would pass by, such as the church, the pond and a waterfall. The path was easily traceable because the maps presented a good birds' eye view of the journey.
52. Similarly, children's ICT skills are well taught. Most of the Reception-aged children can already use the computer's 'mouse' and arrow buttons competently to control programs and the cursor's movement around the screen. They can open programs and drag and drop objects to form pictures. They operate remote control toys well and switch the tape recorder on and off when they want to listen to taped stories.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn to manipulate small and large objects and to manoeuvre wheeled toys with good control and awareness of the space needed.
- There are some missed opportunities for children to explore the effect of exercise on their bodies.

Commentary

53. This area of learning is taught well and, because of this, achievement is good and standards exceed those expected by the end of the Reception Year. The wide and varied range of activities in the Early Years Unit is exciting and children enjoy learning how to control their bodies and develop their co-ordination when, for example, peeling vegetables for snack time and cutting, sticking and punching holes on cardboard when making Chinese lanterns. Children often choose to work independently in the 'make and do' area where they practise skills such as cutting out, colouring in and cutting strips of sticky tape. The wide range of materials they have to choose from means that their handling of small objects improves well over time.
54. The outdoor learning area is used well to develop children's larger movements and body control. They manoeuvre wheeled toys well, showing a good awareness of space, and run about without bumping into each other. They aim beanbags accurately into baskets and hoops onto sticks. In the hall, they practise moving in different directions and in different ways, such as hopping, skipping and slithering along the floor. However, not enough was done in the lesson seen to develop children's

understanding of what effect exercise has on their bodies because although children exerted themselves and were huffing and puffing at the end of the session, no mention was made of this or of how they felt.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enjoy a wide range of opportunities to use their imagination through independent activities as well as through teacher-focused ones.
- Children show good control in particular in their paintings and drawings.

Commentary

55. Creative development is taught well and, because of this, achievement is good and standards exceed those expected nationally by the end of the Reception Year. This is because well-planned activities ensure plenty of exciting opportunities for children to engage in and to use their imagination. Independent learning is embedded, which means that children have many opportunities to create objects, pictures and models, choosing different materials and their own methods. They can do this because they are taught skills that they will need to be able to create and recreate. Because of this, they have a range of strategies at their fingertips to be able to join things together, such as by using sticky tape or glue, or even by sewing. Role-play areas are exciting and constantly changing, such as into a 'doctor's surgery' or 'Jack's cottage', giving children the opportunity to engage in character roles. In their artwork, because their learning is based on observation and exploration, the children's eye for detail is developing very well and their work is quite detailed and accurate; children mix paints to create just the right shade to recreate, for example, Van Gogh's sunflower picture.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and standards are above average in Years 1 and 2 because of good teaching.
- Standards in writing are not good enough by the end of the school because expectations are too low in Year 3 and assessment information is not used effectively in Years 3 and 4.
- Good provision for pupils with special educational needs means that these pupils achieve well given their difficulties.
- The subject leader is aware of the weaknesses and where they are but has had limited time and opportunity to pursue and eradicate them.
- Pupils of all ages have some good opportunities to use their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills in other subjects.

Commentary

56. Satisfactory improvements have taken place over time and the provision in English is better than it was at the time of the last inspection. Standards have risen from average to above average in reading and writing at the end of Year 2 and improvements to the reading scheme in Years 1 to 4 have increased pupils' understanding and interpretation of what they read, so pupils now achieve well in reading to reach standards at the end of Year 4 that are above the nationally expected level. Similarly, pupils' speaking and listening skills are developed well and standards are above average by the end of the school. However, standards in writing are at the expected level at the end of Year 4, which, given their good attainment at the end of Year 2, means that pupils do not do well enough.
57. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good in Years 1 and 2 because high expectations of what pupils can achieve mean that pupils do well and start Year 3 with good standards in both reading and writing. This is because teaching builds well on the good reading and writing standards children have when they leave the Early Years Unit. Teachers share with the pupils what they are expected to learn by the end of each lesson and revisit these aims periodically during lessons to make sure that pupils are learning well enough. They continually check on pupils' learning and probe their understanding, and then adapt their teaching plans to meet the changing needs of the pupils. Pupils know why they have to spend time learning grammar rules, thinking of powerful verbs and practising story beginnings, middles and endings. This is because teachers tell them that at the end of the two-week period, they will put all of these skills together to produce an extended story. This works so well because teachers are not afraid to use what they know about pupils' previous learning to move away from the national teaching guidelines. They spend time, if necessary, going over a skill that pupils have not quite mastered, or move more quickly than anticipated onto the next step, rather than letting pupils tread water going over work they can already do.
58. This does not happen as well in Years 3 and 4, partly because teachers in both year groups are reluctant to move away from the national teaching guidelines and use what they know about pupils' previous learning to decide what to teach them next. For example, in Year 4 pupils are practising writing play scripts – because it is the next unit of work prescribed in the guidance. Yet the pupils' work shows that most of them cannot organise and structure stories well enough. They set their ideas down randomly, do not extend them logically, and bring their stories to an abrupt end. Although some detailed marking goes on, teachers' comments do little to help pupils to understand how to improve because they do not get to the heart of the weaknesses.
59. In Year 3, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. There is a lack of drive to push pupils up more than one sub-level, and a lack of analysis about how to improve pupils' skills. Whilst pupils have a list of things in the front of their workbooks that tells them what they need to be able to do in order to reach the next level, these are achieved more by accident than intention. Comments, such as "Check your writing targets each time you write", do not focus pupils on which of the 10 targets they should be concentrating on at any given time. There is little consideration

given to how pupils' learning is built step by step and too few opportunities for pupils to write stories or reports.

60. Pupils with special needs do well because they are supported effectively in small groups out of the classroom, and those with statements of specific need are supported well in the classrooms. Their concentration in the small group work is excellent because of the effective relationships that they have with each other and the support staff.
61. The subject leader was appointed only a year ago, and in that time has been deputy to two different head teachers, as well as taking on the role of acting head teacher for a short period. Despite these difficulties, she is well aware of what is going on and knows that teaching is not as effective as it should be in Year 3. However, because she has not had enough time to pursue this rigorously, she has not yet got to the heart of why things are going wrong and how to support the teaching in order to bring about improvement. Because of this, her leadership and management are no better than satisfactory, although she has high aspirations and provides a good role model for staff through her own teaching.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

62. In all subjects, teachers' good promotion of technical language means that pupils of all ages usually explain clearly what they are doing and how they have done it. Most pupils are articulate and use subject vocabulary accurately and effectively. There are also some good examples of reading and writing supporting learning in other subjects in Years 1 to 4 and effective ways in which it is taught through other subjects in Years 1 and 2. For example, in mathematics, Year 1 pupils estimated how many cubes long their foot would be before measuring it, and in religious education, Year 2 pupils wrote about how the world was made, making correct use of full stops and capital letters. Pupils of all ages label diagrams in science, word-process stories in ICT, and research information on the Internet in geography. However, in Years 3 and 4, the construction and accuracy of reports and information are not promoted well enough. For example, when describing conductors in electricity, inaccurately structured descriptions go unchecked and this lessens the quality of the work and standards that pupils reach in this aspect of science.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well to reach above average standards by the end of Year 2.
- Teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 are good, but information about pupils' achievements is not used well enough to tailor work to meet the needs of all pupils in Years 3 and 4.
- The leadership of mathematics is good, although some aspects of management are in their infancy and others are not yet fully established.

Commentary

63. The quality of teaching is sound overall, achievement is satisfactory, and standards are above average at the end of Years 2 and 4. However, the good gains that are made by children in the Early Years Unit and by pupils in Years 1 and 2 are only just sustained from the start of Year 3 to the end of Year 4. This is because, although satisfactory overall, the quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 and 4 is less consistent and has some fundamental weaknesses, which the subject manager is working hard to eradicate. In these years, the teaching is not as sharply focused as it is in the other years and expectations about the amount of progress pupils could reasonably be expected to make in Year 3 in particular are too low. There are some weaknesses in the way teachers in Years 3 and 4 use assessment information to match the pupils' work to their ability, which slows progress further. This leads to weaknesses in planning and, although lessons have a clear focus, teachers are not always clear about how much work they wish pupils to do in a lesson or what progress they want them to make. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could.
64. In contrast, teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good, work is tailored well to pupils' needs, and pupils do well, with many more reaching the higher level than in most other schools. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and, because of this, push them to do a little better than would generally be expected. Pupils rise to the challenge because they find the work enjoyable and interesting. As a result, achievement is good and standards are higher than those attained at the time of the last inspection. Pupils' knowledge and understanding are developed effectively through practical tasks, which make it easier for them to see how numbers change and also easier for them to remember what they have been taught. Teachers have good knowledge and are confident teaching the subject. Lesson planning is good so that pupils extend and practise their skills, enabling them to make good progress in lessons. Teaching makes effective use of a good range of well-chosen, interesting methods and activities, with an emphasis on practical tasks, to clarify their explanations. Pupils' thinking skills and understanding are developed well because teachers ask probing questions and encourage pupils to explain their methods and ideas using the correct mathematical vocabulary.
65. However, in Year 3, some pupils lose ground. This is partly because they reach a natural plateau in their learning, but mostly because teachers' expectations of what

pupils can achieve are not high enough given the above average standards that they achieve at the end of Year 2. However, the school has introduced the teaching of pupils in ability sets in Years 3 and 4 to help teachers to match work more accurately to the needs of the pupils and so raise standards. Although this, and some additional teaching support in Year 3, has brought about some improvement to pupils' learning already, achievement is not as good as it could be because whilst the results of end of year assessments are used to assign pupils to these sets at the start of the year, teachers' analyses of what pupils achieve in lessons is not used effectively to adapt the subject plans to meet the changing needs of the pupils. This is because, during lessons, teachers' monitoring of pupils' progress is not rigorous enough. Consequently, teachers do not have a clear enough picture of what pupils can or cannot do in order to plan lessons that will help improve their skills and understanding. Instead, teachers base lessons on the expected level of achievement for the different groups as opposed to what these pupils already know and can do. As a result, teachers move some pupils on too quickly, and others not quickly enough. For example, in one lesson, the more able pupils did not have the skills and understanding required to solve a variety of problems the teacher had set them related to equivalent fractions and this resulted in too few managing the work successfully.

66. Whilst, in Year 4, teachers have a good idea what pupils already know by giving them regular assessment tasks, they do not use the information to tailor the work, moving on instead to the next unit of work set down in the national subject guidelines, regardless of whether pupils need to go over previous work or not.
67. Throughout the school, learning support staff are used effectively to provide very good support for pupils with special educational needs. They sit with these children during lessons, clarifying what the teacher is saying, and making good use of practical resources to aid pupils' mathematical understanding. The very good relationships and use of praise motivate these pupils and enable them to make similar progress to their more able classmates.
68. The subject leader provides effective leadership and there have been sound improvements since the last inspection, resulting in higher standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. She has clear direction and is well focused on raising standards. Through her evaluation of planning and analysis of test results, she has identified, as a high priority, the need to improve the progress made by pupils in Year 3 and the way in which teaching in Years 3 and 4 uses assessment information to set pupils more appropriate targets and match work to their needs. However, it is early days and things are moving slowly because, as yet, she has not had sufficient opportunities to observe the teaching in order to get to the heart of precisely what is going wrong and to offer effective support to colleagues. Although her immediate reaction to put in additional support is showing signs of success, this is far from an ideal remedy, not least because of financial implications.

Mathematics across the curriculum

69. Opportunities for pupils to use their mathematics skills in other subjects are satisfactory. Teachers plan appropriate links; for example, Year 4 pupils apply their knowledge of angles when using a modelling program in ICT.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good support for teaching in Year 3 is starting to improve pupils' learning.
- Pupils have good attitudes to their work in science because it is of a practical nature and mainly based on investigation.
- Assessment is not used well enough in Years 3 and 4 to check on pupils' learning or to tailor their work to meet their needs.

Commentary

70. Pupils achieve satisfactorily to reach standards that are in line with those expected nationally by the end of Years 2 and 4. This is because teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and the proportion of good and very good teaching observed has increased since the school was last inspected. However, teaching and learning are more successful in Years 1 and 2 than they are in Years 3 and 4, although recent improvements in Year 3 mean that learning is improving steadily. Although there is evidence of pupils underachieving in the past, standards have improved in Year 3 recently due to some effective support teaching that has high expectations of what pupils can do, ensures that work is better adapted to meet the needs of all pupils, and challenges more able pupils particularly well. For example, in a particularly successful lesson, the support teacher's very good subject knowledge enabled pupils to plan an experiment to investigate magnets; skilful questioning and insistence on pupils using technical vocabulary ensured pupils were well focused. As a result, all of the pupils could suggest questions of their own and consider ways they might investigate them; they thought carefully about what they could investigate and how to go about it. For example, one pupil suggested that they might be able to find out how magnets attract by visiting a factory, whilst another suggested testing how strong magnets were by seeing how many objects they could pick up. Excellent classroom management and very good relationships between the teacher and the pupils and the good use of resources, including education support staff, time and writing frames to help them organise their writing, ensured all pupils made very good progress, commensurate with their ability.
71. However, the most able pupils do not do well enough in Years 3 and 4. This is because whilst teaching in Years 1 and 2 takes good account of pupils' abilities when planning their work, it does not in Years 3 and 4. For example, in a Year 4 lesson aimed at developing pupils' investigative skills using conductors and insulators, pupils did not make as much progress as they could have done because the task was not sufficiently adapted to the abilities of the pupils. In addition, the teacher's explanations and use of technical vocabulary were not always accurate, which led to some pupils misunderstanding related ideas.
72. Nevertheless, pupils of all ages have good attitudes to learning and the subject contributes well to their personal development. They enjoy in particular the practical nature of the subject. For example, in a good lesson seen in Year 1, pupils watched in awe as the teacher lit a candle in their darkened classroom and reflected on where the

flame had gone when the teacher blew it out. One pupil speculated, "It's gone inside the candle." The teacher then prompted the children to think how they felt about the dark and sensitively tackled the issue of pupils who were afraid of the dark by getting them to discuss their fears. The children were so engaged there was an outcry when the teacher suggested they put the lights on again. Later pupils considered how blind children might feel and sense their world by providing an opportunity to experience objects while blindfolded through the senses of touch, hearing and smell.

73. Leadership and management are sound and improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. A greater proportion of teaching seen during this inspection compared with the last inspection was good or better and there has been a rise in standards by the end of Year 2. There is greater consistency between the progress made by pupils in parallel classes because the work is based on national subject guidance and the support teacher in Year 3 is beginning to address the inconsistency between the balance and coverage of work between the classes and other year groups. The subject manager has analysed the available assessment data and has identified main strengths and weaknesses, but this role, together with monitoring and supporting teaching and learning, is under-developed and she has not yet identified the need for teachers in Years 3 and 4 to use assessment more effectively to check on pupils' progress and to use the information gained to match work more closely to their abilities.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is well organised so that pupils regularly practise their skills and refine them further.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good.
- The subject leader is well informed and good plans for improvement are in place.
- Whole-school procedures for assessing pupils' progress are not established.
- Pupils have good opportunities to use ICT to support their day-to-day learning in other subjects.

Commentary

74. Standards are as expected nationally by the end of Years 2 and 4 and the achievement of pupils is satisfactory. Since the last inspection, sound improvements to provision in ICT have taken place. In addition to more computers, teachers and support staff have increased their skills and knowledge through further training and are more confident in their use of ICT. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, as it was at the time of the last inspection but, because of their more secure subject knowledge, teachers give clearer explanations and make effective use of the 'Smart board' to involve pupils in the demonstrations. The contribution pupils make, by giving instructions and identifying which tools are to be used in order to carry out certain procedures, gives them opportunities to demonstrate their skills, and provides the teacher with useful information about what individuals have remembered. Effective lesson introductions enable pupils to approach new learning with confidence.

75. Pupils are enthusiastic about their work and enjoy working with computers in particular. They behave very well and demonstrate a high level of concentration because they are keen to learn. They listen carefully to teachers and teaching assistants, readily accepting their support and advice so that they have a clear understanding of what they are to do and learn. In discussion and when working together, pupils co-operate effectively and support one another well, reflecting their very good relationships with each other.
76. The subject leader has a good knowledge of the subject and leads and manages the subject satisfactorily. He is enthusiastic and keen to build on the developments already taking place within the school. A computer suite is under construction and the school is giving careful thought as to how best to integrate its use into pupils' day-to-day work. The good teamwork of the staff ensures that the investment in resources and training is reflected in classrooms. Both teachers and pupils use ICT with greater confidence and competence across the curriculum.
77. However, there are, as yet, no consistent procedures for monitoring pupils' progress and identifying what groups of pupils can do in order to help teachers more with their planning. Consequently, pupils do not have as clear an understanding as they might of what they can do well and how they can improve.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

78. Teachers carefully plan for pupils to develop an appropriate range of skills, which link well to their learning in other areas of the curriculum. There are good examples of the use of ICT as a tool for learning in mathematics and English lessons. The school has purchased a range of programs, which is well matched to the work pupils undertake in lessons. Teachers make good use of ICT, in particular the interactive whiteboards, where installed, to support teaching in all subjects of the curriculum. This contributes to pupils' learning in ICT by providing opportunities for pupils to consolidate their skills.

HUMANITIES

79. In **history**, insufficient evidence was collected during the inspection to make a secure judgement about the provision, standards, or the quality of teaching.
80. In **geography**, one lesson was observed and one lesson was sampled; in addition, pupils' work was looked at. From this limited evidence base it was not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of provision. However, from what was seen, standards are in line with national expectations and achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 to 4. New subject guidelines have been implemented which are securely and appropriately based on national guidance. This has ensured pupils make better progress in organising and communicating information in a variety of ways and recording their learning. For example, in Year 1, pupils have made labelled models of geographical features such as harbours, volcanoes, beaches and villages linked to the story of a girl who lives on the Isle of Struay. They have also made maps of their route to a local museum and written about places they have visited on holiday with the toy Barnaby Bear. In Year 2 pupils were challenged to get Barnaby ready for a

holiday in France. Using information leaflets about their holiday destination, pupils worked out what kind of transport and currency they would need and which tourist attractions they might visit in Paris. Pupils also learnt simple French phrases to enhance their knowledge. In a good lesson observed in Year 3, the teacher and support teacher planned the lesson well to include a short visit to observe human and physical features in the local environment. Careful questioning and use of ICT enabled pupils to identify, describe and sort these features but lack of assessment prevented the more able pupils, in particular, from being sufficiently challenged by work more appropriate to their ability.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been good improvement in religious education since the previous inspection and standards now meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.
- Pupils have good attitudes and enjoy learning about different religions.
- Assessment information is not used effectively enough to check on the consistency of pupils' progress and to adapt work to suit differently attaining pupils.

Commentary

81. Standards are average overall and meet the requirements of the agreed syllabus for religious education. Achievement is satisfactory because of sound subject teaching. This is good improvement since the last inspection when standards, progress and the quality of teaching were all unsatisfactory.
82. In accordance with the local guidelines for religious education, the main focus throughout the school is on pupils learning about the Christian faith. Additionally, they learn about Islam, Judaism and Hinduism, which they then compare and contrast with Christianity and talk about and explain the differences. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, pupils studied the story of Rama and Sita. They learnt that these are special people to Hindus and that they came from India. They made divas to celebrate Diwali and are knowledgeable about weddings and christenings in the Christian church and the significance of clothing to Muslims. Year 4 pupils understand the significance of the gifts brought by the Magi in the Bible and are familiar with the story of the birth of Christ. They have visited a local church as well as a mosque, where they were taught about the Qur'an and the festival of Eid. They have also visited a synagogue, where they were shown the Torah by the Rabbi, who explained how it was considered by Jews to be precious. Pupils related it to the Christian faith when they reflected on the things that they considered precious to them, such as their friends and family. They also learned about the significance of some of the clothing worn by followers of Judaism.
83. Pupils enjoy the subject and the visits and visitors they have had. They are keen to discuss such experiences and can still recall many facts learned and are developing positive attitudes and empathy with peoples of different beliefs. This is most notable in the support they give to others less fortunate than themselves. Encouraged by the head teacher in assemblies, they have sent Christmas parcels to deprived children and

give long-term support to a child in Africa. This helps develop pupils' social responsibility as well as their sense of common humanity that aids their understanding of the main principles underlying the major religions studied.

84. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject leader has successfully dealt with the issues raised in the previous inspection report by reviewing the teaching guidelines and ensuring that staff's subject knowledge is secure. She has instigated visits to religious buildings and invited visitors to school to talk about their religion. She has identified now the need to develop an assessment system to enable pupils' progress to be kept check of and has produced a useful action plan which rightly recognises the need to monitor teaching and learning more effectively in order to identify what is and is not working and to find further ways to improve the subject provision.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

85. Too few lessons were seen in any of the subjects to judge provision or teaching. Evidence was gathered, however, from teachers' planning, samples of pupils' work and discussions with pupils and staff.
86. In **art and design**, the standards reported at the last inspection have improved and work on display indicates that attainment is above national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 4. This is because teaching places strong emphasis on the development of pupils' observational skills as well as close attention to painting and drawing skills and techniques, and, most importantly, allows pupils sufficient time to work with thoughtfulness and care. As a result pupils achieve well and display a very good range of skills and techniques using a variety of materials. Their work illustrates their careful attention to detail with very effective use of tone, line and texture, such as in Year 2 pupils' drawings of the school. In a Year 4 lesson sampled, pupils made good use of the digital photographs they had taken to develop their understanding of how people view objects and scenes in different ways. The teacher made good use of artwork such as *The Eiffel Tower* by Robert Delaunay to promote discussion and enhance pupils' understanding, which then informed their own work. The art curriculum is well planned and opportunities for pupils to learn from the work of well-known artists such as Matisse and Kandinsky are well integrated into the curriculum. Pupils' experiences are broadened very effectively by opportunities to work with professional artists. They explore an exciting range of artwork and skills, including the art of other cultures such that of the Australian Aborigine. Teachers value pupils' work and their artwork is displayed well throughout school so that all classrooms and shared areas look bright and colourful and enhance the visual environment. Pupils can extend their interest and skills by joining the art and craft club
87. Very little work was seen in **design and technology**, but teachers' planning shows that pupils experience an appropriate range of skills, and work with a suitable variety of materials. Good links are made with ICT so that pupils can use their computer skills to aid their design work.
88. No lessons were seen in **music** or **physical education**, so reliable judgements on provision, standards and achievements cannot be made. In music, teachers ensure that pupils have opportunities to develop their skills across the expected range of musical activities, including exploring the musical elements and composing their own pieces using ICT. They can extend their skills by joining one of the music clubs, which include choir and activities such as African drumming. Pupils regularly take part in musical performances, including participation in the Huddersfield Music Festival, and also have exciting opportunities to see and work with professional performers. These experiences enhance the curriculum and contribute significantly to pupils' personal development. The provision is well organised so that the school makes best use of staff expertise.
89. In **physical education**, the school plans well for the development of pupils' physical skills and the curriculum covers all key areas, including good opportunities for pupils to learn to swim. The range and breadth of activities have improved since the last inspection following the introduction of a more effective programme of work for all year groups. The subject leader is effectively raising the profile of the subject and

pupils say that physical education is now more fun. There is a good range of sports clubs, including opportunities for pupils to learn from visiting specialists and professional players.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

90. Owing to inspection priorities, no overall judgements were made in this curriculum area, but there is secure evidence that standards are good. This is partly because the co-ordinator is very committed to developing pupils' understanding and awareness of personal and health issues, including drugs' awareness, and the importance of leading healthy lifestyles. High quality displays of pupils' work demonstrate the importance given to this area of learning by teachers. The school has worked very hard recently in its quest to earn the Investors in Pupils award, and this is imminent.
91. All staff have undertaken appropriate training to enable them to teach this aspect of the curriculum. Discussions with pupils, along with their good personal development, show that the school is successful in developing pupils' sense of responsibility to themselves and one another. The school council is a strong voice for pupils, and it also initiates them into the democratic process and teaches them how they can contribute in a positive way to their community. Assemblies and circle times, when pupils have the opportunity to talk uninterrupted about how they feel, make a good contribution to this aspect of the curriculum.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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