

INSPECTION REPORT

OLD BANK JUNIOR, INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL

Mirfield, West Yorkshire

LEA area: West Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 107687

Headteacher: Miss Penny Douglas

Reporting inspector: Mr Peter Mathias
21945

Dates of inspection: 19 - 22 June 2000

Inspection number: 192024

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Taylor Hall Lane Mirfield West Yorkshire
Postcode:	WF14 0HW
Telephone number:	01924 326605
Fax number:	01924 326605
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr H Fearnley
Date of previous inspection:	November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Peter Mathias	Registered inspector	Science Geography History Physical education Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Julian Vischer	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Valerie Howells	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Religious education Provision for children under five Special educational needs	How well does the school care for its pupils?
John Vipond	Team inspector	English Information technology Art Design and technology	How good are the curriculum and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

Full Circle
35 Trewartha Park
Weston-Super-Mare
North Somerset
BS23 2RT

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This school is a below average size primary school for boys and girls aged from three to 11 years old. It has 165 pupils of whom 48 pupils attend the nursery on a part-time basis. A significant number of children enter the nursery but go on to reception classes in other schools.

Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is well below that typically found nationally and few are ready to begin the National Curriculum by the age of five.

Forty three pupils are identified as having some degree of special educational need, which is well above average. There are 18 pupils between stages three and five of the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs. Most of these between Levels 3 and 5 of the Code of Practice have moderate learning or behavioural difficulties. Many pupils come from homes with some degree of social and economic disadvantage. Some 41.5 per cent of pupils are considered eligible for free school meals. This is twice the national average. There are no pupils with English as an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Old Bank is an effective school which has made steady improvement since the last inspection. Currently it is well placed to improve further. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 in the 1999 assessments in English, mathematics and science were well below average in comparison to schools nationally and to similar schools. Currently there is evidence to suggest that results are higher in the most recent tests. Overall the trend of improvement since 1996 is similar in shape but below that of schools nationally. Generally pupils enter the school with well below average levels of basic skills. Standards in classes are broadly satisfactory by the age of 11 except in English and pupils by the age of 11 achieve well from a low base.

Teaching is successful, particularly towards the end of Key Stage 2. The headteacher is very committed to the school and provides effective leadership.

What the school does well

- The teaching is good towards the end of Key Stage 2 where some of the teaching is excellent.
- Standards achieved by the end of Key Stage 2 are high in religious education and design and technology and in some, but not all aspects of information technology. Pupils make good progress, particularly within Key Stage 2, in mathematics, science, information technology, religious education and history although they start from a low base.
- There are good opportunities for pupils' personal development.
- Arrangements to support pupils and promote good behaviour are very good.
- The school has tried hard to involve parents, but their efforts have had little impact.
- There is a very positive attitude amongst staff who know their pupils well.
- Provision for children under five is good.

What could be improved

- Standards in the national tests in English, mathematics and science are not as high as standards in the classrooms, although there is recent evidence to show that test results are improving.
- Standards in information technology in control monitoring and modelling at the end of Key Stage 2 are low.
- Not enough attention is given to analysing carefully test results and other information about pupils' progress.
- The headteacher and co-ordinators do not regularly visit classrooms to review the quality of teaching and learning going on.
- The governing body is not sufficiently well informed or involved to act as a critical friend of the school and to take long-term decisions.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When it was inspected in November 1996, Old Bank was a school with some strengths and the school's climate for learning was good. However, standards achieved by pupils and the quality of education provided required some improvements. There were some strengths but also some weaknesses in the leadership and management of the school.

Since then there has been some progress in raising standards and some, but not all of the key issues for action have been achieved successfully. The headteacher is now well supported by an active senior management team which has clear areas of responsibility for its members. Pupils, including those with special educational needs now receive good support because of a generous provision of learning support assistants, who work effectively with teachers to promote good behaviour. There are regular procedures in most subjects to assess what pupils have learnt from a series of lessons. Staff have received appropriate training on the teaching of English.

Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics have been maintained in line with national trends and there is evidence to suggest that in the most recent tests standards have risen. Standards have improved in information technology, religious education and design and technology. They have remained the same for other subjects. The school is only beginning to use the information available from national tests and the school's own assessment procedures to judge the progress of individual pupils and to raise standards further.

Despite considerable efforts by the school most parents are not sufficiently involved in their children's learning and the governing body is still not sufficiently active in the life of the school to fulfil its role as a critical friend and to take well informed long-term decisions.

The quality of teaching has remained a strong feature of the school particularly towards the end of Key Stage 2. The school is solidly placed to improve further.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in the National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	E	E	E	E	Well above average A Above average B Average C Below average D Well below average E
Mathematics	E	D	E	C	
Science	C	E	E	D	
All	E	E	E	D	

This shows that standards in the last three years in English are well below average. In mathematics standards are well below average and were slightly higher in 1998 than they were in 1999. Standards in science were average in 1997 but fell in 1998 and in 1999 to well below average. When compared to similar schools, standards in 1999 are well below in English, average in mathematics and below in science. Overall performance is below that of schools considered similar and well below the national picture. The school has a trend of improvement which is similar to but below that of most schools. There is evidence to suggest that the 2000 results for 11 year olds are higher.

Currently standards in classes at the end of Key Stage 2 are below average in English and average in mathematics and science. In religious education, design and technology and some aspects of information technology they are high. In art, geography, history, music and physical education standards are at levels expected nationally and most pupils achieve at least the expected standards in swimming.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good - most pupils enjoy coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory - although some pupils' behaviour can be problematic. The school's behaviour policy is very effective.
Personal development and relationships	Good - the quality of relationships between pupils, teachers and other adults is good. There is a strong atmosphere of care and support.
Attendance	Satisfactory - close to the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Satisfactory	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The quality of teaching is good overall. The quality of teaching in English is good, teaching in mathematics is satisfactory overall. Teaching is particularly good towards the end of Key Stage 2 where some of the teaching is excellent. In only a small percentage of lessons is teaching unsatisfactory.

Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory, the quality of teaching for children under five is good and planned carefully to provide these children with experiences which are appropriate for their age. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good.

Particular strengths in the teaching observed were:

The teachers' detailed subject knowledge; good questioning skills; positive relationships with pupils; the teachers' infectious enthusiasm and interest in the subject; there are well taken opportunities to assess the success of the lesson.

Areas for improvement are:

Managing the time available better, so that enough time is set aside to complete the task and not wasted unnecessarily repeating explanations of what is expected.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. The curriculum for children under five is good. There is a typical range of sporting and other activities offered. Some aspects in information technology are not provided.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. It is well organised and staff are well aware of the Code of Practice.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development is good. Provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are good. Procedures for the support and guidance of pupils are very good as are procedures to monitor and promote good behaviour. Satisfactory arrangements to support and monitor pupils' academic progress are only beginning to be put into effect. Currently these are not used as well as they might be to help pupils reach higher standards. Arrangements for monitoring and improving attendance are good. The school has made strenuous efforts with very limited success to involve parents more in their children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership of the headteacher has some strong features. She is firm and caring and ensures that the school provides good support for its pupils. There is an effective senior management team which works closely with the headteacher to plan the curriculum. Arrangements for the headteacher and co-ordinators to judge the quality of teaching and learning have been agreed but are not fully in practice.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The chair of governors regularly visits the school but in general governors are not sufficiently well informed to help the school to make long-term decisions and to judge their success.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There are recently introduced procedures to look at the information which the school has from national tests and other assessments to judge the progress of individual pupils. These are not yet used to analyse what the school needs to do to raise standards in the national tests further.
The strategic use of resources	The school is just beginning to consider ways of judging the success of its spending decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My child likes school. • My child makes good progress at school. • The school is approachable. • The school expects my child to work hard. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour in the school. • The school does not set the right amount of homework. • The school does not keep parents well informed about progress. • The school does not work closely with parents. • The school is not helping children to become mature. • The school does not provide a sufficient range of interesting activities.

In response to the 155 questionnaires sent out by the school only 17 were returned. This is a very small percentage and is not a firm basis on which to draw general conclusions about parents' views of the school.

The evidence of the inspection generally confirms the parents' positive views of the school. The school has worked hard to establish successfully a comprehensive policy to improve pupils' behaviour in school. The school has made several well thought out attempts to make its homework policy work but has not received the support of the majority of its parents. Reports are detailed and there are regular opportunities to discuss individual children's progress. The school has had very limited success in developing links with most

parents although a small group of parents are very supportive of the school and work hard on its behalf.

The school has put in place several effective initiatives to give older pupils a sense of responsibility. There is a typical range of interesting activities outside school including a residential visit for older pupils.

A meeting was held between the registered inspector and parents. Four parents attended. They expressed positive views of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Standards within the school are generally below average by the end of Key Stage 1 and average at the end of Key Stage 2. There is no significant variation between the performance of boys and girls at either key stage. However, the results in the 1999 assessments at the end of Key Stage 2 are below the standards seen in classes. Those results related to a different group of pupils. There is evidence to suggest that results in the 2000 assessments are higher.
2. In the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, standards in comparison with those in schools nationally were well below average in English, mathematics and science. Overall the results were well below average. When compared to schools considered broadly similar, results in English were well below average. In mathematics results were average and in science they were below average. Overall results were below average for similar schools.
3. Since 1996 the results have been consistently below average with the exception of science in 1997 when results were average. The overall trend of improvement since 1996 is similar in shape to, but below that of schools nationally. The school is beginning to analyse the information data it collects carefully from these tests and other assessments, to attempt to identify reasons why pupils perform less well in the national tests than they do in their work in classes.
4. Pupils enter the nursery with levels of basic skills which are well below those typically found amongst children of this age. While they make good progress few at the age of five are ready to begin the National Curriculum. The school's results at the end of Key Stage 1 are well below average in reading, writing and mathematics when compared to schools nationally and to similar schools. At the age of seven only 41 per cent of pupils reach the expected level in reading and 67 per cent in writing. These results are well below many other schools. Over the last four years, results have remained consistently well below the national picture.
5. Standards in English are below average at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. While standards in speaking and listening are average at the end of both key stages, in reading and writing standards are below average.
6. In speaking and listening pupils in Key Stage 1 listen carefully to what their teachers and other pupils say. They can follow instructions and act on suggestions. They listen to stories and poems intently and take turns to speak and ask appropriate questions. By the end of Key Stage 2 many pupils reflect carefully on questions and can explain and justify their answers and opinions.
7. In reading in Key Stage 1, pupils use picture clues to guess the meaning of words and they are beginning to develop skills to enable them to sound out words and read common words by sight. By the end of Key Stage 2 some pupils read enthusiastically and independently but the majority read hesitantly and lack expression. Few develop skills to read quickly and accurately because they start from a low base.

8. In writing in Key Stage 1 many pupils can form handwriting with letters of consistent size and spacing but few can join letters fluently. By the age of 11 most pupils have legible joined handwriting. Older pupils are beginning to choose words carefully when they write but their writing is limited because they find difficulty in extending their ideas. The literacy hour has been effectively introduced and used to put to good effect to teach reading skills. However, standards remain below average, because the strategies have not yet had time to have their full effect.
9. Standards in mathematics are below average at the end of Key Stage 1 and average at the end of Key Stage 2. Within Key Stage 1 the higher attainers count on and back in twos, fives and tens and can recognise odd and even numbers, but most find it difficult to perform mental calculation. They are able however to conduct simple surveys and present information in graphs. Within Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress. They have a sound grasp of the value of numbers and multiply and divide accurately by ten and 100. They can recognise equivalent fractions, have a good understanding of shape and space and use information technology to handle data they have collected for example, about the local litter problem. The National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive impact especially towards the end of Key Stage 2 in developing pupils' approaches to calculating mentally.
10. In science standards are below average at the end of Key Stage 1 and average at the end of Key Stage 2. They remain the same as at the time of the last inspection. Within Key Stage 1 pupils have some understanding of how to test materials to discover their physical qualities and record their results. Within Key Stage 2 pupils quickly learn how to conduct a fair test and to plan and experiment. They know the differences between liquids and solids and the effect of temperature changes upon them. They know about life cycles of animals. They know about forces which push and pull. They can predict likely outcomes.
11. Standards in religious education are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Key Stage 1 and above the expected level at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards have risen in this area which is a reflection of the very good teaching which takes place towards the end of Key Stage 2 in this subject. Pupils have good opportunities to learn about other world religions as well as Christian beliefs. Pupils know in detail some of the stories of the Old and New Testament and of the symbolism of religious artefacts such as the rams horn in the Jewish religion. Pupils make well thought out comparisons with other world religions and Christianity because they have appropriate opportunities to explore religious beliefs.
12. Standards in information technology are at about expected levels at the end of Key Stage 1 and at the end of Key Stage 2 are above those usually found amongst pupils aged 11. An exception to this is the area of control, modelling and monitoring where pupils within Key Stage 2 do not make the progress they do in other aspects of this subject because it is not taught consistently and there is a lack of resources to measure and monitor changes for example in temperature. Pupils make good progress within Key Stage 2 and standards in this subject are higher now than at the time of the last inspection. Since then an effective system to assess and record pupils' progress in the skills and knowledge of this subject has been put into effect. Within Key Stage 1 pupils can use the mouse and keyboard confidently. They know how to use the computer as a word processor to write their names and stories. They can arrange pictures and text together. Pupils use the computer well in other areas of the curriculum, for example in geography when discussing land use and in art to make designs. They are beginning to use the Internet confidently.

13. In art, geography, music and physical education standards are in line with those expected and have remained the same since the time of the last inspection. In design and technology standards are higher than at the time of the last inspection and are above those usually expected of pupils aged seven and 11. In history standards are below those usually found amongst seven year olds and about those typically found amongst 11 year olds. This improvement is due to the very good teaching and wide curriculum towards the end of Key Stage 2.
14. The school has set realistic targets for improvement bearing in mind the low starting point from which many children enter the school. Progress towards these targets presents problems because of the high turnover of pupils within the school. Many pupils leave or start at the school at times other than normal, and many who enter the school come with some degree of special educational needs.
15. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress towards their individual targets and are well supported in class. They build steadily on their previous learnt skills and understanding.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

16. As at the last inspection pupils' attitudes to learning are good throughout the school. They take pride in sharing their work with others. Pupils generally settle down quickly and are keen to get involved with the task in hand. They listen carefully and are responsive and attentive in many lessons. For example in a mathematics lesson in Key Stage 2 they were very alert to the teacher's deliberate errors. They readily volunteer to assist the teacher in day-to-day classroom jobs and responsibilities such as assisting with the various duties during and after assembly. They concentrate well. Pupils handle resources carefully and record work sensibly especially in the older age groups. Pupils with special educational needs have good attitudes to learning both when working in the classroom and when working in groups by themselves.
17. Most, but not all, pupils behave sensibly. Since the last inspection the school has concentrated on creating a comprehensive behaviour policy which is effective; for example, the number of exclusions is down on the last recorded year. There were no incidents of bullying noted during the inspection. In the playground they generally but not always play purposefully. Pupils are especially keen to participate in the games organised by the supervising staff at both ends of the age range. Many are keen to build good relationships with one another, they respect each other's feelings and property. For example, the 'Befrienders' scheme is taken very seriously by those taking part and is effective. Younger pupils develop a sense of security knowing the scheme is there and this breeds confidence. The approachability of all staff towards pupils creates a positive atmosphere. Pupils show confidence in talking to adults and often take the initiative in opening conversations. For example, during registration several pupils readily assisted a temporary teacher by explaining who was not present and why.
18. Attendance is satisfactory. The attendance rate is average. Registers are taken promptly and efficiently. Latecomers are strictly marked as such. Since the last inspection, unauthorised absences have increased and are well above the national average. This is because the school rigorously monitors attendance and refuses to accept minor reasons for non-attendance, for example, going shopping as being authorised. This reflects the school's stricter behaviour policy.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching is good overall. This represents a broadly similar picture to that at the time of the last inspection. Ninety five per cent of teaching is satisfactory or better and 52 per cent good or very good. As in the previous inspection in a very small number of lessons teaching is excellent. This high proportion of good or very good teaching is a particular strength of the school and has a very good impact particularly on the way older pupils behave and the way they learn.
20. In nearly all lessons the teaching of literacy is at least satisfactory and often good, although these strategies have not yet had time to have their full effect. It is generally well planned to meet the structures of the literacy hour. Teachers have a good secure knowledge of how to teach reading. The school has made a purposeful start to the implementation of the numeracy strategy. Where there are some shortcomings these relate to misjudging the time set aside for different activities, so that too much of the lesson was taken up by unnecessarily repeating instructions.
21. The quality of teaching for children under five is good. The nursery and reception teachers work hard to meet the needs of pupils who often begin school with well below the expected levels of basic skills. They plan carefully to ensure that the children's education is appropriate and record meticulously the progress made so that the teachers provide appropriate activities for them to experience in the future.
22. Across the school where teaching is very good or excellent the teacher shows a very good subject knowledge for example, when describing some of the symbolism within the Jewish religion. The lesson begins with a clear statement of what is to be learnt and pupils are reminded regularly of these objectives. There is a strong sense of urgency to move the lesson on and to make the subject not only interesting but the process of learning fun. In this the teacher shows a very good sense of humour and a personal interest in each pupil. The teacher encourages pupils warmly so that each feels that they have an important part to play. Questions are carefully phrased so that there are clear links between one subject and another. As a result, pupils are able to apply what they have learnt in science about levers to their work in throwing, in physical education. Pupils are encouraged energetically to give of their best and the teacher sets a good example of what can be achieved. A particularly strong feature of these lessons is the skilful way the teacher is able to draw out from the pupils the answers required. Complex issues such as 'sacrifice' are explained simply so that all pupils understand what it means. There are well taken opportunities to pause and consider the deeper meaning of everyday events. Pupils respond very positively to such an extent that they are so absorbed in the lesson that the teacher 'could hear a pin drop'. Pupils respect each other's views and speak confidently knowing that their contributions are valued. They return the positive and considerate way in which they are treated and are anxious to please.
23. Support assistants are well used to help provide appropriate help to individuals and groups while the teacher is working with other pupils. At best they play a full part in the teaching for example when acting as 'a billeting officer' in a lesson about evacuation in World War II. A particularly strong feature of the teaching throughout the school is the consistent and effective way in which the school's behaviour policy is put into effect by all adult staff. As a result teachers set clear expectations of how pupils should behave and as they generally deal with potentially unsatisfactory behaviour quickly and effectively. This has a very good effect on the quality of

learning in all classrooms. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and they are given work appropriate to their needs.

24. All staff are very well aware of the many individual needs of pupils and often provide very good support and appropriate help. Pupils are given, through the way the teachers mark their pupils' work and speak to their pupils, the clear message that their efforts are valued. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils achieve well because of the confidence they are given.

25. There are detailed arrangements for the setting of homework. However particularly among younger pupils these arrangements are unsuccessful because many pupils do not receive the support and encouragement at home which would ensure that the homework is completed.
26. Pupils are eager to learn although many start from a low base. They wish to please their teachers and recognise the positive way the teachers regard them. Nearly all pupils respond very well to the teachers. As a result many concentrate hard for long periods and give of their best.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

27. The school provides a curriculum that is broad, interesting and supports the values and general aims of the school. It ensures equal and fair access to the National Curriculum with a focus upon the core skills of literacy and numeracy. The school is committed to developing information technology skills to support learning across the curriculum, although the teaching of control technology is yet to be introduced to Key Stage 2.
28. Since the last inspection, the school has produced detailed plans to ensure coverage of all the National Curriculum areas. The headteacher monitors the plans and checks on classroom practice. The national strategies in literacy and numeracy are fully in place. The nursery children have good access to a safe purpose-built play area with a range of varied activities which, together with the well organised classroom experiences, help the children access all the six areas of learning for children under five. There is a particular emphasis on supporting children's skills in speaking and listening, which are monitored through detailed observations by their teachers. Older children have their progress checked on a detailed system of school records.
29. There is a marking policy in place, and teachers are careful to ensure that children's work is regularly marked. The comments on work are varied from general comments about the work to specific guidance as to how the children should progress. Targets are set for children but these are often not specific enough.
30. The school is good at identifying children with special educational needs and works hard to ensure they are provided with appropriate support to succeed.
31. The school's emphasis on developing the pupils' personal, social and moral skills underpins many activities and is a strength of the school. The school's links with the local community have led to visits from the health service and the police in a combined program of drug education. Sex education is taught as part of the same curriculum and the policy has been approved by the governors. The teaching of religious education is effective and through lessons and visits introduces successfully the children to religions of other cultures and beliefs.
32. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. The school's provision for the moral development of pupils is good. It promotes an understanding of moral principles that allows pupils to tell right from wrong. It provides a clear framework in which pupils develop values of fairness and honesty and show respect for just treatment. The school succeeds in helping pupils appreciate the world around them, to care for their environment, for example in a recent 'litter' project and show respect for property and others, recognising their place in the school community and the

wider world. Of particular merit is the school 'Befrienders Scheme' that encourages older children to befriend and support younger children. The provision for social development is good. The headteacher and staff provide good role models for the children.

33. The school has a typical range of after-school activities to enable the children to participate in sport and music. The children, as part of their learning, often make outside visits to places of interest and the older pupils are offered further experience in studying the environment at a residential centre. Good examples of the children's study of minibeasts, which they undertook at Cliffe House, are attractively displayed around the school.
34. The school has effective links with other schools in the locality so that staff share good ideas. Links with the local community are sound. Recently the school developed a comprehensive homework strategy involving parents. Most parents did not respond to this initiative. Records are kept of progress in homework.
35. Further community links exist through the school supporting an African development project. The children are also involved in local projects for example harvest produce is taken to the elderly people in the community.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. The school has developed a full equal opportunities policy that ensures that pupils have equal access to the curriculum. For example the school has a tracking programme following different ability groups of pupils of both gender through their whole time at school. This programme also describes practical ways for staff to provide equal opportunities.
37. From the beginning of the nursery the school cares for its pupils well. Full baseline assessment procedures are undertaken on entry to the reception class during the term in which the children reach five. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early in their school career and placed on the special educational needs register and appropriate measures are taken to support the pupils through the implementation of detailed individual educational plans, which are reviewed and updated regularly. Teachers know all their pupils well, recognise their needs and respond to them. The school employs a large team of trained classroom assistants who provide good support for pupils in class and during the times, they are withdrawn from class for additional teaching. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. The school receives good support from outside agencies.
38. All staff are well aware of the procedures for child protection. The headteacher vigorously pursues the policy to identify children who may be at risk. Procedures to ensure health, safety and welfare of pupils are good and appreciated by pupils who can and do approach the head with confidence. Health and safety within the classrooms are good and many of the staff are qualified first-aiders. Overall, the school provides a safe and secure environment for its pupils.
39. There are very good procedures in place to monitor and promote good behaviour. Attendance is monitored well by the headteacher and teaching staff. Since the last inspection, the school has developed a new behaviour policy, which enables it to deal with a wide range of behavioural difficulties. All staff, including lunchtime supervisors apply the system of rewards and sanctions consistently. They are well

informed, for example, the lunchtime supervisors' handbook describes clearly how to deal consistently with pupils, and this contributes to a positive lunchtime for pupils.

40. The visiting educational social worker further supports this procedure with twice-weekly visits to school.
41. The school assess regularly pupils' achievements in all subject areas, including literacy and numeracy. Results are recorded appropriately, however the school is only just beginning to use this information to judge the progress individual pupils are making and to estimate whether or not pupils are on target to achieve an appropriate standard.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. Parents generally have positive views of the school. Parents feel welcome in the school and feel that there is a genuine open door policy, not only in the classroom, but also with the headteacher. However some parents feel that the school does not work closely enough with them. The last inspection report identified a greater involvement of parents in their children's learning as a key issue. Since the last inspection the school has tried several initiatives to try and persuade parents to become more involved in the life of the school but with little success. For example, the school has provided various curriculum workshops and a detailed homework package but these have been poorly supported. Consequently the impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school remains low. However, a few parents come and work in the school and make a valuable contribution. For example, a new parent governor has quickly become closely involved with special educational needs provision.
43. The regular flow of half-termly newsletters keeps parents well informed. School reports are very clear and comprehensive and tell parents many details of what they need to know about their child's progress at school. They include annual targets for improvement. Some parents are involved in regular homework, mostly reading, but the school's attempts to make more parents involved in homework, in spite of a clear and easy-to-read policy have met with little success. As a result the contribution of parents to children's learning at home is poor. Various coupon collecting schemes and the Parent Teacher Association events are generally well supported enabling the school to raise funds.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory overall with some strong features. At the time of the last inspection the leadership of the school by the headteacher was firm and caring and it remains so. However there were some aspects of the leadership and management of the school which required some improvement. For example, a key issue was to reduce the overall burden on the headteacher by strengthening the management team by defining their roles and responsibilities more clearly and encouraging a more active role of the governors.
45. Since then the headteacher has maintained a very strong vision for the school and this is reflected very clearly in the school's aims and values it successfully engenders.
46. The headteacher now works closely with a senior management team each of whom has specific responsibilities. They meet regularly and work together well to draw up plans for the curriculum. They are just beginning to use the information that the school is assembling from national tests and their own assessments to raise standards further through a process of careful analysing to identify what needs to be

done. Formal arrangements for the headteacher and co-ordinators to visit classrooms on a regular basis to judge the quality of teaching and learning are in the early stages and have had limited impact so far. Only the teaching of literacy and numeracy has been systematically reviewed. Currently the headteacher visits classes to work with individual pupils and discusses issues in passing with staff. The school has recognised the need to formalise arrangements and staff have agreed an appropriate procedure and format for this to occur.

47. Currently there is a strong sense of direction and purpose amongst staff. There is a positive commitment to raising standards and expecting the most from pupils, many of whom start school from a low base. As a result the school is soundly placed to improve further.
48. Funds and resources for special educational needs and Statements of Special Educational Need are used effectively and there is very good provision within classes for pupils with some degree of special educational needs to receive good support from the assistants who are effectively deployed and familiar with their responsibilities. The management of children under five is good so that the curriculum is appropriately planned and well resourced.
49. Generally the staff work together well as a team and pupils and adults generally treat each other with respect. The headteacher sets the tone for this so that the school functions effectively with a strong sense of care and purpose.
50. The governing body meets its statutory duties and is supportive of the school. The chair of governors regularly visits the school and is well aware of issues effecting the school. However, the governing body as a whole is not sufficiently involved in the life of the school to act as its critical friend and to make informed decisions. The governing body does not play a significant role in judging the long-term needs of the school and in assessing the effectiveness of its spending decisions. For example, arrangements for the governing body to be involved closely in working alongside staff to identify and plan strategically are unsatisfactory, and as a result they are unaware of the targets the school is setting for itself. The governing body is over-reliant upon the advice and guidance it receives from the headteacher. This remains a weakness from the time of the last inspection.
51. The headteacher has successfully encouraged all staff to feel that they have a contribution to make. Subject co-ordinators work hard within the overall management structure of the school where many decisions regarding the curriculum are taken by the senior management team in consultation with co-ordinators. Within these arrangements the co-ordinators for the literacy and numeracy initiatives have worked effectively to introduce these successfully, although there has been insufficient time for these to have their full impact on standards. Only very recently have co-ordinators had responsibility for setting or managing funds set aside for their subjects.
52. Sound arrangements for the appraisal of staff are in place. Procedures for the induction of newly qualified and newly appointed staff are appropriate with a senior member of staff assigned to give help and guidance.
53. The day-to-day administration of the school is sound and unobtrusive. Generally resources are adequate and the school makes good of the local resource centre to add, from time to time, to its provision of resources for specific subjects being studied. The day-to-day management of the school's finances are sound but the

governing body does not have sufficient procedures in place to judge whether or not its spending decisions are effective.

54. Pupils enter school with levels of basic skills which are well below those typically found amongst children of this age. By the time they leave at the age of 11 many attain average standards. They make good progress in most subjects particularly towards the end of Key Stage 2. Taking this into account and the generally sound quality of education provided, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

55. (1) Raise standards in English by:
giving more opportunities for pupils to learn to read, providing a greater range of reason for pupils to write so that they can express themselves appropriately in different styles and contexts (paras 5, 65, 68, 69).
- (2) Use the information which the school is now assembling about the standards pupils achieve to raise standards further by regularly reviewing the progress of individual pupils and by taking appropriate action to address areas of weakness (paras 41, 46, 74, 77, 83).
- (3) Put into full effect the agreed arrangements for the headteacher and co-ordinators to regularly visit classes to judge the quality of teaching and learning going on in all subjects (paras 46, 83).
- (4) Put in place training so that:
(i) governors are better informed of their role in the management of the school (para 50);
(ii) governors have a greater involvement in long-term planning and in judging the success of their decisions (para 50).

Minor key issues

- Raise standards further in information technology by teaching the elements of control modelling and monitoring at Key Stage 2 (paras 12, 101).
- Review the geography curriculum in the light of recent advice (para 94).
- Review strategies for involving parents more in the work of their children and in the life of the school so that they can best help their children (para 42, 43).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	46
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	38

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	13	35	43	5	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	24	132
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	n/a	55

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	43

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.4
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	12	15	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	4	7	11
	Girls	7	11	11
	Total	11	18	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	41 (58)	67 (74)	81 (79)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	11	10
	Girls	10	11	10
	Total	16	22	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	59 (63)	81 (68)	74 (79)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	8	14	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	2	4	3
	Girls	9	10	11
	Total	11	14	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	50 (41)	64 (57)	64 (62)
	National	70 (65)	68 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	2	3	2
	Girls	9	10	10
	Total	11	13	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	50 (46)	59 (59)	55 (55)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	3
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	1
White	112
Any other minority ethnic group	3

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	22	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR - Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	22

Education support staff: YR - Y6

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	234

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	40

Number of pupils per FTE adult	7.6
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998-1999
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	£
Total income	327,453
Total expenditure	306,414
Expenditure per pupil	1,481
Balance brought forward from previous year	21,039
Balance carried forward to next year	21,039

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	155
Number of questionnaires returned	17

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	29	12	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	47	35	6	0	12
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	29	24	6	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	6	24	18	35	18
The teaching is good.	47	29	12	0	12
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	12	35	12	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	29	12	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	35	6	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	41	6	35	12	6
The school is well led and managed.	53	24	0	12	12
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	41	29	12	6	12
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	6	18	29	12	35

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

56. Children under five years of age are working well towards the areas of learning considered desirable for children under five. Since the last inspection, the standards in the nursery have been maintained. Children enter the reception class in September if they will be five years of age by the end of February. Those that will be five years old later in the year start in the reception class in January. Currently three pupils in reception are under five.
57. At the time of the inspection, there were 48 children in the nursery aged three and four years, attending nursery on a part-time basis. There are two classes of equal size, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. On entry to the nursery, children's attainment is well below that found nationally, particularly in aspects of literacy and language and numeracy. As they move through the nursery, the children achieve well in relation to what might reasonably be expected of them. However, generally, children's attainment at the age of five, when some but not all, enter the school's reception class is well below average and few are ready to begin the National Curriculum.

Language and Literacy

58. In the nursery the children enjoy looking at books, story time and rhyme time. They talk enthusiastically about pictures and understand how books work and that words and pictures carry meaning. Many recognise their name in print. Progress in reading from entry to school is satisfactory, although many start from a low base and respond well to the good teaching, which places considerable emphasis on the development of language, literacy and communication skills in all activities. The children have ample opportunities to talk at length with adults about their experiences, ideas and impressions. Most learn to take turns when speaking in a group, show an interest in what others have to say and listen to their teacher and nursery nurse. Children make satisfactory progress in speaking and listening, although many children, have indistinct speech and a limited vocabulary with which to express their feelings and ideas.
59. Children are beginning to learn to form and copy letters to write their own names. They draw pictures and make their own marks to write 'letters' in the office and use pens, pencils and crayons to colour pictures. They know that the 'messages' they write are valued and show an understanding of the relationship between reading and writing. They make satisfactory progress.

Mathematical understanding

60. In their mathematical activities children create patterns and are familiar with number rhymes. They count accurately to six and using their knowledge of one to one correspondence match dots on dice with spots on ladybirds. They are encouraged to work carefully and to explain how they solve simple problems. The most able children count to 20. The quality of teaching is good, and detailed records are kept of children's progress. The majority of children recognise numerals to ten and the teacher plans well for them to use the computer confidently to reinforce their knowledge and understanding of number. However, many of the children have only

a weak understanding of mathematical language, and few are ready to begin the National Curriculum by the age of five.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

61. There are good opportunities in the nursery for children to develop knowledge and understanding of the world around them through play, exploration, investigation and discussion. They recall interesting facts about their immediate past from looking at the class photograph album and responding appropriately to 'Do you remember?' questions. The quality of teaching is good, it successfully promotes and understanding of time through the careful organisation of daily routines. Children enjoy a range of scientific and technology activities, which this term include the investigation of minibeasts collected from their outdoor area and classification of materials which they cut and sort to form a collage.
62. They show sound progress in their skills of observation and understand that plants need water and sunlight in order to grow. Most use the computer independently and with confidence. Overall children's progress in the development of knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory.

Creative development

63. Most children make satisfactory progress in their creative development. They experiment with colour in their painting, use scissors well to cut card accurately and have good opportunities to gain experience of working with a variety of materials to enhance their creative abilities. They respond well to working with clay and enjoy exploring the properties of the material and moulding shapes. Most children enjoy singing and remember the words of their favourite songs. The quality of teaching is good. For example the teacher encourages the children to talk about their work with pride. The teacher provides imaginative role-play areas for the pupils to explore.

Physical development

64. There are good regular opportunities for pupils to explore and extend their physical skills. The good teaching encourages children to enjoy playing with large wheeled toys and they are able to travel over climbing apparatus with control and balance with skills in line with those expected by children of their age. As they move through the nursery, they improve in their awareness of space and manipulative skills, through a good range of carefully planned activities.

ENGLISH

65. Pupils enter the school with levels of basic skills in language and literacy which are very low and at the age of five few are ready to begin the National Curriculum. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are below average overall, although in speaking and listening standards are about average. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards remain below average except in speaking and listening where standards are average. Standards are the same as at the time of the last inspection.
66. In the 1999 tests for seven year olds, attainment in reading and writing was very low in comparison with the national average and well below the average for similar schools. In the 1999 tests for 11 year olds, results in English were well below the national average and were since 1996 and were well below the average for similar schools. Whilst attainment in reading and writing improved at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1997 to be closer to the national average, in 1998 and 1999 it declined. At the same time at the end of Key Stage 2 results in English improved in 1997, dipped in

- 1998 and rose again in 1999. There is evidence to suggest that in the most recent tests standards have risen even more.
67. The pupils' attainments in speaking and listening, whilst being below average, show progress in that they listen carefully to what their teachers and the other pupils have to say. They can follow instructions and act on suggestions. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are able to listen quietly to stories and poems and they are developing the skills of taking turns to speak and asking appropriate questions. Most of them develop clear speech and make relevant contributions, for example, in Years 5 and 6, many of the pupils reflect carefully on questions and can explain and justify their answers and opinions. When studying a poem, they can express opinions about how a poet uses language to create humour in a poem.
 68. At the end of both key stages attainment in reading is below the national average despite the action taken by the school to address the shortcomings, for example, encouraging children to read more at home through a number of good initiatives. The literacy hour has been used to good effect to teach reading skills but there are few additional opportunities for pupils to be directly taught reading skills. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils are able to understand and respond to books by re-telling the stories and describing the characters and events. By the end of Key Stage 2 few are enthusiastic and independent readers. Some pupils have a good knowledge of their favourite authors and can explain the reasons for their preferences and choices, but many pupils read little. When reading aloud, the more able pupils are fluent and expressive. They are aware of any errors they make and most are able to correct them. Only a few pupils develop skills such as skimming and scanning. They use these skills effectively when they are researching and retrieving information from the books they use in other subjects such as geography and history.
 69. Standards in writing are below average at the end of Key Stage 1 and remain below average by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards are about the same as at the last inspection. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils write for a wide range of purposes and reasons but their writing lacks imagination. There are insufficient opportunities to write at length for different reasons and in different styles.
 70. By the end of Key Stage 1 many of the pupils write their letters with consistent size and spacing by the end of Key Stage 1. They are becoming aware of the significance of punctuation and many use full stops carefully. By the end of Year 6 most of the pupils develop legible, joined handwriting. However, there are a significant number of children whose handwriting is less well developed and is untidy.
 71. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are interested in the meanings of words. Year 6, are more knowledgeable about the irregularities of spelling. They use a dictionary accurately and quickly. They are beginning to make considered choices about words for their writing.
 72. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and often good, particularly towards the end of Key Stage 2. This good teaching raises standards from a low base. In the best lessons the teachers have high expectations that pupils will behave well and will concentrate hard on their work. They skilfully reinforce good behaviour with praise. They skilfully question pupils to establish and extend their understanding. In almost all the lessons, the pupils' queries and uncertainties are sensitively handled. In literacy the lessons are generally well organised and move at a brisk pace. Work is

- marked regularly and often teachers' comments contain warm praise and encouragement as well as advice on how pupils can improve their performance. In less successful lessons however the whole-class sessions were too long and pupils did not have enough time to complete their work. In lessons, most of the pupils have good attitudes. Most of them concentrate on their work, are attentive during discussions and make relevant contributions. They are generally well behaved and respect the ideas and opinions of others. They settle quickly and work hard.
73. Most of the teachers explain clearly to the pupils how to identify their own mistakes and think about ways to rectify them. The teachers generally make good use of their daily assessments of the pupils' progress to plan future work.
74. The subject is well led. The co-ordinator regularly scrutinises teachers' plans and samples of the pupils' work and has realistically identified areas for development. However, the school is in the early stages of using the information which it has from its own assessments and national tests to judge the progress individual pupils are making towards the targets being set, and to take appropriate action to support pupils who are experiencing difficulties.

MATHEMATICS

75. Standards in mathematics are below average at the end of Key Stage 1 and average at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards are the same level at the end of Key Stage 1 as at the last inspection at the end of Key Stage 2 they have risen. In the 1999 tests for seven year olds, results were well below the national average and well below average for similar schools. In the 1999 tests for 11 year olds results were well below average when compared to schools nationally and broadly in line with schools considered similar. Between 1996 and 1999 standards at the age of seven improved to close to the national average in 1997 but have fallen away since. In contrast standards achieved by 11 year olds have improved steadily over the period and have exceeded the national trend in mathematics. There is evidence to suggest that results in the latest national tests are higher again.
76. Pupils enter the school with number skills well below average for their age. They make satisfactory progress within Key Stage 1. Most find it difficult to perform mental calculations and do not have a range of suitable strategies to draw on. However, in most classes, the use of the National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive impact in developing pupils' strategies for mental calculations, especially at the end of the key stage. The more able pupils can count on and back in twos, fives and tens from any two digit number, whilst many children have a sound grasp of odd and even numbers and doubling. Overall, pupils' recall of number facts is slow and they lack confidence to use mental calculation to solve simple problems. By the end of the key stage pupils make simple surveys and represent data graphically. Progress is good in Key Stage 2. Pupils' use of mental strategies and ability to make mental and written calculations are average. At the end of the key stage, they have a sound grasp of place value and multiply and divide accurately by ten and 100. They have understanding of equivalent fractions and use their knowledge practically. Most pupils in Year 6 are able to use standard methods for long multiplication and division and have good understanding of shape and space.
77. Overall, teaching is satisfactory. Teachers make good use of a variety of methods to encourage pupils' mental strategies, good use of questioning techniques to help pupils confirm their understanding of mathematical concepts and operations, the provision of suitably challenging work that is effectively matched to the pupils' abilities and good opportunities to assess learning at the end of lessons. In addition,

towards the end of Key Stage 2 where teaching is good lesson planning is effective and teachers have high expectations of their pupils. Teachers are competent in the teaching of the National Numeracy Strategy and make the learning intentions clear to the pupils before the lesson begins. In the less successful lessons teachers' explanations are overlong and pupils lose concentration. Consequently they are unable to follow instructions. Generally, teachers know their pupils' abilities well and make regular assessments, but the information from these is not used in a systematic way to judge whether or not pupils are making appropriate progress. Overall, teachers employ the school's behavioural management procedures effectively and classes are orderly and free from disruption. In the majority of classes, relationships are good.

78. Homework is set regularly. The teachers carefully prepare termly homework booklets. Each contains guidance for parents to help their children and targets for the child to reach. Work in each year group is related to the areas of study for the term and provides a range of work suited to all abilities. Unfortunately, only a few pupils work with their parents to complete the homework.
79. The curriculum is well planned to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and the National Numeracy Strategy. Management of the subject is satisfactory. Appropriate arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching have recently been put in place and the co-ordinator has observed a lesson in numeracy in each class. In some classes, areas for development have been identified, but the school does not have adequate procedures for ensuring that these are pursued and opportunities to develop the teaching of numeracy remain underdeveloped in these classes.

SCIENCE

80. During the inspection few science lessons were seen. However from a scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' plans and by talking to pupils and teachers, it is clear that attainment in science is below average at the end of Key Stage 1 and average at the end of Key Stage 2. In the 1999 assessments for 11 year olds standards were well below average and below average when compared to similar schools. In the tests over the last four years standards were below average in 1996, average in 1997 and fell away to well below average in 1997 and 1999. Over this period the trend is that standards have improved at about the same rate as other schools nationally. Standards are the same at the end of Key Stage 2 as they were at the time of the last inspection. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are lower.
81. Within Key Stage 1 pupils know that lights can be bright or dim, they know that some material are hard and that others are soft. They can test these materials to discover their qualities and record their results. Within Key Stage 2 pupils quickly learn the importance of making a test fair and have good opportunities to plan, 'what I think I will discover'. They know the difference between liquids and solids and can change their characteristics by heating or cooling them. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 know about the life cycle of minibeasts. They set out their work neatly listing, 'what I already know' and 'what I want to know'. At the end of their work they can record 'what I have learnt'. They construct a simple identification key. They measure and express data about the upward forces of water on various objects. They are able to separate substances and solutions. They know how to predict accurately when they begin to plan an experiment.

82. The curriculum for pupils within Key Stage 1 is adequate. Within Key Stage 2 there are good opportunities for pupils to experiment express and investigate for themselves. Pupils make satisfactory progress from a low base of skills and knowledge in Key Stage 1 and good progress within Key Stage 2.
83. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the subject and advises teachers in the planning of their work. However, there are currently no opportunities for the co-ordinator to work alongside staff and to look at how they are teaching and their pupils are learning. Resources for experimental work are adequate and the school makes good use of the local area, for example to study pond life. However, insufficient use is made of the information the school collects from pupils' tests and assessments to understand why results in the tests are not as high as they are in class and to take appropriate action to raise them.

ART

84. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection, but the quality work on display around the school indicates that overall, standards in art at both key stages are at expected levels and are the same as at the last inspection. Pupils use a variety of mediums, including pencils, pastels, charcoal and paint to create light and shade. At Key Stage 1 they use pencil shading effectively to draw pictures of engines and are introduced to art in other cultures, when they design and colour covers for the Koran. Throughout the school, good use is made of colour mixing and a variety of techniques for painting to work in the style of other artists including Van Gogh and Monet. Pupils have worked well with artists to make designs for a silk painting representing life in the school and designing castles in clay. Pupils enjoy weaving and have used wood, paper, card and fabric to create textured and colourful materials. Good use is made of computer-generated art at both key stages. Younger pupils have designed teddies successfully whilst the older pupils have used an art program to create symmetrical and kaleidoscopic pictures effectively.
85. Teachers' planning is satisfactory, ensuring that all pupils have a wide range of experiences and are enabled to acquire the skills needed to produce satisfying work.
86. In the small number of lessons seen, the lesson is well organised, allowing time for discussion and debate where pupils are encouraged to express their feelings in a safe and secure atmosphere. The school provides pupils with a wide range of interesting materials to enable them to learn about composition through observation of the work of other artists.
87. All pupils' progress is at the expected rate as they move through the school. The curriculum ensures that art is linked effectively with other subjects, such as history, English, science and information technology. The management of the subject and scheme of work makes sure that skills are progressively built upon as pupils move through the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

88. During the inspection there was limited opportunity to observe design and technology lessons. Judgements are based upon scrutiny of teachers' planning, previous work and photographic evidence provided by the school, as well as the four lessons observed. Since the last inspection the school has continued to make good progress in design and technology and by the time the children leave the school their attainment is above that usually found amongst 11 year olds. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress in their

knowledge and understanding of the designing and making process and in developing making skills.

89. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils work with a range of materials, mainly card, textiles and construction kits. They produce drawings to show what their model will look like. Their making skills include using scissors with care and increasing accuracy, and using different means of joining materials. In one class the teacher had planned the work to link with literacy work and as a consequence the children enhanced their language skills through the production of menus.
90. At the end of Key Stage 2, the quality of pupils' design drawings has developed significantly and many pupils use detailed or annotation and labelling. There is evidence of pupils using a wide range of materials including fabrics and examples of previous work show a wide range of imaginative activities. For example, children at the end of Key Stage 2 had produced some very effective structure to be used as outdoor shelters for barbecues. The pupils have experience of working with rigid materials, which require the use of hand tools and finishing techniques. Pupils have positive attitudes to design and technology work and enjoy the practical nature of the work. They concentrate well and co-operate to help each other.
91. Resources are good and include a wide range of appropriate tools and materials, which are well maintained and stored. The subject co-ordinator sets a good example in teaching and planning but has not yet had the opportunity to look at lessons to see how effectively the subject is taught and their planning ensures that pupils learn systematically, building on what they already know and can do.

GEOGRAPHY

92. During the inspection few lessons in geography were seen because this was not a focus of the curriculum at the time. However, from a scrutiny of pupils' previous work and teachers' plans and by talking to pupils and teachers it is clear that standards at the age of seven and 11 are about typical.
93. In Key Stage 1 pupils draw a simple plan of their route to school. They put safety features such as traffic lights and zebra crossings accurately on it. They follow the travels of 'Barnaby Bear' from the colourful postcards and photographs he sends. In Key Stage 2 pupils describe why settlements have occurred. They know that different areas have different rainfall patterns. They contrast their own area with Marsdon, a rural village. They study their local environment in detail, for example, when using maps of the school and information from a 'rubbish survey'. They identify a problem and suggest realistic solutions when developing a scheme to address the problem of rubbish in the area.
94. The co-ordinator who is relatively inexperienced has accurately identified the need to review the curriculum for geography in the light of recent national guidance, and is currently beginning the process of identifying what the school should teach in the future. Arrangements for the co-ordinators to look at how well the subject is taught are at present unsatisfactory although the school has plans for this to occur in the future. Resources are adequate with a good range of reference books. The school uses the local area well.

HISTORY

95. Standards are below those typically found at the end of Key Stage 1. At the end of Key Stage 2 standards are about those typically found amongst 11 year olds. Many pupils achieve well starting from a low base. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have made good progress which reflects a well thought out curriculum and the very good teaching these pupils receive. At the time of the last inspection standards were in line with national expectations.
96. Within Key Stage 1 pupils know about the lives of some famous people. They can write imaginatively a Samuel Pepys recording in their diaries, 'Today I went to see the King'. They have good opportunities to learn to write independently about Florence Nightingale. Using photographs, they deduce some similarities and differences in the things people do on holiday today compared to when their grandparents were young.
97. Within Key Stage 2 pupils empathise very well with children evacuated from their homes during World War II. They write sensitively about their life as a prisoner of the Nazis. They know that the population of Britain grew dramatically during the 19th century and many people moved from the country to the industrial towns. They have a good knowledge of some aspects of the ancient civilisations of Greece and of the Indus Valley; for example they know not only that Pythagorus was a mathematician but that "I have proved that he is right".
98. The quality of teaching is good. A particularly strong feature is the very good quality of teaching towards the end of Key Stage 2. Where the teaching is very good the teacher shows considerable imagination in introducing pupils to the subject of the lesson. Pupils are transported back unexpectedly to the period of study. The pace of learning is brisk, to suit the urgency of the occasion - evacuation from home - pupils are reminded vividly of the reality of the blackout and air-raid. In a lively and very interesting way they are made to experience the process of being adopted into a strange family. The teacher has very good knowledge of this period and uses the adult support assistant very well who also plays a full part in the lesson. There are good opportunities planned and taken up to encourage pupils to write longer pieces of writing about their journey and experiences. In response pupils work hard often with rapt attention and take on their new roles enthusiastically behaving sensibly. They are able to identify well with others. The lesson is very well resourced with many artefacts of the time which are used well by the teachers.
99. Where teaching has some shortcomings, the teachers fail to emphasise the purpose of the lesson clearly so pupils are not fully aware of why they are studying the subject. While the teacher questions well to encourage pupils to look carefully and think about the evidence before them, subsequent tasks are mundane such as colouring in a picture which does not extend the pupils' learning.
100. The curriculum is wide and interesting and well planned. There are good arrangements for teachers to assess what pupils have learnt at the end of a series of lessons. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and has produced a scheme of work which is closely related to recent national guidance and is up to date. There are however no opportunities for the co-ordinator to observe teachers and pupils putting the scheme into practice. As a result the co-ordinator has limited opportunities to raise standards of teaching and learning further. This has been identified by the school as a priority for the future. There is a very good range of resources and materials, some of which the school obtained from a local resource centre. These and other resources and materials are well used.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

101. At the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils' attainment in information technology is broadly in line with national expectations whilst pupils in Key Stage 2 make better than average progress and attainment is higher than is generally expected except in the areas of control modelling and monitoring. Generally this is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in developing information technology skills and using the computer, particularly to support their literacy and numeracy work.
102. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have satisfactory mouse and keyboard skills. They know basic word processing functions and can use the keyboard to write their names and for copy writing their stories on to the computer. They can use the mouse to 'click and drag' to arrange pictures and text. Pupils use the computer to extend their work in numeracy and literacy, for example, one group of children had produced poems using the computer whilst another group had produced a menu to support work in food technology.
103. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils use the computer well to support the rest of the curriculum. Excellent use was made of a program on mountain landscape to stimulate discussion on land use. There are good examples of children using software to collect, display and interpret data in charts and graphs in science and mathematics, for example, one class of children were seen preparing a budget spreadsheet to support work in mathematics. Younger children use a control device to develop basic control technology skills but this is not continued within Key Stage 2. This is a weakness.
104. The introduction of the Internet is new to the school and the pupils have had only a short time to develop information collecting skills using this facility. However, good examples were seen of children using CD-ROMs to investigate projects in science and they have knowledge of how to use the computer for researching a topic.
105. The use of information technology to support art is good, with many examples in both key stages of imaginative graphics, for example, in a Year 4 class the children had used symmetrical patterns to produce effective designs.
106. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers make use of the facilities well and teach the pupils with enthusiasm and clear instructions. Since the last inspection there is an effective system to assess and record pupils' progress in the acquisition of skills and knowledge in information technology. There is a policy and scheme of work, although the learning targets for each year group are rather general. Teachers in Key Stage 1 and 2 have recently undergone training and have an increased confidence when using the computer. The school development plan indicates further training for teachers in Key Stage 1.
107. Resources are satisfactory with a small computer suite of up-to-date equipment and a large number of classrooms having their own computers.

MUSIC

108. During the inspection only a few music lessons were seen. However, from a study of pupils' work and teachers' plans, and by talking to pupils and teachers, pupils achieve standards broadly in line with standards expected nationally at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils listen carefully to music, describing the feelings the music

creates. They have an understanding of how different instruments are used to create mood and dramatic effect. They use percussion instruments they have designed and made to create simple repetitive sequences and record their compositions appropriately for their age. Pupils sing tunefully when they practise songs and rhymes, for example, to extend their learning in English and mathematics.

109. A specialist music teacher comes to the school weekly to teach the recorder to a small number of pupils. These pupils enjoy their lessons, learn to read music and play tunes keeping in time with each other and are making satisfactory progress in learning the instrument.
110. Teaching is guided effectively by a commercially produced scheme, which enables teachers who are non-specialist to gain knowledge and understanding of music and confidence to teach the subject. As a result, pupils have sound knowledge of rhythm and are confident to perform in front of an audience for school productions. The subject is co-ordinated carefully to enable teachers to provide a full music curriculum but has no opportunity to look at the way the subject is taught in classes and how children learn.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

111. Standards at the end of both key stages are in line with national expectations and remain the same as at the time of the last inspection. Standards in swimming are high and nearly all pupils reach at least the standard expected of 11 year olds (to swim 25 metres) and many exceed it.
112. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils catch and throw accurately. They use different parts of their bodies such as their knees and elbows to move a ball along the ground. They are able to form a series of movements using rolls, jumps and balances. Within Key Stage 2 pupils refine their catching and throwing abilities, for example, when practising their cricket skills. They are well aware of the importance of warming up and cooling down before and after exercise. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to take part in team games including soccer and netball and there are well attended after-school clubs in these sports which help to enrich the curriculum further for these pupils.
113. The quality of teaching is good. Where the teaching is good the lessons begin purposefully with a thorough warm-up session in which pupils are successfully encouraged to stretch and prepare themselves for the main activity. The lesson is moved forward purposefully by explaining the objectives of the lesson clearly. The skills to be learnt are demonstrated well and pupils are encouraged to look closely at the techniques employed for example, when spinning a ball. There are good links made with other subjects which pupils are currently studying, for example, in forces and levers, when a teacher asked, "Why does the ball travel further when thrown like this?". The teacher sets increasingly more difficult tasks so that the expectations of what pupils can achieve are always high. Pupils respond very positively and enthusiastically to the challenges set because they wish to please their teachers. They respond sensibly to each other and are kind when including those with some degree of special educational needs in their activities. They take turns fairly and treat their equipment with respect.
114. Where teaching has some shortcomings, the teacher does not ensure that the pace of the lesson is brisk so that pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to exercise

vigorously. Too much time is taken with the majority of pupils sitting and observing a small number of pupils demonstrating an activity. The teachers takes too much time explaining what is expected when pupils already know what to do.

115. The co-ordinator has assembled a sound policy for the teaching of this subject but has insufficient opportunities to ensure that it is put into practice consistently through watching pupils and teachers at work. Resources are appropriate and include a well equipped hall and outside hard and grassed areas.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

116. Pupils' attainment by the end of both key stages is in line with the expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus and their achievement in relation to what might be expected of them is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. The school has maintained the same standards as at the last inspection.
117. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are aware that different people hold different beliefs and that people worship in different places and with varying rituals and observances. They are aware of the similarities and differences between two major religions, Christianity and Islam from visits to different churches and a mosque. In addition, Key Stage 2 pupils study Judaism and develop empathy with the customs of Judaism from studies of Bible stories, which they relate to every day life and from visits to the synagogue. By the end of the key stage pupils know the difference between sacred and secular music and literature and are able to explain their thoughts clearly. Religious education lessons provide good opportunities for pupils throughout the school for reflection.
118. Some of the teaching is excellent. In the very best lessons teachers have a very good subject knowledge and can put it over clearly and simply, for example when describing the use of artefacts in the Jewish religion such as rams horn. The lessons begin with the teacher setting out in a very enthusiastic way what will be learnt, so that pupils know what is expected of them. The lesson is moved on at a good pace so that pupils are excited to learn what will happen next in the story of the Sacrifice of Isaac. They are given excellent opportunities to reflect on the meaning of sacrifice in their own lives and those of others. Pupils' views are encouraged by the sympathetic and supportive way the teachers listen. As a result pupils respond confidently and try their best, often achieving very well and demonstrating a very good understanding of the subject.
119. The curriculum meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and is suitably broad and extended to place the school and its pupils firmly within the culture of Mirfield and its immediate surroundings to enable pupils to develop tolerance for and understanding of a multi-faith society. Generally, tasks set are interesting and challenging for pupils and learning in each year is built upon previous learning. The subject is well led, by a co-ordinator who is very well informed and has a clear understanding of what is required.