

INSPECTION REPORT

NORMANTON ALTOFTS JUNIOR SCHOOL

Altofts, Normanton

LEA area: Wakefield

Unique reference number: 108208

Headteacher: Mr R Vasey

Lead inspector: Dr J N Thorp

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 5th May 2005

Inspection number: 267401

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	342
School address:	Ash Tree Gardens Altofts Normanton West Yorkshire
Postcode:	WF6 2NF
Telephone number:	01924 302430
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr T Kitching
Date of previous inspection:	December 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Altofts Junior School is located on a very large site, close to the centre of Normanton. Most children come from the surrounding area. The school has changed in designation since the previous inspection, from a middle school providing education for pupils aged eight to twelve, to a junior school for pupils aged seven to eleven. The school is above average in size and also larger than it was at the time of the previous inspection, with 342 pupils currently on roll. The vast majority of pupils are white. The school serves an area with a broad social mix. Attainment on entry is above average overall, although there is a wide spread of ability. There are 66 pupils (19 per cent) on the school's register of special educational needs, which is broadly average compared with schools nationally; eight of these pupils have a statement of special educational need, which is higher than found in most other schools. There are three pupils with English as an additional language who are at an early stage of English language acquisition.

The school is involved in the Excellence in Cities initiative and is currently also involved with the national Interactive Whiteboard Expansion project. There is community provision for the Wakefield Metropolitan District Council Community Forum and for the use of sports facilities. The school achieved a third Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
6327	Dr J N Thorp	Lead inspector	Mathematics Music Physical education
14141	Mr E Marshall	Lay inspector	
27591	Mrs M Campbell	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Religious education
2759	Mr D Sleightholme	Team inspector	English Geography History Special educational needs English as an additional language
11816	Mr G Jones	Team inspector	Science Personal, social, health and citizenship education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Overall this is an effective school, with some very good features. The headteacher provides very good leadership, ensuring a firm focus on high standards and a most positive ethos. Teaching is good, with some lessons of high quality, contributing effectively to pupils' learning and good achievement. Standards in English, mathematics and science are consistently above or well above average. The curriculum meets pupils' needs effectively and there are very good opportunities provided to enrich it. High levels of care, support and guidance ensure pupils' personal development is very good. The school has good links with parents and the community, and provides good value for money

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils' achievement is good, with the vast majority doing as well as they can; standards are above or well above average in key subjects by the end of Year 6
- The headteacher leads the school very well, with a firm focus on high standards; he is very well supported by other key staff who lead their subjects and areas very effectively
- Teaching is good overall; it is particularly strong in Year 6
- Very small classrooms limit possible teaching strategies and inhibit learning at times; no room for computers means pupils have too few opportunities to work with them in other subjects
- Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour and the very good relationships amongst pupils and adults contribute to the very positive ethos in the school
- Good assessment procedures enable teachers to track pupils' progress effectively and to set clear targets for improvement, enabling them to manage pupils' learning at a good pace
- At times, insufficient care and attention are given to the presentation of pupils' work
- A very good range of activities is provided to enrich the curriculum

There has been good improvement overall since the previous inspection in December 1998. Previous high standards in English, mathematics and science have been maintained. There has been very good improvement in the provision for pupils with special educational needs, which is now good. Good improvement in provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has raised standards, although further development of resources is required to ensure pupils have access to the full curriculum. The introduction of a policy for teaching and learning is ensuring that teaching is now much more consistent in quality across the school.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	All schools			Similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	A	A	B	C
Mathematics	A	A	B	C
Science	A	A	A	B

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

Overall **achievement is good**. Pupils' learning is good and the majority reach standards which are above or well above average in English, mathematics and science. As the table shows, results in 2004 were not quite as high, but there was a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this year group. Pupils currently in Year 6 are well on course to achieve well above average standards in English and science and above average standards in mathematics. Throughout the school standards in ICT are broadly in line with those expected and in religious education they are higher than expected; in both subjects this is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good. High levels of support and guidance, and very good relationships contribute to pupils' very positive attitudes. Behaviour is very good. Attendance is well above average and pupils are punctual to school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good overall, including some lessons of high quality. Teaching is particularly good in Year 6. There is purposeful and effective teamwork among a strong team of teaching and other staff. The very good relationships amongst adults and pupils and the very effective management of behaviour contribute towards the very positive environment for learning. The planned curriculum and the very good range of opportunities provided to enrich it stimulate pupils' interest very effectively, contributing positively to pupils' learning and their achievement. Good assessment enables teachers to track pupils' progress effectively and set clear targets for improvement. Very good care, support and guidance for pupils ensure that their personal needs are identified and met. Pupils' views are valued. The school's links with parents and the community are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall **leadership and management are very good.** The headteacher provides very good leadership, ensuring a firm focus on high standards and a strong commitment to the inclusion of all pupils. There is very good teamwork, with the deputy, other key staff and the school's administrative staff all providing very good support. Management systems are very effective in ensuring the school runs smoothly. Senior managers monitor the work of the school effectively, which enables them to plan well for further improvement. The governing body is well led; governors fulfil their legal responsibilities and contribute effectively to the strategic development of the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents justifiably have very positive views of the school. The vast majority are pleased with their children's progress and the high standards they achieve; they are pleased with the way higher attaining pupils are extended. Parents believe their children are well taught, but some would like more information about how they can help their children at home. Most parents are very pleased with the wide range of opportunities provided, although a small minority are needlessly worried about their children's access to these activities. Pupils also have very positive views about school. The vast majority enjoy coming to school and the range of activities provided for them. They are happy and secure, accept responsibilities confidently and feel their teachers help them to learn.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to work with computers in all subjects
- Teach pupils how to present their work more carefully
- Continue to explore ways to extend and use the available space more creatively

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects

Overall pupils' achievement is good. Standards on entry to the school are above average in the core subjects, although there is a wide spread of ability. Learning is good and pupils achieve well, so by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6, standards are above or well above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils also achieve well in other subjects and attain well above average standards, including in their personal, social, health and citizenship education.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school, with standards currently well above average in English and science and above average in mathematics
- The year-on-year improvement in standards by the end of Year 6, at a rate faster than that in other schools nationally, reflects this good achievement
- Standards in ICT and religious education have improved since the previous inspection
- Pupils' completed work indicates that standards are higher than expected in history and geography; there is some completed art work of high quality on display
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well

Commentary

1. The achievement of pupils throughout the school is good. Effective teaching ensures learning is good and enables pupils to make good progress. The results of national tests in 2004 indicate that pupils attained standards that are well above average in science and above average in English and mathematics when compared with pupils in all other schools nationally. Although these results were not quite as good as the previous year, there was a significantly higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this year group. Nevertheless, standards in science were higher than at the time of the previous inspection. Furthermore, there has been a year-on-year improvement in standards in these subjects as a whole over the last three years, at a rate faster than in other schools nationally. When the 2004 results are compared with those in schools in which pupils achieved similar results at the end of Year 2, they are above average in science and average in English and mathematics. Good assessment procedures and the careful monitoring of standards ensure that pupils' specific learning needs are identified, targets are set and effective measures put in place to support their learning. This contributes very effectively to improving standards.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.3 (29.3)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	28.5 (28.7)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	30.4 (30.5)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 86 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Inspection findings indicate that standards among pupils currently working towards the end of Year 6 are well above average in English and science and above average in mathematics. Standards in ICT are in line with those expected of pupils their age, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. The substantial work to develop provision for ICT has been successful and pupils now make significantly better progress because both teaching and available resources are better, although the lack of some resources still limits the progress pupils can make in some aspects of this subject. Pupils also now reach higher than expected standards in religious education, because they are so effectively taught the curriculum which meets the requirements of the local agreed syllabus.

3. Although there were insufficient opportunities to observe teaching and learning in other subjects to inform judgements about overall provision, there was sufficient evidence in pupils' completed work and in that on display to indicate that standards in history and geography are higher than expected of pupils their age. Some of the pupils' completed art work on display is also of a high quality. There was insufficient evidence to support a judgement about standards in other subjects.
4. Throughout the school, the well-organised and effective teaching, the careful planning of lessons and the clear targets set for improvement all contribute to the effectiveness of pupils' learning. Pupils are interested and motivated, concentrate well in lessons and work hard at the tasks set. All this ensures that learning is good and that pupils enjoy and benefit from the rich variety of experiences provided for them. All pupils are encouraged to do their best regardless of their capability.
5. Overall attainment among most pupils who have special educational needs is below average. However, good regular support, and programmes of learning matched carefully to their individual needs, help ensure these pupils to achieve well. Overall, this is a good improvement since the previous inspection. The small number of pupils with English as an additional language also achieve well and make progress at a rate similar to their classmates, because they are well supported, particularly in literacy and numeracy activities.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is very good and above the national average for primary schools; punctuality is good. Pupils display very good attitudes in lessons. Their behaviour in class and around the school is also very good. Pupils' personal development is very good overall with clear strengths in their moral and social development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good behaviour and attitudes to learning contribute positively to pupils' good achievement
- Very good attendance illustrates pupils' liking for school and underpins their good progress
- The school provides very well for pupils' personal development and prepares them well for their responsibilities as future citizens
- A wide range of activities in art, drama and music enhances pupils' cultural development

Commentary

6. The school has very high expectations of behaviour to which pupils respond very well. Pupils are encouraged to contribute to life in school, agreeing the details for class and school rules for example, and they show they understand the need for them. Inappropriate behaviour is rare. The relationships developed between pupils and between pupils and all the staff are very good and provide a most positive contribution to learning and to the school's positive ethos. Pupils and parents report no racial or bullying problems and none were seen during the inspection. Pupils show keen interest in lessons and the various activities provided and they try hard; they co-operate well with others, working willingly and effectively in pairs or groups when required. Pupils also demonstrate the ability to work independently, in the open shared learning areas for example, with minimal supervision. Behaviour in the playground and around the school is very good. Pupils use the limited space sensibly and show awareness and concern for others. The 'playground buddies' are prominent in their orange tabards and make themselves available to give help and friendship for any pupil in need. Behaviour in the dining areas is good and this creates a very pleasant social atmosphere. All this contributes to pupils' very good social and moral development.
7. The school has good procedures in place to encourage good attendance, awarding certificates for full attendance throughout the school year. Fifty-five of these certificates were

awarded last year, some to pupils who had also achieved full attendance in the previous year. This very good attendance reflects the parents' view that their children like to come to this school. Many pupils are waiting by the doors well before the start of lessons and come quickly into their classrooms where they begin to organise themselves enthusiastically for the day ahead. Pupils working voluntarily and unsupervised before time for registration is commonplace; reluctance to finish lessons and leave the classroom at the end of the school day is also seen. Almost all pupils are punctual and the school makes good use of the time available. There are no recorded exclusions.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.6	School data	0.1
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

8. The school encourages pupils to become mature and independent. All the Year 6 pupils and many others have additional tasks such as clearing away in classrooms, setting up equipment, taking messages, issuing and recording library books and answering the telephone in the school office during lunch times. Election to the school council and the 'buddy' group is seen as a significant achievement of trust and responsibility. Lessons in citizenship provide very well for pupils to begin to understand the responsibilities of living in a community where the views and opinions of others matter. A recent mock parliamentary election activity is a particularly good example of how the school helps develop pupils' ability to think and act maturely. The annual residential visits provide very good opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership and team-working skills. All these contribute effectively to pupils' very good personal development.
9. Pupils' spiritual development and cultural development are good and are achieved through participation in the themed assemblies and a wide range of activities in art, drama and music. Pupils have a good awareness of their own cultures and are taught to understand and respect the values and beliefs of others. Pupils understand the need to keep the school as an orderly and happy community and as a result relationships throughout the whole school are very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education for all its pupils, which has improved since the previous inspection. Teaching is good overall, ensuring that pupils' learning is good. Good assessment effectively underpins teaching and learning, so that both teachers and pupils know exactly what is needed for further improvement. The curriculum meets all pupils' needs effectively, including those with special educational needs. There are very good opportunities provided to enrich the curriculum. There is very good support and guidance for pupils and a good partnership with parents. The school has good links with the community. All of these contribute positively to pupils' good achievement.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good. Assessment is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are now good and more consistent across the school, which has ensured good improvement since the previous inspection
- The organisation of teaching and learning is effective, because teachers understand pupils' learning needs and provide relevant tasks and activities to meet them

- Teachers work hard to overcome the challenges posed by the limited space in their classrooms
- There is a firm focus on learning, to which pupils respond very well
- Good procedures for assessment enable the school to track progress effectively; the involvement of pupils in evaluating their own learning is particularly valuable
- Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good

Commentary

10. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection because it is now more consistent in quality across the school. The weaker teaching noted in Year 4 and the unsatisfactory teaching in some mathematics lessons has been eradicated. Teaching and learning in this inspection were consistently good; teaching in Year 6 was particularly strong. The table below indicates that a substantial proportion of the teaching seen during the inspection was good, and in around a third of lessons it was very good. Evidence in pupils' work also reinforces this view of teaching across the school, and parents too, rightly believe that teaching in the school is good.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 47 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	14 (30%)	23 (49%)	10 (21%)	0	0	0

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

11. Throughout the school teachers effectively plan an interesting and relevant range of learning activities. They understand what pupils of different abilities need to learn next; the clear communication of specific learning objectives is a strong feature of the start of most lessons. The 'setting' arrangements in English and mathematics are good, because they successfully help teachers to meet pupils' learning needs efficiently and effectively. Strong teamwork underpins planning and reinforces these arrangements and good use is made of individual teachers' particular subject expertise amongst each of the year groups. Teachers are good at assessing what pupils already know and understand and this usually enables them to set tasks that are well matched to pupils' particular learning needs and their capabilities. A strong feature of most lessons was the brisk pace with which teachers manage pupils' learning. Teachers skilfully engage pupils in discussion with clearly focused questions and at times they make good use of talking partners at various points in the lessons to reinforce learning. On the very few occasions where teaching fell below the generally high standard seen, although nonetheless satisfactory, it was the result of a lack of sufficiently focused or challenging tasks for the different groups in the class.
12. Teachers work very hard to overcome the challenges imposed by the restrictions of space in their classrooms. Despite these difficulties teaching is purposeful and well organised, with good use made of available resources. Teachers make very good use of their interactive whiteboards, although the limited space sometimes restricts the way they can be used interactively, because of the difficulties of pupils moving around in the crowded classrooms. Throughout the school teachers have very good relationships with their pupils. Their high expectations of behaviour have a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning and their response in lessons. As a result lessons are well managed and productive, ensuring pupils are able to learn and enjoy their work.
13. There is a firm focus on learning throughout the school to which pupils respond very well. They show interest in their lessons, work hard and are keen to succeed; most concentrate well on the tasks in hand. Pupils try hard and persevere even when they find activities difficult. All this helps them make good progress and contributes positively to their good learning.

14. The school has good systems and procedures for assessment, which provide good information with which the school can track pupils' progress. The detailed analysis of the outcomes of assessment informs target setting across the school, enables teachers to identify those pupils needing more support and effectively underpins the firm focus on pupils' learning and raising standards. Teachers' day-to-day assessment in lessons is good. They are skilful in posing questions that enable them to evaluate pupils' learning and to identify those pupils who need additional help and support. Pupils' work is marked effectively, often, as in mathematics, during the lesson with pupils present. In many lessons pupils are also involved in evaluating their own learning. As a result, they are helped to become fully aware of what they need to do to improve or what they need to learn next.
15. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, is good. These pupils benefit from the setting arrangements in literacy and numeracy, because this enables teachers to provide activities and tasks which more specifically match their capabilities and needs and which link, where appropriate, with targets on the pupils' individual education plans. In many lessons, the good support and encouragement of teaching assistants are also valuable in helping pupils with special educational needs make progress and contribute positively to their good achievement.

The curriculum

The school's curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant and meets the needs of all its pupils. There is a very good enrichment programme. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is well planned and organised; homework provision is good
- Although the accommodation includes good specialist features, the very small classrooms limit the styles of teaching that can be used and the deployment of some resources
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good and much better than reported in the previous inspection
- Interesting innovations are contributing effectively to the ongoing further development of the curriculum
- The very good programme of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum very effectively and appeals to a wide range of interests
- Provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education is very good
- Pupils are prepared well for the next stage in their education

Commentary

16. The planning of the learning programmes taught to pupils from Years 3 to 6 is detailed and thorough. This ensures that the statutory requirements for each National Curriculum subject and the coverage prescribed in the locally agreed syllabus for religious education are met. Literacy and numeracy are taught four times per week; science, ICT, physical education, religious education and personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) are taught weekly. There is a comprehensive booster programme to help pupils tackle national tests confidently. The curriculum is also extended through good homework provision. This encourages pupils to consolidate key skills and to work independently on projects based on personal research.
17. The strengths and weaknesses of the accommodation have a significant impact on the styles and methods of teaching used to deliver this good curriculum. Some of the specialist facilities retained from the former middle school, such as a music studio, tennis court and food technology facilities, provide opportunities not usually found in primary schools and they have a positive impact on standards. The large central area is used well by teaching assistants working with pupils who have special educational needs. However, all the classrooms are very small and cramped; there is no space for additional furniture and the options for the organisation of pupil tables are limited. Teachers do endeavour to make the best use of their

rooms but the styles of teaching they can employ are restricted. For example, it is difficult to provide opportunities for pupils to sit together on the carpet during the whole class input to lessons, or during circle times. In classrooms with an interactive whiteboard, these support teachers teaching very effectively, but it is very difficult for pupils to use them interactively without considerable disruption.

18. At the time of the previous inspection provision for pupils who have special educational needs was unsatisfactory. All the former weaknesses have been addressed effectively and provision for these pupils is now good. The organisation of pupils into three sets for literacy and numeracy helps ensure good equality of opportunity for pupils of all levels of attainment. Pupils who have special educational needs access similar topics taught to other pupils, but which are planned at a level appropriately matched to their capabilities and needs. Teachers work well with their teaching assistants to provide a good range of small group and individual support activities closely matched to the targets in pupils' individual education plans. This provision is sufficiently flexible to provide varying support for individual pupils who benefit from additional reading practice, small group work in basic writing skills and individual support in mathematics topics such as shape.
19. Teachers have introduced a range of curriculum innovations. For example, afternoon registration in one class included the opportunity for pupils to address their teacher in elementary French; in another class the teacher used short physical exercises to help the pupils prepare for the learning that was to follow. Another effective innovation is that, for some non-core subject teaching, a teacher with expertise in a particular subject sometimes takes a lead role in working with all the pupils in the year group. This happened during a history lesson when a teacher successfully led the whole year group through an evidence trail using artefacts from World War 2. Good use is made of national guidance on linking subjects. Consequently, some subjects, such as geography and history, are 'blocked' into study units. Good opportunities are taken to link subjects when it is deemed to be advantageous to pupils' acquisition of knowledge and skills. For example, a lesson covering key buildings in the locality of the school provided a good opportunity for Year 4 pupils to use their ICT skills to import text and images on to the base maps they were using.
20. Pupils have very good opportunities to learn from direct experience through the very good enrichment programme of visits to museums and specialist sites, which enhance their learning very effectively. Pupils in Year 4, for example, could recall in good detail a visit to a Viking settlement in which they had dressed up in Viking costumes and had experienced what it was like to live in a thatched hut with bed covers made from animal skins. By Year 6 pupils have visited a mosque, a Hindu temple, York Minster and their local church to improve their understanding of world religions. They also met a parent, representing the Hindu faith, who provided them with first hand knowledge of religious practices and traditions. Pupils in Year 6 extended their artistic skills by working with a professional cartoonist; those in Year 5 have learned how to make puppets based on Greek mythology when they had access to the skills of two visiting puppeteers.
21. The school provides pupils with opportunities to join a very good range of extra-curricular activities including art, singing and instrumental tuition, drama, environmental education and a mathematics challenge programme. Pupils can learn to improve their sporting skills and take part in sport with teams from other local schools. A junior football match with a nearby school during the inspection was a valuable social occasion as well as a good opportunity for girls and boys to play football competitively.
22. The curriculum includes very good opportunities to extend pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education. Literacy lessons during the inspection helped pupils to express their feelings when they contributed to class discussions. The governors have agreed that sex education and drugs education will be taught; parents are invited to visit school to learn about the content of the sex education programme. Drugs education is provided through the science curriculum. Pupils' personal safety out of school is covered regularly, including reminders to them about the danger of living close to a busy railway line and canal.

23. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. During the summer term Year 6 pupils follow a unit of work that includes activities that are designed to help them prepare for transfer to secondary school. Pupils study a novel; they practise literacy skills such as taking notes and are taught elementary algebra in a range of activities that introduce them well to the Key Stage 3 curriculum.
24. Staffing levels are good and represent a good blend of experience of junior teaching. The number of staff employed to support pupils with special educational needs is good with many trained in learning programmes such as the Additional Literacy Strategy. Resources for learning are good overall and are used well.

Care, guidance and support

Overall, the school's provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is sound. Pupils enjoy very good relationships with adults in school; the support, advice and guidance they receive are very good. Pupils' views are regularly sought and the level of involvement of pupils in the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff know pupils as individuals with individual needs
- Very good relationships among pupils and adults underpin the high levels of mutual care and respect; pupils have confidence to approach an adult for guidance when worried or concerned
- Good induction arrangements help pupils settle quickly and make good early progress
- The school council provides an effective means for pupils to have an influence on school life
- Minor revisions to control arrangements for some health and safety procedures are needed to improve their overall effectiveness

Commentary

25. This is a very caring school where staff know pupils as individuals with individual needs. Specific needs are identified on entry and all pupils are carefully monitored as they progress through the school. The provision of support, advice and guidance is very good. Pupils with special educational needs are particularly well cared for by teachers, by support staff and by specialists from relevant outside agencies.
26. There are high standards of mutual respect existing between staff and their pupils. The situation is clearly demonstrated by the staff's efforts to encourage pupils to bring any problems to their attention. Concerns over class work or homework can be made known through pupils' assessment of their own progress. If they find work difficult to understand or complete, a symbol such as a red traffic light or unhappy face drawn at the end of the work is all that is required to notify the teacher that help is being asked for. Help is willingly given. Very good relationships enable pupils to develop a very good level of trust in their teachers and this gives them the confidence to approach staff if they feel in need of help when worried or concerned. Staff monitor their pupils' academic work continuously and also their personal development. Because of this careful approach, the advice and guidance given to pupils are relevant to their needs and provide effective support that enables them to make progress.
27. The school has implemented good procedures for induction of new pupils into the Year 3 classes. The Year 3 staff and groups of Year 3 pupils visit the linked infant schools to meet the leavers and give them good opportunities to ask questions about their new school and how the Year 3 pupils have felt about it. Year 2 pupils are invited to annual concerts and are given a half-day induction session when they come into their new school, meet their new classmates, and enjoy sample lessons and activities. The 'buddies' look after small groups, show them around the school and answer any questions. The arrangements ensure new pupils can settle in quickly with confidence and begin to make early progress.

28. The school council is used effectively to gather pupils' suggestions or complaints about the school and bring them to the attention of the senior staff for discussion and consideration. The 12 elected members represent all age groups and meet regularly. Though a relatively new initiative in school, the council has been successful in obtaining new and improved play equipment, planning an environmental play area prior to construction, and producing a pupil information handbook and is now busily engaged on the planning for a school magazine. The members are also 'buddies' and are proud of the contributions they have been able to make.
29. The school has effective procedures to ensure compliance with requirements for child protection, including Internet security. First aid arrangements are clear and procedures are followed correctly. Medicines are properly controlled and pupils are carefully supervised throughout the school day and during the after-school activities. Regular testing of equipment is carried out, but the identification of which appliances have been tested is not sufficiently clear. The termly fire drills are evaluated and recorded appropriately. Recent staff changes and the current building work in the school have created an opportunity for review of some precautionary aspects of safety planning and the staff and governing body will need to implement changes to ensure risks are identified and guarded against.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents are good and parents are very supportive of the school. The school has established good links with the community and uses them well to support pupils' learning. Links with other schools and colleges are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The responsiveness of staff and good communication between school and home result in a high level of parental satisfaction
- Links with the local community provide regular and valuable opportunities for enrichment of the curriculum
- Good links with the local secondary school have resulted in support for sport and the computer club; there are good arrangements for the transfer of pupils at the end of Year 6

Commentary

30. The school is responsive to parental concerns and staff listen and help wherever possible. Parents appreciate this and say they feel comfortable about approaching the school with problems or complaints. Home/school communication is good and parents feel well informed. Whole-school and individual year group newsletters are supplemented effectively with termly curricular information and the use of homework diaries for parents' questions or comments. Parent consultation evenings are provided in autumn and spring and parents can attend a further meeting in the summer if they wish to discuss their children's annual reports. Nine parents attend on a regular basis to provide help in the classrooms and 13 parents are on a roster to provide help with supervision for off-site activities. The school facilitates adult learning courses and has helped in the provision of courses for parent helper training. Although there is no parent-teacher association, fund-raising events organised by the school are well supported by parents and the community.
31. The school has established good and varied links within the local community. Off-site visits are provided for each age group and are used well to illustrate the curriculum and provide greater stimulus for learning. Pupils extend their learning through visits to local sites and facilities such as a historical village, a water environmental centre and museums. Visits to the local church, a mosque and temple provide good insights into different faiths. Visitors to the school are also used well to provide advice and guidance on personal safety issues and broaden the curriculum. Personnel from the fire service and the school nurse, for example, give advice on personal health and safety matters, and an environmental group give advice on recycling. A theatre group provide drama and visitors in costume provide popular sessions on

Roman, Greek, Tudor, Victorian and Egyptian history. Community use of school premises is encouraged and local football teams make good use of the outdoor play areas at weekends.

32. The school is developing its links with other schools and colleges. Membership of the group of local schools is being used effectively to provide opportunities for the headteachers to discuss joint problems and share best practice. The good link established with the local secondary school has resulted in the provision of additional tuition in sports and support for the computer club. This link is also used effectively to help smooth the transfer of the Year 6 leavers. Good co-operation between the respective staffs enables the leavers to enjoy a full induction day of lessons and activities in their new school and provide transition work units in English, mathematics and science. The special education needs co-ordinators meet to discuss pupils' specific needs and pupils considered to have worries or problems are identified for additional support to ensure their progress is not interrupted.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good. The school's governance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very good leadership, which motivates and inspires staff to manage key projects and tasks very effectively
- The development of the curriculum and teaching is led and managed very effectively by the headteacher; other key staff contribute positively to the maintenance of high standards
- There is very good teamwork and a strong commitment to the continuing improvement of the work of the school
- There has been very good improvement in provision for pupils with special educational needs since the previous inspection
- Governance of the school is good; governors are well led and act effectively as critical friends of the school

Commentary

33. The headteacher provides very good leadership, which is ensuring the school continues to develop and improve. His very good relationships with everyone in school have led to a commitment amongst all staff to make the school happy and its work interesting, and to enhance its good local reputation. He effectively motivates others and as a result key members of staff carry out their appointed tasks efficiently and effectively, contributing positively to continual school improvement. Subject co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science, for example, analyse the outcomes of pupils' answers in national tests carefully to identify aspects of the curriculum where knowledge, skills or understanding need improvement. The co-ordinator has enhanced the provision for pupils with special educational needs since the last inspection. The mathematics and science co-ordinators have established a number of measures that have improved standards and pupils' learning, including the introduction of a planning system for pupils to use when constructing scientific experiments to ensure that these are scientifically valid.
34. The curriculum is developed well through the careful construction of an effective school development plan to which all staff contribute. This ensures that everyone feels fully part of all planned development and contributes positively to the success of each initiative. Aspects of the curriculum identified as areas for improvement have effective action plans coupled with careful costings of the elements involved. This has ensured that the initiatives undertaken are linked with the budget and are affordable. Such action plans have ensured that the school's standards in mathematics and science have risen steadily over the last four years. Although standards in English have declined slightly from a high level in 2002, the school has now formulated plans and devised strategies to improve pupils' skills further in speaking and listening and to explore the links between these and writing skills. The school has also

improved pupils' skills in ICT since the previous inspection when pupils' progress was slow and attainment below average.

35. Very good teamwork results from the teachers' commitment to working together. Teachers plan lessons collectively in their year group teams, which is effective in enabling them to share ideas for teaching and to ensure that pupils in each of the classes receive the same curriculum. The school's approach to performance management is very thorough. Team leaders agree separate teaching targets with each of the teachers in their team and monitor lessons regularly throughout the year. Good formal feedback is provided which includes the strengths as well as the areas of the lesson that need improvement. Opportunities for in-depth discussion are provided and the teacher's progress towards meeting the agreed targets is monitored. Further training is provided should the teacher need additional support.
36. The temporary special educational needs co-ordinator has successfully continued the work in improving provision during the absence of the permanent post holder. Good progress has been made in addressing all the concerns identified in the previous inspection, so provision is now good. The good arrangements put in place to identify pupils with special educational needs and to draw up pupils' individual education plans, the deployment of support to individual pupils and the links with external specialist services, have all been effectively consolidated.
37. The governing body works hard and effectively fulfils its aim of being a critical friend to the school. Governors challenge and question any anomalies in the school's annual national test results and call the school to account over any concerns they may have. Governors monitor the budget regularly and rigorously and this has ensured that the school has always been in a healthy financial position. Governors closely monitor the progress of the initiatives in the school development plan and have a very clear and realistic view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Although one of the governors carries out an annual health and safety risk assessment this is not sufficiently formal to ensure appropriate rigour.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	789,231
Total expenditure	794,194
Expenditure per pupil	2071.76

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	47,855
Balance carried forward to the next	42,892

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils do well to reach standards that are well above average by the time they leave the school
- Although boys and girls achieve well throughout the school, achievement is particularly good in Year 6
- Teaching is good overall; it is very good in Year 6
- The very good subject leadership has helped the school to secure a trend of high standards
- Standards of presentation of pupils' work are variable

Commentary

38. Over time, results in English have almost always exceeded the national average and those found in similar schools. Standards dipped slightly in 2004 because there was a higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs and a significant proportion of pupils just missed attaining the higher level 5 by a single mark in the national tests. This inspection has found that standards in Year 6 are well above what would be expected for the pupils' age; many pupils in this year group are reaching high standards in English and this represents a good improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. A number of factors have contributed to this, including the high levels of good teaching across the school and, significantly, the very good teaching in Year 6, that is challenging pupils to do well. There has also been consistently good attendance and the fact that most pupils have attended this school throughout their junior years has enabled them to benefit from the good teaching over time.
39. Although the data shows girls slightly outperforming boys in the national and optional tests, the inspection found that there were no significant differences between the achievement of different groups of pupils. Both boys and girls achieve well because they benefit from good and at times very good teaching; setting arrangements are used well to deliver work that is carefully planned to match pupils' prior attainment and most pupils show very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils who have special educational needs and those with English as an additional language also achieve well because they can access small group and individual support through a very good inclusion programme.
40. Achievement is particularly good in Year 6. Most pupils can hold a mature conversation with each other; some pupils draw on a wide vocabulary referring to terms specific to the topic of their conversation. They listen very well to others and respect each other's point of view. This reflects the high expectations and clear directions they have received from their teachers. More able pupils have learned to be precise and persuasive, and use words that will hold the listener's attention; they understand the value of facial expressions and gestures to emphasise particular points.
41. By Year 6 most pupils read fluently, with expression and with confidence. Some pupils have learned the value of pausing when they see a comma to improve the quality of their reading. Similarly pupils change the tone of their delivery when they spot spoken text that includes an exclamation mark. Most pupils know that a blurb on the back of a storybook is designed to tempt them to want to read the book. More able pupils know the function of a glossary. In a Year 6 lesson more able pupils rapidly skimmed and scanned the text to find the information they needed. By Year 6 most pupils are using joined up handwriting and writing for a range of purposes. Although some achieve good standards of presentation, others are much less successful in producing a consistent style. This is a feature not only of some pupils' writing in English but also occurs in other subjects such as history, geography and religious education. Year 6 pupils can write a report of an event, a letter of complaint and a synopsis of a story.

Most pupils regularly write substantial pieces of personal narrative writing, those of higher ability incorporating detailed, vivid description to build up the tension in their stories. As a result, most pupils make secure progress in writing compared to their prior attainment. In writing a play script, for example, lower attaining pupils wrote about a particular scene, while more able pupils wrote a script which included stage directions.

42. Teaching is good overall. However, it was very good in Year 6, where the high expectations of the teachers and their lively, engaging style of teaching contributed most positively to pupils' very good achievement. This was a feature of teaching in all three Year 6 sets. In a very good lesson for more able pupils, for example, the teacher's brisk pace and clear drive for high standards led the pupils to understanding exactly what was expected in the level of detail of their answers in order to score full marks. In a lesson where pupils of average ability marked story text to identify descriptions of the characters and features of the plot, the teacher skilfully used the lesson to strengthen the pupils' ability to bring quality to their own story writing. Finally, in a highly organised lesson for lower attaining pupils, the teacher used her voice very effectively to create mood and tension; this helped to retain the pupils' interest and improve their confidence in using vocabulary. This lesson included a good PSHCE 'talking partners' activity where pupils could express their feelings of the characters. When asked by the teacher, "How do you feel he is thinking?" a pupil replied, "I think he feels neglected".
43. The very good leadership and management of the subject have also contributed positively to its successful development and the sustained high standards. This is because the co-ordinator has led by example, demonstrating a rigorous approach to raising standards. The co-ordinator's monitoring of planning for lessons, to ensure an appropriate match of tasks to the levels of capability typical of pupils in each set, and the regular evaluation of teaching, have been effective in providing colleagues with advice on how their teaching can be further improved. The regular assessment and analysis of pupil performance data, to identify the reasons for the results achieved, have ensured that all staff have been aware of pupils' learning and where improvements have been needed.
44. The co-ordinator has a clear vision of how provision in English might be further improved and plans effectively to achieve it. Among current priorities, the raising of the profile of speaking and listening is being addressed very well because the co-ordinator is providing very good leadership. Similarly, the co-ordinator successfully managed the improvement of resources for English that includes some electronic books used on the interactive whiteboards and a well-organised and stocked school library.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

45. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their literacy in other subjects. During a Year 3 history lesson pupils had good opportunities to gain in confidence as speakers when they offered their opinions on artefacts that were found inside an old suitcase. A display in a Year 6 classroom showed pupils have developed their geographical vocabulary by making comparisons between the features of Normanton and Folkestone. The display reminded pupils to observe the scale, texture and pattern when comparing photographs of buildings in these two locations.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very effective support and challenge ensure that pupils' achievement is good and enable them to attain above average standards by the time they leave the school
- Pupils have a good understanding of number; their command of a good range of strategies helps ensure their calculations are generally accurate
- Good opportunities are provided for pupils to work on a wide range of mathematical topics

- Problems are frequently posed to reinforce learning; older pupils have too few opportunities to work on investigations in which they make decisions for themselves
- Teaching is very good overall; teachers work very hard to compensate for the lack of space in their classrooms
- Very good leadership and management have contributed to the improved provision
- At times a lack of care with presentation has a negative effect on accuracy

Commentary

46. The results of statutory assessment in 2004 indicate that standards were above average. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection, since not only has the underachievement reported at that time been fully addressed, overall standards are better with more pupils reaching the higher level 5 in national tests.
47. There is a wide spread of capability in mathematics but the school's arrangements for setting in each year group is effective in helping teachers meet pupils' various needs. As a result the vast majority of pupils reach their full potential, because they are both very well supported in lessons where they need it and effectively challenged. This ensures that achievement is good. The very good teaching, thorough planning and very positive leadership have all contributed to the very positive attitudes among pupils and their enthusiasm for learning, which is very good. They try hard and persevere with tasks set. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported by teachers and classroom assistants, which enables these pupils to achieve as well as their classmates. Good additional opportunities are provided for higher attaining pupils to extend their skills, in a project with Leeds University for example.
48. Throughout the school pupils have a good understanding of number and they usually achieve high levels of accuracy in their calculations. This is because they have good mental mathematics skills which they use effectively. Pupils successfully learn a range of strategies which support their ability to calculate. In Year 3, for example, 'partitioning' helps them to add larger numbers and in Year 5 they learn to multiply larger numbers by 'chunking'. By Year 6, good use of grids to record their long multiplication and the checking of calculation by inverse operations contribute positively to pupils' understanding and ability to calculate accurately. Throughout the school pupils use number lines to reinforce their understanding of addition and subtraction. By Year 6 the ability of higher attainers to estimate approximate answers supports their reasoning, so that they are often able to identify possible errors for themselves. There has been a focus on improving calculation across the whole school and the consistent implementation of the school's agreed calculation policy has contributed positively towards the improvement of pupils' understanding and skills. At times, however, a lack of care in the presentation and setting out of their work leads to some pupils making unnecessary mistakes.
49. The good range of topics covered enables pupils to make good progress in other areas of mathematics. In Year 3, for example, pupils develop a good understanding of shape. They know the names of common two- and three-dimensional shapes and their properties and they recognise right angles. By Year 6 pupils have studied shapes with up to ten sides, they recognise acute, obtuse and reflex angles and they measure angles accurately using a protractor. Higher attaining pupils at this stage can plot a shape on a grid using co-ordinates and rotate it through 90° or 180° . In Year 3, pupils learn the units of measurement for length, capacity and mass and by Year 6 they use this knowledge in solving real life problems; these pupils convert metric and imperial measures. There is appropriate emphasis on data handling which enables pupils to make progress through the school. In Year 3 pupils can make simple bar graphs of information they have collected, such as their favourite sports. By Year 6 pupils have a much more detailed understanding of various kinds of graphs and their interpretation and they use appropriate terminology such as *mean*, *median* and *mode* when discussing statistics. Pupils have good opportunities to extend their learning in problems related to the various topics they study and this is generally effective in reinforcing their understanding. Frequently, however, pupils do not show how they have worked out or solved these problems in their workbooks, so it is not always easy for teachers to see where they may have gone wrong and so provide additional help and support if they are needed. By Years 5 and 6 pupils

have insufficient opportunities to tackle more open-ended mathematical investigations, where they have to make decisions for themselves about appropriate strategies and calculations.

50. Overall teaching in mathematics is very good and significantly better than at the time of the previous inspection. This ensures that pupils' learning is very good and contributes positively to the high standards achieved. The best teaching enthuses pupils; in many of the lessons seen most pupils were keenly involved and derived both satisfaction and enjoyment from the activities and tasks provided for them. Teachers work very hard to overcome the restrictions on the teaching styles they can use, which are imposed by the limited space available in their classrooms. Although some practical activities pose particular organisational problems, and the use of the interactive whiteboards interactively is sometimes difficult, teachers are generally successful in overcoming these restrictions, managing their lessons with both pace and purpose.
51. Teachers lead the introductory oral-mental mathematics activities well. In each of the lessons seen during the inspection, these were effectively organised, pacy and demanding. Teachers are good at ensuring that all pupils are fully involved, in the best lessons, posing different questions or providing different tasks for the different groups in the class. There is good emphasis placed on the language of mathematics throughout the school. Teachers encourage and guide pupils in using relevant vocabulary, so when they were discussing angles and comparing triangles in Year 6, for example, pupils were able to identify different triangles by name and also use terms such as *congruent*. Throughout the school, teachers make good use of the plenary parts of lessons to assess pupils' learning. In many of the lessons seen, teachers encouraged pupils to reflect on their own learning and evaluate what they needed to do next. Teachers extend pupils' learning well with relevant homework tasks.
52. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. Although in post for only a short time, the co-ordinator has quickly had a very positive impact. A detailed analysis of the results of assessment has enabled her to identify clear priorities for development and these have been pursued with vigour. This has been effective in raising expectations throughout the school and contributed positively to improving standards. Improvements made are being sustained because the co-ordinator monitors both pupils' work and lessons effectively. Current priorities for further development are appropriate and include the provision of workshops to support parents' understanding of how to support their children with their homework.

Mathematics across the curriculum

53. Pupils have good opportunities to use their mathematical skills in their work in other subjects, helping them to develop an appreciation of their application and practical uses. This occurs as they make measurements in making their models in design and technology, for example, or in using graphs and tables to record the results of tests in science. Their understanding of scale also enabled them to appreciate the size of the pyramids during their study of ancient Egypt in history. This use of their mathematical skills contributes positively to pupils' progress in these subjects.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is good and they reach standards that are well above average
- Teaching and learning in science lessons are both good
- The use of assessment information in science is improving pupils' progress
- The science co-ordinator provides good leadership and management
- There is good provision for ensuring all pupils receive an equal opportunity to learn science

Commentary

54. The 2004 test results in science for eleven-year-old pupils were well above the national average. This good result was due mainly to the large percentage of pupils achieving higher levels than those expected for their age. Standards among pupils currently in Year 6 are also well above the national average. At the time of the previous inspection standards in science were above average. The improvement in standards since then illustrates clearly that pupils are achieving well. Furthermore, in comparison with schools in which pupils' prior attainment was similar, the proportion achieving higher levels in the school was above average. Pupils have a very good understanding of how to test scientific ideas in a range of ways and use scientific vocabulary to explain what and why things happen.
55. The improvement in standards since the last inspection is because teaching and learning are more effective, resulting in good pupil achievement. Science lessons are lively, enthusiastic and well planned with a systematic step-by-step approach. Pupils respond to this approach with enjoyment and are thoroughly engrossed in the content of science sessions. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and this results in pupils working hard, attending well during lessons and being eager to please. Teachers often arrange for pupils to discuss their ideas in small groups or to plan an experiment in pairs. This contributes much to building pupils' self-esteem and helps to clarify possible misunderstandings about scientific knowledge and understanding. Teachers start every lesson by informing pupils about the specific aims for developing science skills, knowledge and understanding and end by finding out the extent to which these have been successful. Sometimes teachers find out the level of success pupils have had by questioning them and evaluating their answers or by providing an assessment task for completion. The strengths and difficulties pupils may have encountered during lessons are recorded for future use and to make sure that pupils have a good level of understanding.
56. Although the co-ordinator for science was appointed fairly recently, good leadership and management have ensured that there has been a clear focus on maintaining high standards or improving them even further. Careful monitoring of lessons, already completed in Years 5 and 6, has enabled the co-ordinator to evaluate the quality of teaching in science and provide valuable feedback to enable teachers to develop their skills. The detailed analysis of pupils' responses in last year's annual test has been successful in identifying areas of science in need of further development, while the monitoring of pupils' work in each year group helps ensure that all classes are covering the required science curriculum. Such effective initiatives have helped ensure that all pupils continue to make good progress. The outcomes of monitoring are used well to inform further improvement planning. The co-ordinator's effective leadership of further staff training has ensured a greater consistency in the approach pupils use in planning experiments and investigations and enabled pupils to develop a firm understanding of how to ensure that the conclusions they draw from a scientific experiment are completely valid.
57. The school makes very good provision to ensure that all pupils are extended according to their abilities. Higher attaining pupils are extended effectively because teachers know the pupils in their class well. They pitch questions with differing levels of challenge according to the degree of each pupil's understanding. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very effectively by support assistants or by the class teacher. Those with emotional or behavioural difficulties are provided with a high level of support from trained special needs support assistants. This allows all pupils to make good progress in science.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the end of Year 6, standards are average and pupils achieve soundly

- Sound leadership and management have meant that ICT has developed well since the last inspection and is in a strong position to develop further
- There are no computers in classrooms due to the limited amount of space
- There are not enough chances for all pupils to use ICT to support their work in other subjects

Commentary

58. There has been a clear improvement since the last inspection and the drive to improve standards and pupils' achievement is developing soundly. By Year 6, pupils attain satisfactory standards and their achievement is sound. Pupils are confident at a computer keyboard, can access programs and the Internet competently and apply their knowledge to benefit other subjects, when given opportunity. More able pupils show greater versatility and confidence although the school does not have the necessary resources to take their learning to a higher level. The improvements in ICT are working their way through the school with younger pupils having a better understanding for their age than older pupils. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as their classmates.
59. Teaching is good overall, with a significant proportion being very good. Teachers plan well together to ensure that all pupils benefit from the same curriculum and teaching assistants play a significant part in helping pupils learn. Staff explain the aims of lessons succinctly and demonstrate new skills effectively, so that pupils can quickly apply them on the computers. For example, a Year 3 class was guided by the teacher into a data base and they were then able to answer simple questions by matching the contents of a single field. Older pupils began to logically plan the procedures necessary to program output devices and thoroughly enjoyed the challenge. Teachers encourage pupils to succeed, and praise their efforts. Pupils share equipment sensibly and this enthusiasm and co-operation ensure that pupils work with a purpose.
60. The school has done much to promote and develop ICT over recent years. The computer suites motivate pupils to learn and to acquire the necessary skills. However, because classroom accommodation is very cramped, there are no computers accessible in classrooms which would support the use of ICT in all lessons. The acquisition of interactive whiteboards in some classrooms has further helped develop the subject but the limited classroom space means that these are not used as effectively as they could be.
61. The subject co-ordinator has worked hard to further develop ICT usage throughout the school but staff usage of the computer suites is timetabled, thus limiting pupil access and opportunity to use ICT across all areas of learning.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

62. ICT is developing satisfactorily in conjunction with other subjects. For example, in a Year 6 lesson in religious education, pupils researched the lifestyles of people from different religious backgrounds whilst in a geography lesson a Year 4 class used ICT well to develop their local mapping skills. Nevertheless, teachers do not maximise all such opportunities. As yet it is not an integral part of teachers' planning because of limited access to the computer suite.

HUMANITIES

63. It was possible to see only two lessons in geography and one lesson in history during the inspection. There were insufficient other opportunities to observe teaching and learning to inform a judgement about overall provision in these subjects.
64. In **geography**, the two lessons observed, along with an analysis of completed work and a discussion with a group of Year 6 pupils, confirmed that most are attaining standards in geography that are above what is expected for their age by the time they leave the school.

65. Pupils benefit from a good range of geographical experiences covering local and distant places, landscape, climate, tourism and mapping skills. In Year 3, pupils know how the power of weather can lead to the recent floods experienced in Carlisle or landslides in the USA. A year group topic, based on Kenya, provided Year 6 pupils with a good opportunity to compare climatic features of the wet and dry seasons, the importance of tourism and the characteristics of African village life.
66. Pupils in Year 4 devised and used a questionnaire to seek their parents' views about local facilities in Altofts, Normanton and Wakefield. These pupils know how the landscape has an effect on the location of a settlement, including the benefits of flat land for building construction. During a lesson observed with Year 4, pupils made good use of ICT software to plot the locations of key buildings within the local community. They inserted digital images and added captions in an innovative approach to improving their mapping skills.
67. Discussion with pupils in Year 6 confirmed they have a good knowledge of local and distant places. For example, pupils know that by using the nearby M62 and M1 motorways they could travel to major cities including Liverpool, Manchester and London. Pupils have a good understanding of the economic reasons why Normanton provides local services and Wakefield provides a much greater range of facilities.
68. In **history**, the single lesson observed, the displays of pupils' work, an examination of their completed work in their folders and a discussion with a group of Year 6 pupils, indicate that the majority are reaching standards that are above what is expected for their age.
69. Pupils' factual knowledge of history is enhanced through the regular opportunities available to them to handle genuine artefacts from the periods they study. During a good lesson observed, Year 3 pupils became engrossed in an evidence-gathering activity based on an old battered suitcase that had been 'found' on Altofts railway station. During this lively and engaging session pupils opened the suitcase, examined each article and considered how the owner might have used it during World War 2. This meaningful approach made an important contribution to the good understanding they had of the period.
70. Pupils also have good opportunities to improve their historical knowledge and understanding through a very good programme of relevant visits. The inspection found evidence of pupils enjoying visits to a reconstructed Viking settlement near York and a World War 2 army camp. The use of specialist visitors also adds appeal to history topics. Pupils reported that 'Cleopatra' had visited the school during their study of ancient Egypt and how much this had helped their understanding of important historical events. Pupils could recall many historical features of this period as they described the reasons for the construction of the pyramids and the Sphinx. Pupils knew that, through the perseverance and determination of archaeologists, the mysteries surrounding Tutankhamun had been unravelled. Completed individual topic files show that pupils have applied their knowledge of mathematics when considering the dimensions and scale of a pyramid and they have used literacy research skills to access information through Internet web sites.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good curriculum ensures that pupils build progressively on their learning
- Pupils make good progress to reach standards that are higher than in most schools
- The leadership and management of the subject are good
- The use of ICT to extend pupils' learning is limited

Commentary

71. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards by the end of Year 6 are now above the expectations set by the locally agreed syllabus, because the quality of teaching throughout the school is good. The new syllabus is being integrated with the previous scheme of work and the study of four world faiths – Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Hinduism – is now fully developed. There are now plans to include Buddhism and Sikhism within the curriculum. Teachers plan thoughtfully to ensure that pupils learn about events in Christianity alongside other faiths and are given opportunities to appreciate what is important to each group, what things are similar and what aspects of the religions are different. The planning ensures good, systematic coverage throughout the school and each year group has an educational visit to a place of worship, whether the local church, a Hindu temple or mosque.
72. Good teaching ensures pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. For example, with effective use of the interactive whiteboard, Year 3 pupils were able to recognise the key features within a Christian church. They know what part each feature plays in the Christian place of worship and the pupils were actively involved in the lesson, as much as the small classroom would allow. Pupils in Year 6 have covered a wide range of topics and their discussions demonstrate sensitivity and empathy for others. Pupils understand some of the main beliefs of Christianity, Islam and Judaism at a level appropriate for their age, and explore the similarities between them.
73. Subject leadership is good. The co-ordinator, with support from specialist teachers, is aware of the strengths and areas for development across the school. Although resources are very good, she is aware that those for ICT need improvement alongside relevant software for the interactive whiteboards still to be bought.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

74. It was possible to observe only a very small number of lessons art and design, music and physical education and none in design and technology. Consequently there was insufficient evidence to support overall judgements about provision in these subjects.
75. Although there were few opportunities to observe lessons in **art and design**, the high quality displays around the school, and an examination of their other completed work, reveal that pupils are given a rich variety of artistic experiences. The completed work of pupils in Year 6 indicates that standards are likely to be above those expected.
76. Throughout the school pupils have a very positive attitude towards the subject and are keen and eager to discuss and explain what they have done. They enjoy their work in art because enthusiastic and confident teachers teach them specific skills, give them good support where needed and also take great care to display their work attractively. The subject is used well to enrich other areas of the curriculum, for example in history, where Year 4 pupils created Roman mosaics or Viking masks from clay. In Year 3, pupils integrate mathematics with art, investigating pattern and symmetry. This year group also listened to extracts from Greig's *Peer Gynt Suite* and 'painted with sounds', with one pupil commenting "it was like watching fish, gliding in the water". In Year 6 pupils undertake observational drawings of different buildings in the local area, using pastels effectively to create blends of colour. These pupils also use Wakefield Art Gallery where a professional cartoonist shares his secrets for drawing quick cartoon characters. The subject contributes effectively to pupils' cultural development, in the celebration of aspects of the work of other artists such as Matisse, Turner and Ogundele.
77. In **design and technology** an analysis of pupils' work shows that they can use a wide range of resources appropriately. Pupils effectively extend their knowledge and understanding of the whole 'design, make and evaluate' cycle. Their learning is good; they are taught specific skills, such as how to join materials, to sew and to make moving mechanisms and this contributes to the quality of their work.
78. Work in design and technology is often linked productively to subjects. For example, in Year 3 pupils designed gift boxes, making use of ICT to design a pattern and using mathematical

nets to create a box. In Year 4 pupils link their design work with literacy, creating pop-up story books using different mechanisms. Older pupils designed and made a pair of slippers, using a wide variety of materials, and then used language such as *snug*, *comfy*, *warm* and *luxurious* to describe their finished products. Pupils were very keen to talk about this work, which they thoroughly enjoyed, and the colourful displays indicate high quality work. Teachers make good use of the shared open areas for practical activity to overcome the lack of space in all classrooms. However, the use of ICT to support pupils' learning is not consistent across the school.

79. Pupils have good opportunities to extend their skills in **music** both in lessons and at other times. Very effective use is made of individual teachers' confidence and expertise to teach music to all three classes in each year group and pupils benefit from this arrangement. Teachers' planning ensures there is an appropriate emphasis on extending pupils' skills in both composition and performance. In two of the lessons seen during the inspection pupils' composition skills were effectively extended, because teachers combined the teaching of specific elements, using appropriate musical terminology such as *melody* and *ostinato*, and then provided time for pupils to experiment with instruments. In the lesson with a Year 5 class, for example, the teacher communicated a real enthusiasm for the subject, to which pupils responded well; tasks were well matched to pupils' capabilities and the development of their knowledge, understanding and skills. As a result pupils enjoyed learning about form and the opportunity to compose a group composition. In a very good lesson with Year 3 pupils, teaching was imaginative and effective in enabling pupils to compose their own pieces, building up layers of sound to reflect those 'morning noises' they had heard previously.
80. The music curriculum is rich. Visiting musicians enhance provision, in activities such as the recent African drumming and dance, and in Year 6, pupils have the opportunity to see a West End musical. Alongside the provision in lessons, pupils also have good opportunities to learn to play a musical instrument taught by peripatetic teachers, and to join in other musical activities such as the school's own recorder groups, percussion ensemble and choir. Pupils enjoy participating in the various opportunities they have to perform, in class assemblies for example and in the large scale concerts and musical productions.
81. Although it was possible to observe three lessons in **physical education**, these were all in athletics and so there was insufficient evidence to support a judgement about overall provision. The use of teachers with specific expertise is good and this has a positive impact on pupils' achievement. In a lesson with Year 5 pupils, for example, the teacher was skilfully able to introduce pupils to the techniques of baton changing in relay racing which enabled them to make good progress in improving their skills. The enthusiasm which teachers communicate helps to stimulate pupils' interest and spur them on to greater effort. The curriculum for physical education is appropriately balanced, including provision for swimming. Resources for physical education, including the extensive playing fields, are very good and these support teaching and learning very effectively. Pupils have good opportunities to be involved in a range of extra-curricular sporting activities.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for pupils' personal and social development is very good and enables them to acquire important life skills
- The co-ordinator has worked successfully to establish a prominence for this area of the curriculum that benefits the pupils and the ethos of the school
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of citizenship are very good and have been developed by very good teaching and by the provision of formative experiences

Commentary

82. Teachers use a range of approaches to improve pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding of PSHCE. Whole-class or small group discussions, role-play, 'circle time', analyses of case histories, and visits to the school by community representatives all make valuable contributions. For example, pupils learn effectively to be a good friend by discussing and recognising the facets that contribute to this. They have learned successfully how to analyse conflicts between people and how to deal with them by identifying different strategies. They learn, through well-planned role-play, how to help children who are lonely and are helped to recognise feelings such as anger or sadness and how to deal with these by reliving occasions when they had experienced these emotions. Pupils have also considered, in detail, the consequences of shoplifting and crime in general. Strong evidence can be seen on classroom walls of pupils' growing understanding of the need for members of society to co-operate and work together. For example, pupils have carefully formulated rules for working in a group such as 'take turns, don't say unhelpful things, encourage others to participate, support and build on what others have said,' etc. This demonstrates unmistakably that pupils are developing a clear sense of how to conduct themselves in a community.
83. The co-ordinator for personal, social and health education is very active in fruitfully engendering an interest and enthusiasm amongst the teachers and pupils. The school has a very fascinating and exciting syllabus for this area of the curriculum that also includes citizenship. She monitors planning for PSHCE regularly and discusses classroom practices with class teachers to find out how the teaching impacts on pupils' learning.
84. Pupils develop a good understanding of what life will be like as an adult. They are required to apply for certain jobs within school. For example, pupils aspiring to be librarians have to apply for the job in writing and are interviewed before selection. All pupils vote for members of the school council and the elected councillors represent each year group. The school council meets regularly, has officers, decides on meeting agendas, takes minutes of the meetings and conducts its own business. Such opportunities are very valuable for pupils to experience democracy at first hand. In addition, pupils carry out a good quality study of local democracy and as part of the work a local councillor was invited to visit the school to answer questions. They also have a good knowledge of national democracy and have an understanding of elections, the voting system, political parties and what Members of Parliament do. Furthermore, pupils are encouraged to be responsible citizens by preserving the environment in ways such as collecting empty drink cans for recycling.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS*Inspection judgement***Grade**

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3

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	2

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4

The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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