

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **NORTHFIELD JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Dronfield, Derbyshire

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 112685

Headteacher: Mr John Anderson

Lead inspector: Mr Sean O'Toole

Dates of inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2004

Inspection number: 267408

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 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	107
School address:	Falcon Road Dronfield Derbyshire
Postcode:	S18 2ED
Telephone number:	01246 413134
Fax number:	01246 292313
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Mike Emmens
Date of previous inspection:	5 <sup>th</sup> – 7 <sup>th</sup> July 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Located in Coal Aston, close to Dronfield, it is smaller than most primary schools and has suffered from falling numbers. Almost all of the 107 pupils (53 girls and 54 boys) are from UK heritage backgrounds and no pupils are at an early stage of learning English. Socio-economically, the area in which pupils live is about average. On starting school most pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are about average and their attainment in reading is good. The school has identified 29 pupils as having special educational needs, and eight have statements; both figures are above the national average. The school is involved in the Leadership Development Strategy and is a health promoting school.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20891	Sean O'Toole	Lead inspector	English as additional language; Mathematics; Science; Information and communication technology (ICT); Art and design; Personal, social and health education and citizenship; Design and technology.
14178	Patricia Willman	Lay inspector	
2818	Graham Warner	Team inspector	Special educational needs; English; Geography; History; Music; Physical education; Religious education.

The inspection contractor was :

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Although the school provides an acceptable standard of education it has serious weaknesses.** An unsatisfactory curriculum and inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and the leadership and management of subjects are collectively the cause of some underachievement, especially by more able pupils. The school provides unsatisfactory value for money.

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

- Pupils in Year 3 achieve well because of good teaching
- Pupils with special educational needs benefit from good support and achieve well
- Too much teaching lacks pace, match and challenge, especially for the more able pupils
- Achievement in ICT is good
- The leadership, management and organisation of the curriculum are weak
- The assessment and evaluation of the school's performance lack rigour and consistency
- Pupils' behaviour, attitudes and relationships are good
- The staff support the pastoral needs of pupils well

Improvement since the last inspection in July 1999 has been unsatisfactory. Although standards at the end of Year 6 are average, they are lower than in 1999 and insufficiently high. Although the issues raised in the last report have been dealt with, the leadership and management of the school have not been rigorous enough in raising standards and improving teaching. Recent beneficial staff appointments and involvement in the leadership programme are beginning to make a difference. The school has a satisfactory capacity for improvement.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

**Achievement overall is satisfactory.** Inspection evidence indicates that standards in English, mathematics and science are close to average but the limited links made between subjects means that pupils lack confidence in using and applying their skills and this reflects in their competence in solving problems and using their initiative. Boys and girls achieve equally well. More able pupils do not do as well as they should. In the national tests in 2004 there was some improvement in the percentage of pupils attaining above average levels but standards in English were below average overall. This cohort had a significant number of pupils with statement of special educational needs with learning difficulties. Given their attainment on admission and the good start made in Year 3, pupils should do better. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, is above average and due to good support from learning assistants they achieve well. Gifted and talented pupils

make satisfactory progress. The most rapid progress is made in Year 3 due to effective and challenging teaching.

The trend in pupils' performance has remained static until 2003 but has declined in 2004 and more needs to be done to accelerate the rate of progress. Standards in English, mathematics and science are not as high as those reported at the time of the previous inspection. The school's targets have not been ambitious enough. Pupils make good progress in ICT and achieve well. Standards in religious education and history are average but pupils have a limited range of skills in art and design and insufficient opportunity to develop suitable skills in design and technology.

The pupils are well behaved and have good attitudes to work. Relationships between staff and pupils are good. There has been one exclusion. The school's provision for spiritual, moral, and social development is good. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for life in a culturally diverse society. There are good systems to promote attendance. Punctuality is good and attendance is very good.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is unsatisfactory.** In most of the lessons seen, **teaching and learning were satisfactory.** The approach to assessment is inconsistent and the information is not used well enough to guide pupils on how they might improve and to enable teachers to set sufficiently challenging work for more able pupils. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and support staff are used effectively throughout the school. Teachers manage behaviour well and have good relationships with pupils. Planning has improved recently and lessons are prepared well. The teaching of English and mathematics is mostly satisfactory. Improvements are needed in matching work more closely to pupils' abilities and in increasing the pace and challenge of lessons. Undemanding worksheets feature too much in some subjects. The best teaching is in Year 3 where there is good challenge, high expectations and rigorous and well focused questions. Pupils work hard and have positive attitudes to learning, they respond well to lively teaching and their productivity levels are good when faced with challenging lessons. The school's curriculum is unsatisfactory as it lacks balance and sufficient depth. It is enriched suitably with extra-curricular activities and a range of visits and visitors. The provision for personal, social and health education is good. The overall planning of the curriculum is weak as there are long periods when some subjects are not taught. School topics are not planned well enough to ensure that skills, knowledge and understanding are developed sufficiently from year to year.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.** Parents, staff and governors speak highly of the school's positive ethos and this is reflected in good pastoral leadership by the headteacher. However, the leadership of the curriculum is not good enough. The management of the provision for special educational needs is good but there are weaknesses in managing the subjects. The subject leaders' contributions to raising standards are not as effective as they should be, and more incisiveness is needed in developing the curriculum. Overall, the governance of the school is satisfactory. The headteacher and governors are not rigorous enough in challenging the school's performance. The school's strategic plan identifies appropriate issues but measures of success are not sharp enough. Statutory requirements are met with the exception of those for design and technology. The school's finances are in good order and funds used appropriately with satisfactory consideration given to best value.

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

Pupils and their parents speak positively about the school. The school has good links with parents and pupils' views are represented well through the school council.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve important aspects of teaching including the pace, challenge and match of work in lessons in order to raise achievement, especially for more able pupils
- Improve the leadership and management, through more focused strategic planning and evaluation, to ensure that subjects are taught more regularly and to sufficient depth
- Make more rigorous and consistent evaluation of the school's performance in order to raise standards
- Ensure that statutory requirements for design and technology are met



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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Although achievement overall is satisfactory, more able pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Standards are about average but progress is inconsistent.

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

- Pupils in Year 3 achieve well and make good progress
- More able pupils make unsatisfactory progress
- Standards in reading and ICT are good and pupils achieve well
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress
- Standards in art and design are below average

#### **Commentary**

1. Standards in English, mathematics and science are not as high as at the time of the previous inspection. Most pupils start at the school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are about average and the majority have above average competence in reading. In some year groups, there is an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and statements of special educational needs which affects the school's overall performance in national tests.
2. Over the last three years standards in English and mathematics have fallen but they have risen slightly in science, largely because of specialist teaching in Year 6. However, national test results in 2004 showed that by the end of Year 6 standards were below average in English, mathematics and science. Taking into account their test results at the end of Year 2, these pupils made unsatisfactory progress in English, mathematics and science. When compared with schools with similar intakes, standards in English, mathematics and science were below average. Results of the tests in 2004 show an improvement in the percentage of pupils attaining above average levels but a decline in standards in English overall. Inspection evidence points to pupils attaining average standards in English, mathematics and science this year. Given the pupils' attainment on admission, the good start to school made in Year 3 and strong parental support these results should be better. The school has not been rigorous enough in pursuing challenging targets.
3. The school has recognised some of these weaknesses and has been receiving support from the local education authority and through the National Leadership Development Programme. Some headway has been made in raising standards but much more needs to be done to tackle the underachievement of more able pupils. The school's weaknesses in assessment mean that work is not matched closely enough to the needs of these pupils and their progress is not quick enough. Conversely, good assessment by the coordinator and support by classroom assistants for pupils with special educational needs means that these pupils make good progress. The school has identified several gifted and talented pupils and is beginning to provide particular activities to support their learning. These pupils make satisfactory progress. Test data and inspection evidence shows that there is little variation in the performance of boys and girls.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
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English	25.9 (26.6)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	26.4 (26.2)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	28.1 (28.9)	28.6 (28.6)

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

4. Pupils' performance in the other subjects is affected by the quality of teaching and the weaknesses in the curriculum. Pupils in Year 3 make good progress in all areas of the curriculum because of good teaching. Throughout the school, achievement in ICT is good and pupils make good progress in using a variety of programs and techniques. Pupils attain broadly average standards in history and religious education and progress is satisfactory. However, standards in design and technology and art and design are below average largely because the teaching is not sufficiently focused and opportunities to develop skills, knowledge and understanding are hampered by the unsatisfactory curriculum. Although pupils are reasonably competent in literacy and numeracy and have good skills in reading there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use these skills for research as too often they are required to fill in undemanding worksheets or to work at a level which is well within their capabilities.

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

Pupils respond well to the good spiritual, moral, social and cultural values promoted by the school and, as a result, their attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good. Attendance is very good and most pupils are punctual.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' good attitudes, behaviour and relationships create an orderly and happy community
- Pupils personal and social skills are developed well
- Parents make sure that their children attend regularly
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to have first hand experiences of life in a multi-cultural society

### **Commentary**

5. In lessons, pupils are given opportunities to explore and discuss each other's viewpoints about a range of issues that concern them. In religious education lessons, for example, they learn about different lifestyles and beliefs and they begin to develop a wider perspective on life and an understanding of its diversity. This is extended well through their fund raising activities when they learn about difficulties some communities and individuals have to cope with. Pupils feel valued because teachers listen to their contributions in lessons and this encourages them to participate. This makes a good contribution to their spiritual development and has a positive impact on their attitudes to learning.
6. Because of the good moral and social values promoted by the school and supported by parents, the pupils like coming to school and show good levels of interest in school life. They talk with enthusiasm about the after school activities and value the opportunities provided. The annual residential visit for Years 5 and 6 is a source of enormous enjoyment for those who take part. As a result, pupils say that they learn to work as a team and to confront and conquer their fears, for example, of heights. They clearly understand how they are expected to behave and value the rewards for kindness and good manners. Most pupils are able to express their viewpoints confidently to adults and are interesting and

friendly individuals. They participate well in their lifeskills lessons, talking freely about their feelings and circumstances. The members of the school council are proud to have been chosen to represent their classmates and are good role models for other pupils. They care for the school environment and for each other. Most pupils get on well together and there are few concerns about bullying. Pupils trust the staff to deal with any unkind behaviour quickly, fairly and effectively. Because pupils with special educational needs receive a good level of support in lessons, they take a full part in discussions and are fully involved in the activities. When lessons are interesting and challenging, pupils are stimulated and involved in their learning and this has a good impact on their achievement. There has been one exclusion in the last year for a period of three days as a result of violent behaviour against a pupil.

- Pupils' cultural development is promoted primarily through their art, music, history and literacy lessons. This is extended through a good range of visits and visitors. Although pupils learn about religious festivals and celebrations in other cultures, there are too few opportunities for first hand experience of cultural diversity.

### Attendance

- Attendance has been maintained at a level well above that found in most primary schools and, because parents advise the school of reasons for absence, there is no recorded unauthorised absence. Most pupils arrive at school in good time and the school day starts promptly.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	3.5
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

### Exclusions

#### Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Chinese

#### Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
106	1	1
1	0	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

Overall, the school provides an unsatisfactory quality of education. Teaching and learning are at their best in Year 3. The curriculum is unsatisfactory.

### Teaching and learning

Overall teaching and learning are satisfactory but the quality has declined since the previous inspection. Assessment is weak.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in Year 3 is good
- Pupils with special educational needs benefit from good teaching especially by support staff
- Too many lessons lack pace and challenge
- Assessment is not used well enough to enable teachers to match work to the abilities of the pupils

## Commentary

9. Although the teaching seen was predominantly satisfactory, the analysis of pupils' work and evidence from several lessons shows that there are some important areas for development. Staff have good relationships with the pupils and make effective use of praise and reward to encourage good behaviour and attitudes. There is a friendly and calm atmosphere in all classrooms and this enables pupils to listen well to instructions and settle quickly to tasks. Pupils are well motivated and keen to do well and please their teachers. They work hard and maintain good concentration. In the best lessons pupils get excited about their work. In a science lesson in Year 6, the pupils cooperated effectively in drawing round their bodies and labelling the main body systems and in a Year 4 lesson in ICT the good rapport between the teacher and technician enthused the pupils, and gave them confidence to tackle complex tasks. Teachers give regular homework, and the pupils say that this helps to reinforce their learning. Homework is mainly in English and mathematics, and occasionally pupils follow up work done in ICT. Pupils comment positively about their teachers and other staff and parents support these positive views. The pupils expressed the desire to have more challenging work. Inspection evidence shows that teaching meets the needs of most pupils satisfactorily although more able pupils are not challenged sufficiently.
10. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good; underpinning the quality of the work is effective leadership and management. Support staff play a pivotal role in meeting the needs of these pupils and their friendly and firm manner, linked to skilful questioning and a strong focus on working through targets in the well crafted individual education plans, ensure that the pupils achieve well. Many examples of caring and thoughtful teaching of these pupils were observed during the inspection.
11. The teaching in Year 3 is good with some very good features. Pupils benefit from thoroughly planned lessons which take account of the different abilities in the class because assessment is used well to pinpoint strengths and weaknesses. High expectations of presentation and productivity leave the pupils in no doubt about what they need to do to improve. Lessons are lively and interesting and the more able pupils respond with enthusiasm to demanding tasks. In a very good mathematics lesson, the teacher set a challenging investigation with odd and even numbers and pupils worked methodically and with tenacity to find a solution.
12. The teaching of English and mathematics is satisfactory overall. Recent opportunities to be involved in writing days have had a positive impact on the quality of written work and boys and girls expressed much pleasure in this approach. Although reading is taught satisfactorily and the pupils attain good standards some opportunities to extend pupils' research skills and to encourage independence are lost as reference books such as dictionaries and thesauri are not accessible. Staff make use of the guidance in the literacy and numeracy strategies when planning lessons but generally do not pay sufficient attention to pace and to matching the work to the different abilities in the classes, resulting in

underachievement by more able pupils. In some lessons expectations are not high enough. In one science lesson the teacher did not capitalise on the pupils' own scientific knowledge and vocabulary and set a task of recording the main food types through drawing rather than in text. Although basic skills are taught satisfactorily there are few opportunities to apply and develop them in other subjects as there is an over-reliance on undemanding worksheets.

13. Assessment is underdeveloped and inconsistent. There have been recent improvements in marking and analysing pupils' work in English and some teachers include targets to guide the pupils on how they might improve. However, in other subjects this practice is haphazard and lacks rigour and accuracy, resulting in an unsatisfactory match of work to ability. The targets set in mathematics are often bland and little to do with raising standards, and in science they are more to do with presentation than learning. Although different work is given to pupils of various abilities in mathematics, the more able often have to complete work which is too easy for them before they get on to more demanding and investigative work. Because lessons are often slow paced they rarely do this.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 21 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	1	6	12	2	0	0

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

**The curriculum**

The curriculum is unsatisfactory as it lacks balance and some subjects are not taught in sufficient depth. The staff work hard to enrich learning through extra-curricular activities, special events and visits.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Although all subjects are taught there are gaps in the provision for art and design, geography and design and technology
- There is a good programme for personal, social and health education
- The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs
- Insufficient plans have been implemented to make links between subjects

**Commentary**

14. Although the curriculum includes all National Curriculum subjects and religious education there is an imbalance in the time allocated to subjects and insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their skills consistently in design and technology, geography and art and design, and this is unsatisfactory. The provision for design and technology does not meet statutory requirements. Most subjects are planned using national guidelines and the school organises topics on a four-year programme. All year groups work on the same topics and this leads to some difficulties in ensuring that skills, knowledge and understanding are developed consistently and to sufficient depth. The lack of incisive subject leadership means that insufficient check is made on what is taught. There are often long gaps between teaching sessions in some subjects; geography was last taught in the summer term and will not be covered again until after Christmas. The school uses the literacy and numeracy strategies to develop pupils' basic skills but insufficient planning has gone into linking English and mathematics with work in other subjects. This weakness

means that pupils tend to work at a basic level rather than apply what they have been taught. Although the school has changed its timetable recently, insufficient consideration has been given to the balance of the subjects. The curriculum has deteriorated since the previous inspection and this is a contributory factor to weaknesses in teaching and learning.

15. The school provides equal opportunities for its pupils and successfully supports pupils with learning or behavioural difficulties. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for the next stage of their education and the good links with other schools contributes to an easy transition. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils are included effectively in lessons because of the good quality of the support staff and the rigorous application of individual education plans which pinpoint the next steps in pupils' learning. There is good involvement of outside agencies and parents in the provision. The recently appointed coordinator (SENCO) has well organised paperwork and a clear understanding of how to guide staff in meeting the needs of the pupils.
16. The school makes suitable provision for enriching the curriculum. Pupils speak enthusiastically about visits and visitors, especially their residential visit to an adventure centre. Staff are conscientious in providing a range of extra-curricular activities, which include badminton, football, ICT and recorders. Pupils respond well to these opportunities. Last year the school won the national rounders championship, a real success given the small number of pupils. The school provides well for pupils' personal, social and health education through its Lifeskills programme and regular lessons contribute to pupils' understanding of healthy eating, relationships education and the use and misuse of drugs. The school is part of the Healthy Schools' Initiative.
17. The school has a good number of teaching and support staff and they work well together. Staff are involved in training and development and recently have been involved in the National Leadership Programme which is beginning to have an impact on how the school assesses its performance. Support staff have good skills in working alongside pupils with specific needs. The technician makes a significant contribution to the development of pupils' skills in ICT. The teachers have secure knowledge of some aspects of the curriculum but there is a tendency to follow their own interests resulting in gaps in subjects. The system of specialist teaching for English, mathematics and science in Years 5 and 6 works satisfactorily. The school benefits from spacious and good quality accommodation. Resources are good in ICT. Overall, the school has satisfactory resources but there are gaps in design and technology, music and art and design.

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

The school makes good provision for the personal care and welfare of all pupils. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Because of the weaknesses in assessing pupils' performance, the overall support and guidance provided is satisfactory. Pupils' views have a good impact on the quality of school life.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All staff are fully committed to the care and welfare of pupils
- Personal support and pastoral guidance for pupils is good
- There are good opportunities for pupils to be involved in deciding important aspects of school life

- The procedures to assess pupils' performance are not used well enough to raise their achievement

## **Commentary**

18. There is an appropriate awareness of health and safety issues. Fire drills are carried out regularly and there is good provision for first aid. Regular checks of the premises are carried out and annual formal risk assessment is recorded and reported to the governing body. The teacher responsible for child protection issues has undertaken recent training and all staff are aware of their duty of care in this aspect of pupils' welfare. Pupils learn about the benefits of a healthy diet through their science lessons and older pupils are given appropriate information about sex and drugs. Through their Lifeskills lessons and in assemblies pupils learn strategies to keep themselves safe. The organisation and supervision at lunchtime is good.
19. Because of the good relationships between most pupils and the adults who work with them, pupils feel confident that someone will help them if they are unhappy or worried. Any instances of poor behaviour are monitored and appropriate action taken to modify such behaviour. Pupils show pride when rewarded for their good behaviour or kind and caring attitudes, and this motivates them effectively to try harder for recognition of these personal qualities. Although there is no formal recording and monitoring of pupils' personal development, the small community promotes a good level of communication and co-operation between staff. This ensures that any problems are picked up early and support provided as necessary. Academic support, advice and guidance, however, are not as good as they should be, particularly in relation to the more able pupils. The good induction arrangements for new arrivals ensure that parents are confident that their children will be cared for.
20. The school council successfully presents the views of pupils to the management of the school and action is taken as a result. Most recently, they have been responsible for the decision to redecorate the school. Other views or concerns can be placed in the "Tell us all about it" box in the library for the headteacher's attention.

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

The school has a good partnership with parents and with other schools and colleges. The links with the community are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents have positive views about the work of the school and support the good values promoted
- They feel welcome in the school and are confident that any concerns will be dealt with effectively
- Parents of children with special needs are fully involved in the development and progress of their child
- There has been no formal consultation with parents about school developments

## **Commentary**

21. The parents who took part in the consultation before and during the inspection spoke highly of the work of the school. They comment that they feel welcome in the school and are

confident that the school listens to their concerns. They are provided with good information through the prospectus, the annual governors' report and newsletters. The annual reports on the progress of children are satisfactory and the consultation evenings, which give parents a clearer idea of their children's progress, are very well attended. An overview of what children will be learning is provided for parents. Parents encourage their children to complete their homework and several help regularly in school. Many willingly volunteer to help with visits and large numbers attend the performances and celebrations held in school. They support the fund raising activities organised by the school, and significant amounts are raised as a result. There is currently no regular or formal consultation process to canvass parents' views about future school developments.

22. The school has a satisfactory range of links with the local community. Local clergy visit the school to take assembly and the pupils have recently visited the adjacent church in support of their learning. Walks around the immediate vicinity and visits to local amenities increase pupils' enjoyment of school life. Community groups use the school premises. There are good links with the infant schools and good systems to ensure effective transfer to secondary education. Links with other schools are well developed and effective.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. There are weaknesses in the leadership and management of the curriculum in evaluating the school's performance. Leadership by the headteacher is satisfactory but subject leaders play an unsatisfactory part in driving up standards. Governance is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher provides a positive lead in creating an ethos of care and staff work well together and provide the pupils with good role models
- The monitoring of teaching and learning lacks focus and is not effective in addressing weaknesses
- The school's finances are in good order and funds are used well
- The school's strategic and curriculum planning needs a sharper edge with more clearly defined targets
- Governors are not rigorous enough in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance

### **Commentary**

23. The school has not improved sufficiently since the previous inspection but recent initiatives and support have brought a greater sense of urgency in raising standards and improving the quality of education. Nevertheless much needs to be done to tackle the school's serious weaknesses. Given the school's involvement in the National Leadership Programme and the appointment of new staff, some important areas have improved such as the leadership and management of the provision for special educational needs and teaching and learning in Year 3. The school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

24. The headteacher is keen to move the school forward and recognises the urgency of this task. The leadership is committed to running a school in which all are included and in which the individual matters. The staff are consistent in promoting the school's ethos and this has helped to create a positive atmosphere in which pupils feel valued. The strong commitment to pastoral care has not been linked to promoting more effective teaching and learning and to providing a balanced curriculum. Monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance has been too bland and resulted in some complacency and reliance on the school's reputation rather than in tackling some areas of underachievement. Most subject leaders



have an insufficient grasp of standards in their subjects and lack of rigorous monitoring has led to gaps in planning and pupils' knowledge. The weaknesses in teaching and learning have not been tackled with sufficient rigour and the school's curricular policies and procedures are implemented inconsistently.

25. The school has a useful bank of information about pupils' performance and last year successfully focused on increasing the percentage of pupils attaining above average levels in national tests. However, the data is not used consistently and effectively to set challenging targets for staff to ensure that pupils learn at a quick rate and benefit from a balanced curriculum. The good leadership and management of the provision for special educational needs have enabled these pupils to achieve well.
26. The governing body make a satisfactory contribution to the life of the school. They are strong supporters of the school's positive ethos and are frequent visitors. They ensure that statutory requirements are met in important areas such racial discrimination, equal opportunities and access for the disabled but have insufficient oversight of the curriculum to ensure that all subjects are taught as fully as they should be. Performance management targets need to be sharpened up to call the headteacher and staff to account. The headteacher has been largely correct in his evaluation of the school's performance and the school's strategic plans to address identified weaknesses are satisfactory. However, there is a lack of sharpness in assessing the success of the plan as measures of success are rather bland.
27. The school manages its budget well. Finances are in good order and financial administration works effectively. The school makes satisfactory use of the principles of best value when purchasing supplies and services although the assessment of spending decisions and their impact on curricular development and standards are at an early stage of development.

### Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	338,201
Total expenditure	336,916
Expenditure per pupil	2,955

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	350
Balance carried forward to the next	1,305

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS**

### **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2**

#### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

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

- Standards this year are average
- Teaching and learning are mainly satisfactory and pupils achieve satisfactorily
- Marking does not always support pupils well enough
- The skills of English are unsatisfactorily developed across the curriculum

#### **Commentary**

28. Standards are not as high as those reported at the time of the previous inspection. Standards have declined in recent years and the percentage of pupils attaining above average standards has dropped. A factor in declining standards has been the increase in proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Test results show that girls do slightly better than boys in English but given the small numbers involved this variation is not significant. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special needs receive good levels of support and make good progress. Most recent test results show a decline and more remains to be done to boost standards.
29. The pupils' speaking and listening skills are given inconsistent levels of attention. In some lessons pupils are well engaged in discussions at the beginnings of lessons. In a lesson in Year 5 where the teacher took a dramatic role of a Victorian teacher pupils were immediately engaged. They responded positively because they had so much they wanted to say. In a lesson in Year 4 the opening discussion was too teacher domination so that pupils had too little contribution initially. However, teacher awareness of this meant that pupils were gradually drawn into the discussion. When pupils are being best encouraged to develop these skills they respond to open-ended teacher questioning and listen with care to adults and one another.
30. Standards in reading are above average. The pupils are enthusiastic readers. More able pupils read with expression and fluency and those with special educational needs benefit from high quality support from learning assistants which enables them to make good gains in reading. Achievement in writing is satisfactory but some pupils are not being challenged enough, particularly in using writing skills across the curriculum. Teachers make appropriate use of the literacy strategy and in the lessons seen in Years 3 and 5 they are innovative in setting tasks for the pupils. The school has recently focused on developing the writing skills of more able pupils through the use of "Better Writing" booklets. A recent incentive for the pupils is to become part of the Northfield Excellent Writing Team; some pupils have achieved this. Writing standards should be better. Although handwriting and spelling skills are being given regular, systematic attention, there are missed opportunities to translate the skills of writing across the curriculum in subjects such as history and religious education.

31. Teachers follow the National Literacy Strategy to plan lessons. Lessons are prepared well and good use is made of learning assistants to support pupils with special educational needs either on an individual or small group basis. Some headway has been made in improving target setting and marking and this is beginning to have an impact. Targets are set in English as a result of the analysis of test results and pupils have an understanding of what to do to improve. Unfortunately there is a lack of consistency between year groups. The pupils are well targeted in Year 3 where the teacher plans thoughtfully. Imaginatively devised tasks at different levels help all pupils to achieve effectively and pupils' work is monitored with care in this year. However, there is less consistent attention paid in other year groups. Marking does not always clearly support pupils in understanding what they need to do in order to improve upon their work. Although basic skills are taught effectively too little attention is given to linking literacy skills with work in other subjects. Pupils mostly enjoy English although several more able pupils thought the work too easy. They listen well and work hard but productivity levels are rather low as teachers rarely set time limits and targets for the pupils to complete their work.
32. The co-ordinator efficiently supports work in English. There has been recent improvement in subject leadership because of the improved approach to analysing the school's results and the implementation of initiative to raise standards. A success has been the "Big Writing Day" which pupils speak of with pride and satisfaction. The school has adequate resources to support teaching and learning. ICT is used to support the subject but in some classes the computer is used more like a typewriter than a word processor.

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

33. The use of language across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. There are missed opportunities to use writing in subjects such as history and religious education as teachers rely too much on undemanding worksheets. Speaking and listening skills are only developed to a limited degree.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

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

- Teaching and learning in Year 3 are good
- More able pupils could do better
- Assessment, the use of data and target setting are insufficiently sharp in guiding staff and pupils on how to improve standards

#### **Commentary**

34. Although standards are average, they should be higher. There is underachievement by more able pupils in most classes. Results of tests at the end of Year 6 in 2004 showed that standards were below average when compared nationally and with similar schools and that progress through the school had been slow. Inspection evidence indicates that more able pupils are not challenged enough and that progress is inconsistent. Boys and girls perform at similar levels. Progress is good for pupils with special educational needs and those in Year 3 because the teaching is effective and individual needs are met. The standards achieved in national tests have fluctuated over the last few years depending on the make up of the cohorts. Standards are not as high as at the time of the previous inspection.

35. Pupils' understanding of number, shape, space and measures and data handling are average. They have a reasonable knowledge of solving problems and mathematical vocabulary but lack of opportunities to solve complex problems hampers their progress in this aspect of their work, with the exception of Year 3 where the teaching is very challenging.
36. Teaching and learning are satisfactory but assessment is unsatisfactory. In the lessons seen the quality varied between very good and satisfactory. In a very good lesson in Year 3 the teacher matched the work very well to the needs of all abilities and her incisive questioning and well directed praise and encouragement inspired the pupils to tackle complex problems. Planning for this year group is well focused and includes the use of accurate assessment to highlight what needs to be reviewed or extended. In all classes the teachers have high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and good humour and positive comments encourage positive attitudes to learning. Homework is used consistently and has contributed to improved standards in mental arithmetic. Teaching is enhanced by the learning assistants who take a full part in supporting those with special educational needs. However, the pace and timing in many lessons are too slow, resulting in some low productivity by pupils and lack of challenge for the more able. Although questions are used to check on understanding the teachers do not make use of the information to pinpoint what the pupils need to do next to improve. The over-reliance on exercises in published schemes hampers some aspects of learning. For example, in several lessons pupils were given tasks to complete which were well within their capabilities and this used up valuable time when they could have been engaged in more challenging work.
37. The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory as there is a lack of rigour in assessing pupils' performance and in checking on the effectiveness of teaching. Although results are analysed the information is not used effectively to accelerate the rate of pupils' progress.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

38. Because of weaknesses in the curriculum there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in subjects such as design and technology and art and design. In some science lessons pupils present their work using graphs and charts but these are not always drawn accurately, which contributes little to mathematical awareness. Overall, the use of mathematics across the curriculum is unsatisfactory.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is good teaching in Year 3 and by the headteacher in Year 6
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress
- Assessment is underdeveloped

### **Commentary**

39. The pupils attained average standards in national tests up to 2003 but the results in 2004 show that standards are below average. Inspection evidence shows that currently pupils are generally achieving satisfactorily. Boys and girls make satisfactory progress. The school's results improved steadily up to 2003 but showed a dip in 2004 when they were below average. The rate of improvement has now dipped below the national trend, and

standards are not as high as those reported at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as they are supported effectively.

40. Pupils have a secure grasp of all aspects of the subject although their recorded work shows limited opportunity to take part in experiments and to design their own investigations. Too often pupils copy out information from books, the blackboard or worksheets. Pupils are very interested in science and respond well in lessons where there are opportunities to use their initiative and work cooperatively. They work hard and maintain concentration effectively.
41. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teaching varied between good and unsatisfactory. Some good lessons were observed in Years 3 and 6 where pupils were actively engaged and made decisions. They formed hypotheses and made effective use of scientific vocabulary, making good progress in learning about life processes. Knowledgeable teaching backed by humour and high expectations resulted in lively responses from boys and girls. In other lessons planning was satisfactory and followed the school's guidelines but lack of imagination resulted in slow learning and opportunities to build on pupils' prior knowledge were lost. Insufficient time is given to investigation, the result of working through a basic curriculum rather than looking for ways to extend pupils' thinking. Assessment is weak in most classes although in Year 3 the teacher carefully records the pupils' strengths and weaknesses and uses the information to plan the next steps in learning. Marking is not well focused as it concentrates on correcting mistakes in punctuation and spelling rather than pinpointing areas for development in scientific thinking. ICT is used satisfactorily to support teaching and learning.
42. Subject leadership is unsatisfactory as more rigour is needed in expanding the curriculum to add challenge and interest. The subject meets statutory requirements. There has been insufficient monitoring of the teaching and learning to ensure that all pupils are challenged. The way in which all year groups complete the same topic simultaneously stretches resources and leads to some needless repetition between classes.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils make consistent and good progress, achieving well
- Standards are above average in communication skills
- The teaching is good
- The subject is well organised and managed effectively
- The technician makes a good contribution to learning

### **Commentary**

43. The school has maintained its good provision since the previous inspection. Pupils enjoy very much working on computers and maintain good levels of concentration. They work hard and willingly experiment with new programs and techniques to produce work of good quality. All aspects of the subject are covered and the school is active in seeking ways to expand pupils' experiences and expertise. Boys and girls equally enjoy using computers and make similar progress. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from highly skilled support and often work at similar levels to their peers because explanations are clear and time is given to practise new skills.

44. Teaching and learning are good. Staff have secure subject knowledge, and this is complemented by the work of an enthusiastic and knowledgeable technician who is often involved in teaching. Lessons are planned effectively and staff achieve a good balance between instruction and opportunities for the pupils to practise and refine their skills. The pupils make good use of a wide variety of tools and techniques and are quick learners because procedures are explained clearly and succinctly. Pupils produce good quantities of quality work as the staff expect much from them. Staff have benefited from good training and development and the scheme of work enables them to apply what they have learned to planning effective lessons. Good attention is given to health and safety and pupils are clear about rules for using the Internet.

45. The subject is led and managed well. Learning is well organised and the good resources in the ICT suite and classrooms mean that pupils have good access to computers. Assessment is at an early stage of development and is not yet consistent.

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

46. Satisfactory use is made of ICT to support pupils' learning in other subjects. Some interesting work using a CD-ROM was completed in a science lesson in Year 3 and the pupils made good gains in understanding how to use computers for research. In some lessons in mathematics pupils use a variety of programs to hone their skills in calculating. Although some writing is done on computers, in a Year 6 lesson pupils copied from a handwritten draft rather than using the word processor as an editing tool. Some good work in design was done in Year 4 in making repeated patterns using a wide variety of techniques and skills.

### **HUMANITIES**

Two lessons in each of history and religious education were observed but no geography was seen. Other evidence included analysis of pupils' work and discussions with them about their work. Teachers' plans and records were reviewed. **Geography** is not taught regularly enough. There was no evidence of pupils' work available for this term and little from previous terms. Pupils in Year 6 struggled to explain what they had studied, although they recalled a visit to Cleethorpes. A lack of geographical displays and limited planning and other evidence shows that this aspect of the curriculum is underrepresented.

#### **Religious education.**

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

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

- Standards at the end of Year 6 are average
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory and pupils achieve satisfactorily
- Marking does not support the consistent development of writing skills

#### **Commentary**

47. Standards have remained at a similar level to those reported in the previous inspection report. Progress and achievement are satisfactory. The school's provision is securely based on the requirements of the local Agreed Syllabus. An appropriate range of world religions is studied with some emphasis given to Christianity at various times in the school year. Pupils are interested in the other world religions and Hinduism and Islam are current

foci. Pupils have an appropriate knowledge of world religions. They understand the importance of religion in some people's lives and know about some main festivals and celebrations.

48. There is balance in the teaching of recording work and discussion. Teachers plan activities that are beginning to support pupils in learning from religion as well as about them. In Year 3 pupils are making good progress in developing an understanding of belonging. Teachers do not always expect enough of the pupils. In Years 5 and 6 the pupils record some work independently but there is an over-reliance on undemanding worksheets in some lessons which do not contribute sufficiently to the development of pupils' thinking skills. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs as support staff working alongside the pupils, ask well focused questions and guide them on what to write. Work is marked regularly but does not always help pupils to understand what they can do to improve. The subject contributes appropriately to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
49. The subject is satisfactorily led by an informed co-ordinator. The provision of resources is managed appropriately so that the Agreed Syllabus needs is met effectively.

## **History**

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are average at the end of Year 6
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory throughout school and pupils achieve satisfactorily
- Not enough written recording of learning is independently recorded
- Marking does not sharply inform pupils how to improve upon their work

## **Commentary**

50. In both the sample of work and lessons observed pupils clearly reach average standards by the end of Year 6. This sustains the position found at the last inspection. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and show a keen interest in history. They work hard and several pupils carry out independent research at home. The subject meets statutory requirements. The school organises history topics on a termly basis, alternating with geography. It is clear in discussion with Year 6 pupils that they would enjoy more regular opportunities to learn about the past. There is some lack of challenge, particularly for more able pupils, in some of their history lessons. There is a lack of variety in the written recording because too little attention is given to independent recording and study.
51. Teaching is satisfactory throughout the school. Pupils in all classes study periods of history at the same time as each other and so work is not repeated. The current focus is on the Victorians. Across the school this is being studied to an appropriate depth. In the different year groups pupils build on their previous knowledge and understanding effectively. Pupils are developing a clear understanding of the passage of time. In a good lesson in Year 3 which focused on Victorian toys, photographs were used well to stimulate discussion. Pupils successfully made comparisons with the past and present. They were able to do so because the class teacher made careful choices of resources and asked thought provoking questions. Teachers and support staff give pupils with special needs good levels

of support. This helps to ensure that they are achieving appropriately. The marking of pupils' work is not sharp enough to give pupils a clear understanding of how to improve and develop their work.

52. The staff has a team approach to developing history learning skills. This collective approach ensures that the subject is satisfactorily led and managed, although resources would benefit from auditing and some replenishment.

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

Two lessons were seen in art and design but none in design and technology, music and physical education. In addition, inspectors talked to pupils about their work, held meetings with staff, analysed a selection of pupils' work and reviewed the teachers' planning. The lack of evidence in **design and technology** clearly indicates that insufficient time is given to the subject. Pupils have a very hazy understanding of the main elements of design and technology. The long gaps between topics and the lack of consistency in the teaching of skills, knowledge and understanding mean that the subject does not meet statutory requirements. With the exception of Year 3, who are starting a topic on food technology, there are very sketchy plans in other year groups for the rest of this term. Pupils have no recall of basic skills and techniques indicating that standards are well below those expected for pupils of this age. The subject is managed poorly.

Very limited evidence was available for **music** during the inspection either through lessons or recorded work. In discussion, Year 6 pupils confirmed that there is an emphasis upon singing in their music work. Use of instruments is limited, although there is an opportunity for some pupils to benefit from instrumental work with visiting teachers. Pupils have a poor knowledge of composers and their work and could not recall producing their own compositions or writing about musical appreciation. There is a well attended club for recorders. The school also produces an enjoyable pantomime each year.

It is clear from timetables and plans that **physical education** is taught in each class. Swimming is an integral part of the provision and the pupils report that they enjoy this activity and that almost all of them swim competently. Throughout the school pupils have appropriate opportunities to take part in a variety of lessons and speak glowingly of their participation in sporting events with other schools. Last year the school won a national competition in rounders and pupils take part in a range of sports including football. The extra-curricular activities contribute well to the school's provision.

### **Art and design**

Provision in art and design is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils make unsatisfactory progress and achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Standards are below average
- Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory
- The subject is led unsatisfactorily

### **Commentary**

53. Pupils have limited opportunities to explore and investigate artistic skills and techniques and, too often, art is used merely to illustrate work in other subjects rather than develop techniques in a wide range of media. Pupils have a poor knowledge of the works, styles



and contribution made by famous artists. Consequently, art and design contribute little to pupils' cultural development. The school has a limited range of resources to support teaching and learning. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to work with a wide variety of materials and three-dimensional art is under-represented.

54. Teaching and learning lack sufficient focus and consistency on developing skills, knowledge and understanding. The subject is not given sufficient time and there is a lack of cohesion in building upon pupils' previous experiences so progress is haphazard. Some good pockets of work were seen as in the pupils' embroideries in the style of William Morris which showed good attention to detail. Work around the school is rather low level in quality although some portraits of Queen Victoria in Year 3 show a good use of colour and tone. Work in sketchbooks lacks the detail normally found in the work of pupils of this age. Some of their observational drawing is hampered by lack of a good range of pencils for shading and fine detail. There was little sense of urgency in the lessons seen and pupils worked slowly. In one lesson the teacher made little effort to guide pupils on improving their skills and techniques. A good link was made with ICT in Year 4 as pupils produced repeated patterns using a variety of techniques effectively.
55. The subject does not receive sufficient time and emphasis and leadership is weak as little check is made on what is being covered. Too little guidance is given to staff in promoting artistic skills and as a result the pupils underachieve. Provision, standards and teaching have declined since the previous inspection.

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

### **Personal, social and health education**

56. One lesson was seen and discussions were held with pupils and staff. The pupils' work was analysed and teachers' plans reviewed. The school has embraced this aspect of the curriculum and staff show a good commitment to developing pupils' personal and social skills. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and through the school council feel involved in decision making. All classes study personal, social and health education as part of the weekly timetable. The curriculum is based on good guidance from a variety of sources. There are appropriate arrangements for the oldest pupils to learn about growth and relationships and to understand the changes of puberty. In a good link with science they learn about the human body and the good and damaging effects of drugs and other substances. The school is aware of the need to promote healthy living and is linked to the Healthy Schools Initiative. The opportunities to sit in small groups at lunchtime and share a meal have a very positive influence on manners and developing conversational skills. The subject leader is enthusiastic in promoting personal, social and health education and has the full backing of the staff.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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