

INSPECTION REPORT

THORNTON JUNIOR SCHOOL

Ward End, Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103268

Headteacher: Mrs Linda Webster

Reporting inspector: Mrs Chris Field
9479

Dates of inspection: 29th October to 1st November 2001

Inspection number: 192659

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Thornton Road Ward End Birmingham
Postcode:	B8 2LQ
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Derek Cowley
Date of previous inspection:	February 1997

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9479	Mrs C A Field	Registered inspector		The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Key issues for action
31754	Mrs C Roberson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes and values Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
31334	Mrs B Atcheson	Team inspector	Religious education	
4099	Mr R Braithwaite	Team inspector	Physical education	Leadership and management
21687	Mrs H Davies	Team Inspector	Mathematics Art and design	
18498	Mrs D Morris	Team inspector	Special educational needs The work of the special needs unit Information and communication technology Geography Music	
20086	Mr D Speakman	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Science Design and technology	Quality and range of learning opportunities
31853	Dr A Thomas-Ramasut	Team inspector	English as an additional language English History	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the Ward End district of Birmingham: an area of ethnic diversity and social mix. Pupils who attend the school come from the immediate vicinity their backgrounds include Black Caribbean, African, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and White UK and European. From time to time, the school provides for refugees from Somalia and Lithuania. There are 480 pupils on roll: 251 boys and 229 girls aged between seven and eleven years. Pupils' attainment on entry to Year 3 is below average overall. This is mainly due to the less well-developed literacy skills of pupils for whom English is an additional language. Around 44 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals which is well above the national average. Some 64 per cent of pupils come from homes where English is not the main spoken language, with the main spoken language being Urdu. Sixteen per cent (78 pupils) is receiving specific help in school to learn to speak English. Around a third of pupils have special educational needs for mainly general learning difficulties. Sixteen pupils have a statement of special educational needs in place and this is very high compared to most primary schools. Attendance levels are well below average; the incidence of unauthorised absence is high. A significant proportion, about 15 per cent of pupils, move on and off roll during the course of a year and this means some have interrupted learning. The number of pupils taking extended holidays is increasing and the school is currently monitoring the impact that this is having on their achievements. The school has a unit attached called "The Lodge" with 12 places for pupils from across the city who have severe emotional and behavioural problems. The school provides for these children by integrating them into main school classes for some of their lessons. At the time of the inspection there were seven pupils in the Lodge.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Thornton juniors' is a highly effective school. Standards have risen significantly over the last few years. When compared to similar schools¹ the eleven-year-olds achieve very high standards in National Curriculum tests in English and science, and above average standards in mathematics. The school sets very demanding targets that so far it has exceeded annually. The pupils make generally good progress in all of their studies because they try hard, are given good support and are well taught. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent; and the headteacher staff and governors are determined that every child will achieve the highest standards that he or she is capable of achieving. Resource allocation is efficient and funds are managed effectively, and the school gives good value for money. It takes great pride in promoting a set of values that instill in everyone a sense of equal belonging to the "Thornton family".

What the school does well

- The headteacher and her senior team provide strong and determined leadership that sets very clear educational direction, and there is an excellent team spirit amongst the staff.
- Pupils from different backgrounds are given equality of opportunity to succeed and make good progress, including those who learn English as an additional language and those with special educational needs.
- Teaching is good, and frequently very good. The teachers are adept at planning interesting lessons that motivate pupils to work hard and give of their best. This is consistently the case in English and science, where standards are very good.
- Pupils' behaviour is tolerant and mutually respectful. Relationships amongst pupils are excellent and there is very high regard for the beliefs and feelings of others.
- The work of the Lodge is very effective in enabling the pupils who attend to make good progress against their individual education plans and to be fully a part of the life of the school. The provision made for all pupils with special educational needs is very good.

What could be improved

- Standards in ICT and PE are not high enough.
- The role of most subject leaders in monitoring and evaluating teaching, learning and standards lacks rigour.
- The use of target setting in marking and the involvement of pupils in assessing how well they are

¹ Those with a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals.

doing is not sharp enough.

- Attendance is unsatisfactory– extended holidays are hampering some pupils' achievements.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1997 and there were five main areas for improvement concerning curriculum and lessons planning, attendance, links with parents, increasing the accommodation, and facilities for physical education. Good progress has been made in tackling most of these issues, though attendance remains stubbornly around 90 per cent despite the school's good efforts to improve it. The school's monitoring shows that the achievement of a few pupils in particular is being affected by poor attendance. The school is currently saving money to provide a new hall; this will enhance further the facilities for gymnastics and dance. The school has good capacity to sustain the good rate of improvement.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests (SATs).

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	D	C	A	A*
Mathematics	D	D	D	B
Science	A	A	A	A*

Key	
Very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Achieving high standards is the school's main priority, and everyone is working hard to achieve this. In their tests the eleven-year-olds are achieving very high standards in English and science, but below average standards in mathematics. Standards are better when compared to those in similar schools, with attainment in English and science amongst the top five per cent nationally and above average in mathematics. Proportionally, fewer pupils attained at above average levels in mathematics, and this is a key reason why the performance shown above is not as favourable as in the other two subjects. Results in tests are getting better all the time. This is largely to do with the setting arrangements which are having such good impact on pupils' progress, the good teaching and well-focused analysis of assessment data that is used to set demanding targets for raising individual attainment.

When the pupils start at Thornton juniors' their attainment is below average. When they leave, most pupils have made good progress in their studies, especially in developing literacy skills. Inspection findings show that: standards at the end of school are at expected levels in English, mathematics, art and design, design and technology, history, geography, music and religious education (RE). They are well above the expected level in science, but below the expected level in physical education (PE) and information and communication technology (ICT). A real curricular strength is the link made between one subject and another that results in pupils' reinforcing key skills. Limited accommodation and the lack of management drive are hampering improvement in PE whilst in ICT organisational and resource issues are slowing down potentially good achievements.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils always try hard to do their best and take pride in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well in lessons and at break and lunch times. This helps them to learn effectively. No exclusions have been made and this is testament to the school's very good social inclusion.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils help and support each other, both in lessons and when they are playing. The school is racially harmonious and this is a strength in

	the excellent relationships.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory but improving. Some pupils prolonged absence impedes their potential achievement. Punctuality is good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	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.

At the last inspection teaching was judged to be mostly good. This is still the case, but there are significant improvements. Most teachers taught at least one lesson that was very good, and this time there was just one unsatisfactory lesson where behaviour management slipped. English, mathematics, science, music and RE are well taught, with a significant amount of very good teaching in English and science. Basic reading, writing and numeracy skills are very well taught across the entire school. The teaching in Years 6 is especially strong; as are aspects of the teaching of pupils with special educational needs and the Lodge pupils. Learning assistants support both teaching and learning very successfully and provide very effective help for the pupils who learn English as an additional language. Learning is effective because the teaching is good. Pupils make good progress in lessons and over longer periods of time because work is pitched at the right levels for them and because teachers expect and achieve good standards of work from everyone. Pupils are keen to rise to the challenges set for them. Higher attaining pupils are well catered for, and the school is now focussing on its just below average attainers, so that their progress continues to accelerate successfully.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. There is sufficient breadth and it is highly relevant with the emphasis on literacy and numeracy. The high time allocation to English and mathematics puts other things slightly out of balance, especially ICT. The provision for extra-curricular activities is excellent.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Well managed provision ensures these pupils make good progress against their individual targets.
The work of the special educational needs unit	Very good. The pupils are exceptionally well integrated into main school lessons and are enabled to do as well as others.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. These pupils are given good support to help them achieve to potential over their time at school. The lack of a co-ordinator gives rise to problems concerning co-ordination that require improvement.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. The school's excellent ethos is very apparent in all areas of its work. Provision for pupils' spiritual growth, moral and social development is very good and cultural development good; pupils are caring and tolerant young citizens.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Pupils are at the heart of every decision and action taken in school. The quality of care is consistently high. There are very good procedures to support and guide pupils' personal development that are consistently used. The use of assessment and target setting to guide their academic development in subjects other than English, mathematics and science is less effective.
How well the school	Good. The school is successful in keeping parents up-to-date about its life

works in partnership with parents	and work and communication is very good. A growing number of parents are working as volunteer helpers in school and others are supporting their children's education with homework.
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HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher has excellent leadership skills that motivate and drive others to success. The staff are united in their determination to give the best possible education to all pupils.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are critical friends who firmly have their finger on the pulse of the school and know well its strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. A useful start has been made by senior managers in evaluating how well the school is doing against a range of indicators. Some subject coordinators are not yet playing a large enough part in checking up on standards and quality in the subjects they manage.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school makes efficient and effective use of staffing, accommodation and resources. Planned savings are accumulating so that a new hall may be built next year. Financial controls are good. The principles of Best Value are appropriately applied in all major 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">• Their children like school.• Teaching is good and pupils make good progress.• The school holds high expectations of what pupils can achieve.• Parents recognise the strong school ethos that helps all pupils achieve.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nothing of significance.

The inspection team agrees with the above views expressed by parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Since the time of the previous inspection standards have risen significantly in most subjects. Standards in design and technology (DT) have been lifted to a satisfactory level since the previous inspection. Standards have improved because management has been well-focused on making sure improvements result in the curriculum enabling pupils to build their knowledge, skills and understanding systematically and because teacher's are assessing pupils' progress more regularly and using this to make sure that all pupils are challenged in their work. A fortnightly timetable is in place to give appropriate coverage to all National Curriculum subjects. Class structures have been changed into learning sets comprised according to English understanding and level of comprehension. Pupils move to a different set for mathematics lessons. Furthermore, the introduction of national strategies for literacy and numeracy, have had a positive impact on standards in English and mathematics. The school has very sensibly adapted the national guidance on literacy to better meet the pupils' language needs and the fact that more pupils are reaching at least the expected level by the time they are eleven is testament to the success of this approach. Boys and girls do equally well at Thornton primary school.
2. The school's performance in National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds shows a rising trend. Results in 2001 in English and science were well above the national average and above average in mathematics. Fewer pupils are enabled to reach the higher Level 5 in mathematics as in English and science; this is the key reason why standards in National Curriculum tests are not as high in mathematics as in the other two subjects. Standards are even better when compared to those in similar schools, with the very high standards in English and science amongst the top five per cent nationally and above average in mathematics.
3. Standards in ICT and PE are not as good as they should be. There are good reasons why this is so that are explored below. However, the raising of standards in these subjects are key issues for the school to address as part of its future improvement.
4. When the pupils start at Thornton juniors' their attainment is below average. When they leave, most pupils have made good progress in their studies, especially in developing literacy skills. Pupils are organised into learning sets according to their skills in language and literacy. This enables teachers to accurately target the work of pupils at different levels of attainment and through focused teaching and high expectations, levels of attainment for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language, are good when compared to their prior attainment. Inspection findings show that: standards at the end of school are at expected levels in English, mathematics, art and design, design and technology, history, geography, music and RE. They are well above the expected level in science, but below the expected level in PE and ICT. Limited accommodation and the lack of management drive are hampering improvement in PE, whilst in ICT organisational and resource issues are slowing down potentially good achievements.
5. Pupils of all abilities, including those who learn English as an additional language, are enabled to achieve well in English. A real curricular strength is the link made between one subject and another that results in pupils' reinforcing key skills. For example, the school takes every opportunity to promote and reinforce subject specific vocabulary and this is a positive feature. Reading, writing, speaking and listening standards are very near to the average overall. The school gives high priority to reading and support staff and teachers make sure that the pupils practice regularly. Pupils who find difficulty with reading are given good support, though a minority would benefit from more planned opportunities to improve their phonological awareness. The school's innovative organisation of reading invigorates all pupils to aim high as they progress from Earth as base level and travel through the scheme until they reach Pluto, as their final destination. Posters about school encourage pupils with messages such as, "Don't be an alien, get a life and read books!". The first

two sets of four in each year include a significant proportion of pupils who have above average skills in reading, though few can dig below the surface of the text to gain wider appreciation and an understanding beyond the literal. Most pupils show a love of books and pleasure in reading. Pupils' writing is given good emphasis across the curriculum; all pupils have an opportunity to write for a wide audience and in a variety of genre. Teachers put a great deal of effort into extending the range of speaking and listening opportunities, during circle time and in assemblies for example. Good emphasis is placed on reinforcing and consolidating these skills. Pupils are confident to voice their opinions and speak enthusiastically, but what they say is limited by their vocabulary and the narrow experiences they have beyond school.

6. Pupils make good progress in mathematics because work is well matched to their needs and because it is well planned, organised and taught, pupils are able to succeed. There is good expectation that gains will be made in skills and knowledge. Teachers take great pains to ensure that pupils understand what they are learning. ICT is being well used to support work in mathematics, for example spread-sheets were set up as a data base to help Year 5 pupils calculate the costs of organising a party. The school is giving emphasis to ensuring that higher attaining pupils are consistently challenged so that a greater percentage reach the higher Level 5 or beyond.
7. In science pupils of all abilities make very good progress with a significant proportion reaching higher levels in the tests at the end of Year 6. Pupils have a good knowledge of all the aspects of science they learn about. Pupils are confident to hypothesise about the outcome of investigations and compare these with the actual results, writing up their scientific discoveries appropriately. One strength observed in all lessons is pupils' effective use of subject vocabulary in spoken and written work.
8. Current standards in ICT are below the expected level at the end of Year 6. This is largely because of a lack of software and hardware to cover all the required aspects of the subject, for example modelling, control and use of the Internet. Contributing to this picture however are satisfactory standards at eleven in word processing, data handling and the use of spreadsheets. Because much work in ICT is now taught in the suite the pupils have more intensive instruction and help. Though in some lessons the time available was not enough for learning to progress beyond a satisfactory level. The focus on the use of the new suite is resulting in the computers in classes not being used as well as they could be and this needs review. The school's ICT improvement plan contains sensible priorities for addressing these weaker aspects.
9. Standards in DT have improved since the previous inspection and are now at the level expected at the end of Year 6. Pupils build skills, knowledge and understanding at steady rates on the whole. This applies to the planning, designing and evaluating stages of the work as well as the making stage. Pupils experience the range of factors that make up DT, not just the excitement of making a successful end product. In so doing, pupils make progress in developing their skills. A strength of provision is in how the experiences pupils gain in design work are dovetailed into work in other subject areas, for example mathematics.
10. Pupils' attainments in art and design, geography, history, music and religious education are at the expected level for eleven-year-olds. Teachers provide a wide variety of interesting activities for pupils in art and design: there are real strengths in the quality of pupils' observational drawings that reach a good standard, for example the atmospheric work on perspectives created in Year 6. In geography and history there is some good development of skills as the topics chosen are lively and stimulate pupils' good involvement. The school taps into local resources, for example the Kingfisher project, to enrich learning experiences in these subjects. In music and RE pupils learn successfully because of consistently good teaching that enthuses and motivates pupils' enjoyment. Pupils enjoy making music and there are strengths in appraising skills when pupils discuss what they hear and make well-considered responses. In RE lessons pupils show respectful and tolerant attitudes when they learn about a range of major world faiths. For example, in Year 4 pupils went on an imaginary walk around the markets of Ancient Arabia as they tried to think about the life of Abraham and the "Days of Ignorance" when people believed in many Gods.

11. Pupils attain standards below the expected level in PE by the age of eleven. There are three key reasons for this. Firstly, the building of a new school hall has been delayed over the last four years and this means that pupils have to manage with very limited space in which to build up skills in dance and gymnastics. Secondly, a significant number of pupils are physically unfit and this has a negative impact on the rates of progress being made and standards achieved. This is the case throughout the whole school. Thirdly, the leadership and management of the subject has shown insufficient urgency in finding strategies to improve standards, which is unsatisfactory. The recently appointed co-ordinator has yet to make the necessary progress in these areas, although she has helped to improve the provision of after school games clubs, which is now good. The raising of standards in PE is a key issue for the school to address.
12. The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils have equality of opportunity to succeed. Its inclusive practice is evident in the good rates of progress that all pupils are making in most subjects. In its efforts to make improvement the school's monitoring has revealed the need to better focus on its just below average attainers, so that their progress continues to accelerate successfully. The majority of pupils in school come from homes where English is not the main spoken language. The work to support and extend the development of English for these pupils is well thought out and managed effectively by the headteacher with support from a part-time teacher whilst she attempts to recruit a permanent co-ordinator. Thus, the pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress and by the age of eleven they speak, read and write English as well as their class-mates. Pupils with different language backgrounds are to be found in all ability groups and they attain well, given their starting point. The good additional support provided for pupils with special educational needs enables them to do well. The pupils with statements, most of whom attend the Lodge but are integrated into class lessons for much of the time, do very well against their learning and personal development targets. Pupils with particular gifts or talents are set challenging work to do, though this depends to some degree on individual class teachers and is a feature in some mathematics lessons that requires a boost.
13. The school is well geared up to continue its drive for making standards the best they can be. Very demanding targets are set in English, mathematics and science every year and everyone in school rises well to the challenge to meet them. The next step for managers is to widen the use of target setting across other subjects and to involve co-ordinators, pupils and parents more in evaluating progress against the targets set. The inspection team judges the school to have good capacity to sustain continuous improvement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. The school has sustained the strengths in provision which result in the very good standards in pupils' attitudes and personal development since the previous inspection. Relationships were judged then as a strength of the school; relationships now are excellent with everyone, both adults and pupils in the school community, benefiting from their involvement with it. Underpinning the consistently very good attitudes, values and personal development is the exceptionally positive and warm ethos, which can be felt immediately on entering the building. Significant also is the sense of children's belonging to and ownership in the school. These consistently high standards help pupils achieve well.
15. Pupils enjoy school, appreciate being at Thornton Juniors, and are keen to attend. They have very positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils are very well motivated, want to achieve, and know they can. They are proud of all their achievements. Pupils' interest and involvement in school activities is very good. They answer questions enthusiastically and work hard at the tasks they are given. They respond especially well where teaching is lively and they are expected to achieve but Thornton pupils nearly always do their very best. Pupils enjoy their lessons and take care to produce accurate work that is well presented. They move around the school sensibly so that lessons start on time, for example, when going to different teachers for mathematics. Pupils from all classes enjoy and benefit from an exceptionally wide range of extra-curricular clubs, which are held every day. Because these clubs are held during dinner breaks as well as after school, those

pupils who also go to Mosque school at the end of the school day, if they want to, can participate fully.

16. Behaviour overall is very good throughout the day. Routines are very well established and older pupils especially respond immediately to adult's instructions and expectations. School rules and policy are understood and followed. Pupils behave impeccably when sitting in what are very cramped conditions in the school hall. Younger pupils behave very sensibly and calmly when they visit the nearby swimming pool. Boisterous play and bullying are rare on the playgrounds and pupils know what happens if they do misbehave. The headteacher plays a key role in the well-established, firm and fair systems of disciplining in the school. There is no record of any pupil exclusion mainly because of the time and commitment that is given to ensure that all pupils, for their own good, are included. Racial harassment or unkind behaviour of any kind is not tolerated and dealt with very seriously. All staff are involved in consistently rewarding good behaviour and in working towards the establishment of a very harmonious and racially tolerant school community where pupils are trusted and want to behave well.
17. A School Council has very recently been set up with two council members from each class. Very constructive relationships between pupils and adults exist among this group and it is a valuable forum for sharing the views and opinions of pupils and directly involves them in improving their school environment and community. Year 6 pupils help Year 3 pupils in reading activities at lunch times. Pupils are very caring towards each other and very friendly, welcoming and polite to visitors. They love talking about their school and give many reasons why they like it. Pupils are a big strength of this school because of their very good values and attitudes.
18. Pupils' personal development is very good and this is fostered well through the exceptional school ethos. The importance given to raising pupil's self esteem is very evident. Pupils are involved in the daily routines of the school, such as putting out chairs and preparing the music for assembly. They act as class monitors and take their role as house captains seriously. They sell tuck during morning break. Under a watchful adult eye, they answer the office phone very politely during dinner break. Moving around the school they notice what needs to be done and do it, for example, showing visitors the way and helping to tidy up after different activities. They help each other. However they do not always put their litter in the bins on the playground. As they get older they grow in confidence and maturity. They have high regard for their teachers.
19. Pupils are encouraged and expected to be respectful of the views of others. Different beliefs and values are listened to and explored. Pupils own contributions are valued and they know this. Staff respect pupils. They take time to listen to them. Relationships in the school are excellent. Many in the school community, including teachers, support staff, pupils, parents and governors speak of their gratitude at being a part of the Thornton family.
20. Although attendance has improved since the previous inspection it is still unsatisfactory because of the higher than average number of pupils who are absent from school with unauthorised and authorised absences. The school has worked hard to improve attendance overall from a very low 87.4 per cent in 1997 to a more acceptable, but still unsatisfactory figure of 90.83 per cent in 2001 which is still below national figures. Support from some parents has impacted positively on individual rates of attendance, but a few other parents are not giving the school their full support to make sure their children attend regularly. Punctuality is good including in the afternoons.
21. However, the school recognises that two groups of pupils are still a cause for concern - both a small number of ethnic minority pupils who take extended holidays abroad and a very few number of pupils in several classes who for a variety of reasons do not attend school quite as frequently as they should. Last year during special religious festivals the whole school weekly rate of attendance fell to between 65 per cent and 70 per cent for no less than three separate weeks. This alone inevitably affected the rate for that complete year by approximately two per cent. The school has recorded much better figures for this first half term of 93.4 per cent which it suggests is because very few families have visited Pakistan due to the troubled political situation in Afghanistan. Nevertheless improving attendance is a key issue for the school to continue to address.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

22. There have been significant staffing changes since the previous inspection, with nine teachers having left in the last two years and eleven new staff appointed. This makes direct comparison with the findings of the previous inspection difficult to make though the good quality seen then has been sustained. Teaching today is good overall with most teachers teaching at least one lesson that was very good. A quarter of all lessons observed were of very good or excellent quality and resulted in pupils making great strides forward in their learning. There have been improvements to teaching quality arising from a well-conceived programme of training, and the introduction of a performance management policy that has been received positively. This time there was just one unsatisfactory lesson where behaviour management slipped. English, mathematics, science, music and RE are well taught, with a significant amount of very good teaching in English and science. Basic reading, writing and numeracy skills are very well taught across the entire school. The teaching in Years 6 is especially strong; as are aspects of the teaching of pupils with special educational needs and the Lodge pupils. Learning assistants support both teaching and learning very successfully and provide very effective help for the pupils who learn English as an additional language.
23. During the week of inspection teaching was at least satisfactory in 99 per cent of the 102 lessons observed. It was good in 46 per cent, very good in 21 per cent and excellent in four per cent. The very best lessons were in English, music and history. Here inspirational teaching motivated the pupils to make very good progress against the good objectives set. Teaching is consistently good or better in Year 6; here pupils' learning is accelerated in all subjects and in English, mathematics and science boosted successfully by the extra support given in preparation for the National Curriculum tests. Learning is effective because the teaching is good. Pupils make good progress in lessons and over longer periods of time because work is pitched at the right levels for them and because teachers expect and achieve good standards of work from everyone. Pupils are keen to rise to the challenges set for them. Higher attaining pupils are well catered for, and the school is now focussing on its just below average attainers, so that their progress continues to accelerate successfully.
24. Teaching is mostly good because teachers ensure that pupils at the school have good quality learning opportunities that provide a rich and stimulating diet. They hold high expectations of what pupils can do, and are supported by effective long and medium-term planning in most subjects. Teachers generally plan lessons very thoroughly, maintain a productive and purposeful ethos, manage behaviour very well, use a good range of interesting materials and largely structure lessons well to make best use of time, resources and the accommodation. The use of homework is satisfactory. There are problems associated with the arrangements in place to deliver ICT and PE, and too much is expected to be done with insufficient time available. This is impeding potentially very high quality teaching and learning. The school is aware of this weakness.
25. The teaching of basic skills ensure that most pupils make good progress in literacy and numeracy during their time at school. Throughout the school there has been positive impact on the achievements of pupils from the successful implementation of both the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies. Teachers make effective use of mental warm-up time to improve numeracy skills and use sessions at the end of lessons well to assess pupils' levels of understanding. Literacy sessions typically begin with the sharing of text, and most teachers engage pupils' good working habits very early on by asking probing questions that stimulate thoughtful answers. It is usually the case that group activities are purposeful and productive times in which the majority of pupils get on well with their independent tasks.
26. Assessment is usefully assisting teachers' planning in English, mathematics and science and to good effect as demonstrated by rising standards. Assessment is less precise in other subjects. A good start has been made in tracking individual progress and in setting targets, but insufficient use is made of these to support teachers' marking and in involving pupils in self-assessment. These are key issues for improvement.

27. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and those who learn English as an additional language is good overall, with many very good features. In some one-to-one sessions, pupils were observed to make great strides forward in learning because of the highly effective attention given to supporting good rates of progress against the individual targets set. Some particularly sensitive and effective teaching was observed taking place with refugee pupils who had virtually no spoken English. The excellent quality of relationships in the school is successfully underpinning the good standards being achieved. Teachers enjoy being with the pupils and vice-versa and this shows in the super climate for learning and improving standards.
28. The very best practice in teaching and learning in the school has yet to be sufficiently shared. Teachers at the school are reflective about their work and constantly seek ways to improve their practice. A timetable of monitoring and evaluation has begun and the next step is to involve more people in observing work in classrooms so that everyone has the advantage of knowing where best to support improvement as part of the school's drive to raise standards still further.

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

29. When the school was previously inspected the curriculum was not as in as good shape as it is today. A key issue was identified that asked the school to ensure that all foundation subjects were provided regularly, and in a way that secured progression in the development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. The school has given good attention to developing the curriculum to ensure that it is relevant, broad and of quality. All subjects are provided regularly and in sufficient depth. The one exception is ICT where the changeover from class-based ICT to the use of the new suite is not yet properly up and running and this is resulting in some time issues. The school is aware of this and has already identified what it needs to do to provide more balance in its sensible ICT improvement plan.
30. The quality and range of opportunities for learning provided by the school are good. All statutory requirements are met. The curriculum is organised so that there is a high proportion of time given to language and literacy and numeracy. This is justified. Although the school believes in a broad and balanced curriculum, skills in language and literacy and numeracy "unlock" the rest of the curriculum to these pupils. Furthermore, the school misses no opportunity to promote pupils' vocabulary in all subjects, and this shows up in the good skills they develop in reading and writing. There is a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and who have English as an additional language and who need these skills to make them effective learners. In this way the curriculum is broad, balanced in favour of developing basic learning skills and highly appropriate and relevant to these pupils' needs. However, there are too few opportunities for the use of ICT in support of these pupils' learning.
31. The organisation of pupils into teaching sets based on language and literacy enables teachers to focus on the needs of different groups of pupils. Higher, average and lower attaining pupils, those with special educational needs and those who learn English as an additional language are all well provided for through work which is well thought out and effectively focused to their levels of attainment. The curriculum is organised on a two-week cycle. Literacy and Numeracy skills are taught daily. Other subjects distributed over the two-week cycle. Appropriate and relevant policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects, and they contain detailed and extensive information to provide for a very full coverage of all subjects. The plans ensure a steady and progressive development of each subject through the school.
32. The school has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies successfully. In literacy, many opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their reading and writing skills across a wide range of subjects. This has helped the school maintain the high standard of work in English. The strategies for teaching literacy are very effective and the school uses this strategy to suit the particular needs of all pupils.

33. The school makes very good provision for the equality of pupils' access to the whole curriculum, with the staff making sure that all pupils are involved in a full range of activities. Very good provision is also made for pupils' personal, social and health education, with aspects of sex and drugs education being fully covered within science and personal, social and health education lessons. Other aspects of healthy living, such as the contents of a healthy diet, are carefully considered in science. The school provides an excellent range of extra-curricular activities. These include music, (recorders for all ages and choir), physical activity clubs (games, netball and football), drama, languages (French), academic (science, mathematics, library and information and communication technology), and general hobby clubs (craft, environmental and puppetry). The clubs for science and mathematics are well structured and effectively support the curriculum. They are specifically intended to extend the more able pupils in these subjects by focusing activities at National Curriculum Levels 5 and 6. The science club makes a significant contribution to the high standards achieved at the end of the key stage.
34. The generally good links with the community and commerce reported on in the previous inspection have been further built on. The community is well used as a resource for learning and is in turn supportive of the school. Regular visits for each class are planned and purposeful and help to broaden pupils' experiences in a range of curricular areas. This programme includes visits to shops, museums, mosques and churches, as well as to elderly residents at harvest time. The school has gained a Business Partnership award and values working in partnership. Older pupils have been closely involved in the planning and creation of the school garden, which includes two small ponds. This very successful project, which has been carefully overseen by a member of staff, has received sponsorship from industry and volunteer help, from within the community, including governors.
35. Links are good with many schools and partner institutions. The most significant and ongoing development in the last two years is the partnership with a college of further education. Many members of the support staff are taking part in an NVQ course organised on site one afternoon a week. This link has been actively promoted by the headteacher. She also welcomes many students from universities, colleges and secondary schools into Thornton for short-term work placements.
36. The quality of the schools' provision for the cultural development of pupils is good and the quality of the schools' provision for spiritual, moral and social development is very good.
37. Pupils' spiritual growth is very well fostered. The whole school ethos is one which values the beliefs and ideas of all its pupils. The way in which pupils' work is displayed shows the degree of importance placed on the contribution of each pupil. In a Year 3 class there was an audible gasp as fairy lights, surrounding the pupils' autumn poetry, were switched on to illuminate their personal achievement. A variety of guest speakers enrich the pupils' understanding of and respect for shared values and beliefs. There is a real sense of warmth and care combined with order and respect as pupils enter the hall. In an assembly taken by a visitor from the Salvation Army, pupils responded enthusiastically to his innovative way of asking them to consider a moral dilemma. Singing was sweet and uplifting with pupils also making the hand movements that accompanied the hymn. Time was set aside for a spiritual moment of reflection when all pupils in the hall looked up to God to think of something that they needed to say sorry to Him for. To close they were invited to look down at their own feet to remind them that as people we are not all perfect and to look to the left and right to think of other people and times when they have upset others and need to say sorry.
38. The provision for moral development is very good. This is a school strongly promotes principles which distinguish right from wrong. The school, class and playground rules, which are prominently displayed in every classroom, provide a basis for good behaviour which is promoted throughout the school. For example, in a religious education lesson pupils were able to use the teachers' good model of moral questions to ask and apply their understanding of the issues involved when looking at photographs. They are able to hypothesise about the feelings of the people involved and explain their reasons to adults. In discussion with pupils they reveal that they have a firm belief in being honest even when it is more difficult to tell the truth. They feel that fairness is important and cite

an example learned in geography, where farmers get very little for their crops whereas retailers have large profit margins. They are very clear about the need to tell the truth, 'if you don't tell the truth you keep remembering it' and are aware that justice must be seen to be done.

39. The provision for social development is very good. There are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility. There is a school council to which every class elects two representatives. Pupils see this as a good idea; 'the school is mainly organised by teachers and so the school council is an ideal way of looking at things from a child's perspective'. Pupils decide on the purpose and aims of the council. 'Councillors' go away and discuss matters such as fund-raising with their classes and return to the next meeting with the ways in which their class is prepared to organise fund raising. The school is organised into houses and the Year 6 house captains confidently rally or congratulate their house in the achievement assembly. Pupils also take responsibility as monitors to answer the telephone and help at lunchtime. All adults in the school provide very good role models for the pupils and as a result pupils work collaboratively and with a high degree of co-operation.
40. The provision for cultural development is good. The school is one family with many differences and those differences are used as enrichment. Purposeful festivals are planned for and celebrated. They have a special assembly for the Chinese New Year and do a dragon dance round the school. Diwali is celebrated in a special assembly with examples of Diwali patterns. Friends of the school who are artists come into the school to extend the pupils' experience. Pupils are given support during Ramadan. Eid is celebrated. The school talks openly about each other's differences and have respect. Cultural development is a way of school life; pupils continuously learn to appreciate their own cultural traditions as well as the richness and diversity of other cultures from each other rather than through 'bolt-on' experiences which have no relevance to the lives of the pupils.

THE WORK OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS UNIT – THE LODGE

41. The provision made for the pupils in the school's attached unit known as the 'Lodge' is very good, and is a real strength of the school. The Lodge was set up four years ago to provide education for junior-age pupils from across the local area who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. It aims to cater for 12 pupils, but at the time of the inspection, only seven places were full. All of the pupils in The Lodge have a statement of special educational needs, and their attainment in English, mathematics and science particularly, is below average. However, in relation to their difficulties, they achieve well and are making good progress in all aspects of their learning, and very good progress in personal and social education. Inclusion of these pupils into their peer groups at the school is a key feature of the provision, and high levels of success have been established in this aspect. For example, within ten weeks of their placement in The Lodge, each pupil is expected to integrate full-time into their appropriate year-group set.
42. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils at The Lodge is good. Both the teachers in the Lodge, and those in the mainstream school, are skilled in catering for the special needs of this group of pupils. Clear behaviour strategies are used consistently, so that pupils understand what is expected of them. Very good support is provided by support assistants so that pupils learn to organise themselves and cope with the school day. Pupils show good improvement in self-esteem and confidence, and the success of the personal and social education programme leads to good coping strategies. For example, during circle time in The Lodge, pupils learn how to share, take turns, discuss a point, and wait for others as they play a range of games. The effectiveness of these activities is evident in the way that pupils talk to each other, and the way they respond to adults. Pupils know and understand the routines and benefit from the very high expectations that staff have of them. These good personal skills stand them in good stead when they integrate for other lessons. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 5, a pupil from The Lodge was fully included and enabled to achieve because he was able to take turns and obey the rules of conversation that he had learned in his personal and social education lesson. The teacher was patient with him as he answered questions in front of the whole class. In another lesson in Year 5, a pupil from The Lodge worked with the average-ability group in a geography task. He was able to take a full and active part in the group, responding appropriately to adults and peers. In a history

research activity in Year 6, another pupil from The Lodge also became fully involved in his part of the enquiry, working at the same level and pace as his peers. These successes are linked to the high quality provision at The Lodge, and to the expertise of the mainstream school staff in supporting these pupils. The positive attitudes that they are developing are helping them to form relationships and work together in harmony. For example, two boys were observed playing a game of 'Connect 4' during early-morning activities in The Lodge. They played alone, without an adult, taking turns, sharing and being able to 'lose' without disruptions. This represented real success for these pupils.

43. The quality of learning opportunities for pupils from The Lodge is good. They have equality of opportunity to all activities on offer at the school, and full inclusion to the curriculum that their peers experience. Their learning targets are clear and well known to them. The very good pupil profiles have a positive impact on staff's ability to track their progress over time. The pupils join in the after-school clubs regularly. One Year 4 pupil was observed taking a full part in a drama club.
44. Management of the Lodge is very good. Procedures are clear and it is very well organised. The success of the Lodge is closely linked to the quality of the ethos that has been established. Respect for each other is a real focus, and staff and pupils alike enjoy each other's company. Resources available are appropriate and well used, but too little use is made of ICT, particularly in free times, when pupils choose an activity for themselves. The high quality of the displays and the stimulating learning environment in The Lodge celebrate pupils' achievements, and promotes simple reminders about behaviour. A range of rewards, including star charts, is prominently displayed to acknowledge individual successes and promote pupils' personal development. Relationships are strong. The Lodge provides good value for money for this group of pupils.

The provision made for Pupils who learn ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL).

45. Approximately 70 per cent of the pupils at Thornton Junior School come from homes where other languages are spoken. The majority of these pupils communicate at home in their parents' mother tongue for, at least, some of the time and many are learning an additional language for religious purposes. This provides a diversity of language experience which is recognised by the school as a richness to be celebrated. Pupils with EAL are well supported at Thornton. They are represented at every level of achievement in speaking, reading and writing and are among the highest achievers in every year group. The majority of pupils who have been in school since the age of seven, attain standards which are in line with national expectations by the age of eleven. Pupils who enter the school late, with limited English language development, and those who have extended absences from school make slower progress as much of their time is spent in catching up. A small number of refugees also join the school from time to time and the school was making good provision for four such pupils during the inspection week. All pupils with English language needs receive good quality in-class support to enable them to follow lessons but they require more direct teaching of basic skills than is currently provided. Pupils at very early stages of language acquisition receive individual teaching from experienced learning support assistants who establish very good relationships and help the pupils build their confidence and skills. They make good progress.
46. The absence of a suitably qualified and experienced EAL co-ordinator, is recognised by the school as a major gap in teaching provision. The head teacher maintains a watching brief over provision which is currently managed by the English co-ordinator and a part-time teacher. The present policy document is weak. There is confusion over the nationally accepted terminology which leads to a lack of clarity in some support provision. The learning support assistants who are specifically funded for EAL support, undertake a direct teaching role with insufficient professional support and guidance for their own development. They are doing their best under difficult circumstances. Assessment of English language proficiency and the identification of specific needs is shared by class teachers and support staff but this arrangement lacks rigour.
47. The appointment of a home-school link worker who also works as an EAL learning support assistant has been an invaluable asset in ensuring good co-operation and support from parents.

48. The appointment of a specialist teacher to assess pupils' language skills, set targets for improvement and co-ordinate provision must remain a high priority for the school. As such, it is a minor issue for the governing body to include in its action plan.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

49. The school provides effective support for all pupils. The pupils are at the heart of every decision and action taken, and this is reflected in its very positive ethos in which the pupils feel safe and well looked after. Parents recognise this, and they agree that it helps their children do well at school. The needs of young people are always put first and their overall personal development is well promoted in the very warm, comfortable and caring school environment. This was a very similar picture to that reported in the previous inspection. Staff know pupils well, have their interests in mind and work together as a team, involving parents and outside agencies whenever possible to support all pupils equally.
50. The school has also improved its systems for assessing pupils' academic progress since the last inspection, and these are satisfactory. There is now a common approach in core subjects, with the ability to chart pupils' coverage of the curriculum and their end-of-year performance. When assessing pupils' work, teachers are making better connections with National Curriculum levels, but it is clear that pupils are not always sure how well they are doing, or what they need to do to improve. There is still a relative weakness in the way in which teachers use assessment information to plan the next step of learning for pupils in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. Although rigorous targets have been set for pupils' performance in these three subjects, there is limited use of targets to support teachers in their on-going assessments. As such, aspects of assessment are key issues for the school to continue to address.
51. There are effective health and safety procedures fully in place and members of the governing body are closely involved in ensuring that the school is a safe environment for all. A range of sensible policies to do with pupils' welfare and support are updated and reviewed every year. Helpful risk assessments are completed on a regular basis. Fire drills are carried out twice termly.
52. A small number of pupils have a 'personal care plan', and these particular pupils are especially well known to all staff. Daily first aid and the administering of medicines are carefully and properly undertaken and recorded. A number of staff, both teaching and non-teaching are fully qualified. The mid day supervisors, who are led by a very caring and sensitive member of staff, are also suitably trained in behaviour management. Together they supervise all play areas and the dinner hall effectively. The school is well informed about pupils' language, cultures, values and customs and uses interpreters occasionally. Many of the staff currently working in the school speak several community languages, and their expertise is well used in supporting pupils and their families.
53. The school follows local procedures for child protection and a named person who is fairly new in this post oversees this aspect of provision. She also has the responsibility of ensuring that the varied needs of looked after children are met. In this she has been recently trained. However, it is a weakness that to date she has not been able to complete the planned for training in child protection that requires attention. Links with outside agencies are effective in ensuring standards of support are good.
54. Procedures for promoting attendance are good overall. The school has worked very hard and with some success to raise levels of attendance in the school and this is in part because it carefully monitors attendance. Teachers record attendance accurately and are strict in marking absences as unauthorised, as they indeed should. Good and improving attendance is rewarded. Pupils and their families are always asked to consider taking extended holidays out of school time. If families who plan extended holidays ask then they are given extra work to take with them. Families are phoned generally on the third day of absence if the school has received no reason for non attendance. The

school is aware that for some pupils their less than satisfactory attendance rates are detrimental to academic progress.

55. Procedures for promoting behaviour are very good. Pupils and teachers are placed in one of four houses when they start school. Pupils are then rewarded with house points, for example for good deeds, for good work or for improving attendance and every week one house receives the house shield. Individually pupils also earn gold stars and certificates, and they respond well to teachers praise and encouragement. The system of rewards is well known in the school community and is very effective in promoting standards of behaviour. Every pupil's achievements are valued. Behaviour is monitored by department heads and a senior member of staff with responsibility for behaviour management, who have a range of strategies both informal and more formal which support them in this role. The headteacher is particularly vigilant in ensuring that any misbehaviour is immediately dealt with firmly and fairly. It is also evident that pupils' attitudes and behaviour are improved by the positive nature of the school's links with parents. These are further strengthened by the work of the home link worker who makes home visits which are very beneficial for sharing information and therefore are reflected in the good quality care and support for all pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

56. As reported in the previous inspection the great majority of parents and carers are more than satisfied with what the school provides. Many positive features were identified then and these have been further strengthened and improved and this area of school life is no longer judged as a key issue for action. Overall, the school's links with parents and carers are steadily improving, and many aspects are satisfactory or good, with some very good features in the information parents and carers receive. A growing number of parents and carers support learning at home and help voluntarily in the school. These good partnerships are effective in promoting standards and achievements for many pupils.
57. Views expressed at the pre inspection meeting which was attended by sixteen parents and carers were generally very positive, with those present being confident to place their children in the care of the school. A few parents of newer pupils felt unsure of school policies and procedures, for example for home reading support and say they would like more information which could enable their children to settle more quickly. Some also pointed out that more advance notice of school events would be appreciated. However, all present at the meeting recognised the strong school ethos, which helps all pupils achieve.
58. Views expressed in the pre-inspection questionnaire, which was completed by one hundred and fifty people which represents approximately 30 per cent of parents and carers and in the small number of letters to the registered inspector were very favourable in nearly all areas of school life. There is support and appreciation for the progress made by pupils, for the good teaching, for the high expectations set by the school and for the range of activities provided outside of lessons. The great majority feels comfortable about approaching the school with any questions or difficulties and believes it is well led and managed. However a small minority of parents and carers do not feel the school is so successful in keeping them fully informed or in working closely with them.
59. Information to parents and carers is however very good overall with significant developments in recent years. A very well presented termly newsletter gives a lively picture of school life. In July the school's most recent successes in the end of year National Curriculum tests are celebrated with parents and carers. Regular letters from the headteacher remind parents and carers of forthcoming events and invite them to for example, the harvest celebrations. Their help and support is always welcomed and they are regularly reminded of the school policy for attendance. They are given good information on how good behaviour is promoted and bullying is tackled in the school. The brochure has been fully updated and gives a very wide range of information to parents and carers. The annual report from the governing body contains all it should. There are termly open evenings for every family and opportunities every day for informal teacher contact. The school reports that in some sets however take up at these open evenings is not as good as it could be. Written reports at the end of the school year are informative, and encouraging, but there is scope to inform parents

- more closely of targets across the curriculum. The headteacher always makes time available for parents and carers. Her very open communication style is a strength.
60. Every family signs home school agreements when their children start at the school. It is also then made very clear that contact and partnerships with all families are very much sought by the school. Homework is not set every day, but the pupils know they are expected to read at home with their families and many do support their children in this way. Pupils in The Lodge share daily with their teachers and parents or carers, a well designed sheet to encourage good behaviour. Effective links have been established with the parents of pupils with special needs. They share in the target-setting process and close contact is developing well. Local authority support services work closely with staff to ensure that needs are fully met. An increasing number of parents are getting involved in school life and help voluntarily for example in the school library and with supervision on outside visits.
61. Links with many families are purposefully strengthened by the good work of the Home School Link Worker. Over time, the school is successful in drawing in parents who may initially find it more difficult to approach them. The small number of parents who spoke with inspectors during the inspection indicate that the school is well known within the community for the good work it does to promote relationships between different ethnic groups. There is strong support for the school from many parents who want and are able to get involved in some way. The school is making good progress in strengthening partnerships all the time and is fully committed to ensuring this will continue.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

62. Since the time of the previous inspection in 1997, the headteacher and her senior staff have continued to give very clear educational direction to the work of the school so that the many strengths identified in provision then, have all been sustained, and issues for improvement tackled successfully. The Lodge is a new feature of provision that offers a very good deal to the challenging youngsters who are placed there from across the city. Their successful integration into the school for most of their studies is made possible because of the outstanding ethos and excellent relationships so evident at all levels in school. The one area of concern to everyone in school that is as current today as it was in 1997, is that despite good prudence in saving a very significant amount of money with agreement from the local education authority, the building of a new hall and dining room has not been possible. The cost of providing the much-needed facilities is increasing at a faster rate than the school can save money to pay for the re-build. The current hall is too small to accommodate the whole school and it imposes restrictions on the PE curriculum for dance and gymnastics that have an adverse impact on standards. This is unsatisfactory. School managers have done and continue to do all they reasonably can to lessen the worst effects of such poor provision, both staff and pupils rise above the problems as best they can.
63. The leadership of the head teacher is excellent. She has total conviction in the priorities and aims for the school and has highly developed skills in communication, motivation, determination and drive to ensure their completion. Her vision of the 'Thornton family' is firmly established amongst pupils, staff and parents and feeds the shining learning ethos immediately evident throughout the school. The leadership and management of key staff are good, and positively reinforce the very good educational direction of the school. As a consequence the whole staff is determined to achieve the highest possible standards for the pupils in a purposeful, caring and happy environment.
64. Notable management strengths in such a large primary school are the clear lines of communication, a strong sense of empowerment and sharing of responsibility amongst all staff, and an excellent supportive team ethic. Clear targets for improvement are set through a democratic process that involves all staff in their successful implementation, and senior management almost always ensuring that everyone achieves success. This has been the case in raising standards, especially in English and Science, to very high levels; the very successful integration of the Lodge into the school; and the many improvements in the environment and resource provision. Where success has not yet been achieved, for example, in the provision of the new hall and kitchen and improvement

in subject areas such as ICT and PE, there is total recognition by the management of the school and a fierce commitment that these priority areas will be developed, and quickly.

65. The role of the subject co-ordinators is recognised as vital by senior management. Turnover in staff has resulted in an occasional lack of continuity in some subject areas for example PE. The school is prepared, on a regular basis, to give subject leadership responsibilities to comparatively inexperienced teachers and this meets with mixed success. Nevertheless, a system of mentoring by senior staff has helped the successful development of most subjects. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning by co-ordinators, whilst generally good, has not yet enabled classroom observation to take place in all subjects. Where it has taken place, especially in English, mathematics and science, teaching and learning have shown improvement. The school is continuing to implement this process across the whole curriculum, although it sometimes has difficulties in finding adequate teacher coverage to enable release for co-ordinators.
66. The aims of the school, to provide a caring community, to give children opportunities to develop their potential, to respect others' values, to encourage tolerance, promote good citizenship and provide pupils with good self-esteem, are very well fulfilled throughout the daily life of the school, aided by the very good guidance of all staff. The aims and values of the school are also continually reflected in the very detailed, precise and appropriate School Improvement Plan, which is a very good practical guide to future improvement.
67. The governing body plays an effective role in shaping the direction of the school, and has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. It fully meets all its statutory requirements. The governing body, through the caring and knowledgeable leadership of a dedicated chairman, is characterised by its sheer love of the school and its pupils. Many governors have strong ties with the school, most living close by, and several having originally attended the school. This enables them, like the staff and pupils, to feel that they too are members of the 'family'. Their relationships with and support of the staff are of a high quality and several devote considerable time to the school; "I just love coming, and being with the children", was a comment heard from several governors. At the same time, they are prepared to act as the 'critical friend', although recognising the considerable abilities of the head teacher and senior staff in successfully managing the school on a day-to-day basis. The school has developed a good quality performance management policy, using its past experience of appraisal and personal development. All staff are given opportunities to further their professional skills by training, and all have opportunities to discuss their professional development on a regular basis. The integration of newly qualified teachers, and teachers new to the school, is accomplished successfully through a clear and comprehensive induction policy. The school is notable for its preparedness to appoint new young teachers, because it is confident that by close mentoring and support they will develop and expand their expertise for the benefit of the pupils.
68. The school makes good use of its financial and other resources. The finance committee has a firm understanding of the day-to-day financial management of the school, and also works closely with senior management on the strategic management of financial resources. This has been particularly important with the necessity to preserve a larger and larger carry forward budget for the proposed new kitchen and hall, which is scheduled for construction within the next twelve months. The governing body has exercised commendable restraint over the continued delays in this project, knowing full well the negative effects of the existing hall. They also work consistently to the principles of Best Value, and have always looked at value for money in the many projects undertaken in recent years, for example the new library and ICT suite. Financial administration by the very experienced bursar, administrative officer and head teacher are also good, and reflect the school's educational priorities as identified by the governing body.
69. The school has identified the need for developing new technology throughout the school. After some delays, the new ICT suite is now operational and pupils are benefiting from focussed learning opportunities on a fairly regular basis. However, ICT is not always being used daily across the curriculum, so the effectiveness of its use is still not fully effective. The deputy head, who is the

ICT co-ordinator, is very confident that now full resources are available, there will be rapid improvement. The use of technology in school administration is good.

70. All staff are committed and confident in their promotion of educational inclusion. The school management provides well for pupils having special educational needs or emotional and behavioural needs. There are major strengths in the quality of support staff, who have a very positive impact on pupils' learning. There is good provision for the needs of pupils who learn English as an additional language and the very few refugees who attend from time to time. The school opens its arms wide to all comers and looks to find the talents and uniqueness of each individual. It is this attention to detail that is a major part of its success with inclusion. The school is attempting to appoint a full-time co-ordinator to oversee the provision for English language learners to strengthen further the good provision.
71. The school has made considerable efforts in the last few years to improve its accommodation and general environment. It has shown ingenuity in several developments, and after some delays, now has a very good new library and computer suite. Although these are good and well used improvements, the continuing failure to replace the school hall and kitchen means the accommodation overall is only satisfactory. Educational resources are generally adequate across the school and used effectively. The school is aware of areas needing improvement, such as computer software.
72. Thornton School has many dedicated and hardworking teaching, support, administrative and maintenance staff, who are totally committed to improvement. Their determination, combined with its highly effective leadership and management, gives the school a very good capacity to succeed in achieving its targets and future goals. The school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The school is providing a good education for pupils. To make it even better the headteacher, staff and governors should seek to:

- (1) **Raise standards in ICT by:**
 - pressing ahead with the sensible priorities contained in the school's ICT improvement plan,
 - reviewing the amount of time that pupils have available to work as a class in the suite,
 - ensuring that much better use is made of computers in classes to support learning across the curriculum.Paragraphs: 2. 3. 7. 23. 28. 29. 63. 68. 70. 109. 117. 122. 123. 127.

- (2) **Raise standards in PE by:**
 - establishing an action plan that shows the time and activities required to ensure that pupils of all ages receive high quality experiences across the PE curriculum that promote skills fully and have maximum opportunities to get fit,
 - raising the expectations of teachers and pupils as to what they can achieve,
 - supporting and further developing the management of PE as a matter of urgency,
 - forging ahead with the plans to build a hall that will be large enough to facilitate whole class teaching and learning in gymnastics and dance.Paragraphs: 2. 3. 10. 23. 61. 63. 128. 129. 131. 133.

- (3) **Extend the monitoring and evaluation role of aspect and subject co-ordinators by:**
 - setting out a clear plan that shows who, when and what is to be monitored and how the outcomes are to be used to support school improvement,
 - seeking the necessary training to support the positive implementation of the plan,
 - giving priority to the plan as part of the school's drive to raise standards.Paragraphs: 12. 27. 64. 100. 106. 110. 116. 140.

- (4) **Widen the use of target setting, specifically in teachers' marking and the pupils' annual written reports, and involve pupils more in assessing how well they are doing against the targets set.**
Paragraphs: 12. 25. 49. 58. 115. 140.

- (5) **Continue with the positive action to improve attendance by:**
 - evaluating what impact individual absence has on pupils' achievements and sharing this information with parents,
 - seeking increased parental support to take holidays when school is not in session.Paragraphs: 19. 20. 53.

A minor issue for inclusion in the action plan is the need to appoint a specialist teacher to assess pupils' language skills, set targets for improvement and co-ordinate provision for EAL.

See paragraphs 45. 47. 69. 78.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	102
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	21	47	29	1	0	0
Percentage	4	21	46	28	1	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	480
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	212

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	16
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	148

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	309

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	35
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	37

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.4
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.5
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 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	64	56	120

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	44	44	58
	Girls	39	31	53
	Total	83	75	111
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	69 (68)	63 (72)	93 (85)
	National	75(70)	72(69)	85(78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	29	32	48
	Girls	33	22	40
	Total	62	54	88
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	52 (52)	45 (64)	73 (78)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	10
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	1
Indian	7
Pakistani	291
Bangladeshi	11
Chinese	0
White	129
Any other minority ethnic group	29

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	0	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: Y3– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	23.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	27

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	121

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	1,066,241
Total expenditure	992,403
Expenditure per pupil	2,072
Balance brought forward from previous year	374,243*

** High carry forward is planned savings for the new school hall and has been accumulated with the agreement of the LEA*

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	11
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	480
Number of questionnaires returned	150

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	33	3	1	2
My child is making good progress in school.	50	45	1	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	42	8	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	46	5	2	1
The teaching is good.	56	39	2	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	36	14	3	7
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	36	3	1	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	32	1	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	41	37	13	3	5
The school is well led and managed.	44	41	5	2	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	41	6	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	47	37	2	1	13

NB Rows may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding

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

ENGLISH

72. There has been good improvement in English since the previous inspection. During their time at Thornton, pupils make sure and steady progress in all aspects of English so that by the age of eleven, the vast majority, including those pupils who learn English as an additional language, attain standards which meet national expectations. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in developing language and literacy skills, and make the same good progress as other pupils. A very high proportion of Thornton pupils are achieving well in National Curriculum tests in comparison with pupils in primary schools nationally, and extremely well in comparison with pupils in similar schools. Standards in tests are better than those observed due to the very high proportion who attained the higher level 5 in 2001.
73. Listening skills are very good across the school. Pupils listen very carefully to lesson introductions and to the teachers' explanations which enables them to settle quickly and efficiently to their tasks. Their contribution to oral and written work, indicates a high level of concentration when listening. In Years 3 and 4, pupils answer questions enthusiastically with the majority showing sound understanding which improves as they get older. Examples of very attentive listening were seen in a higher attaining Year 5 class, where pupils were able to clearly explain the concept of a myth and give examples to illustrate their answers, and in a lower attaining Year 6 class, where pupils demonstrated a good grasp of the plot and characters in the play, 'A Midsummer's Night Dream' by William Shakespeare. A very positive feature of pupils' learning is the attention which they pay to each other's contributions at the end of lessons or in group work. Pupils also listen very well in large groups, such as assembly. The small minority of pupils who find it difficult to sustain concentration are well managed by teachers and learning support assistants, and successfully encouraged to listen. Pupils' good attitudes and very good listening skills make a positive impact on their learning in all areas of the curriculum.
74. Speaking skills are satisfactory overall and sometimes they are good. Most pupils speak confidently in front of their class and the majority responds well to opportunities to talk about their work. They answer questions in full sentences and, with prompting from their teachers, most are able to elaborate their answers. They contribute well to group work. Less confident pupils receive good support and encouragement to participate and, most pupils express themselves clearly by the age of eleven. Most recognise the difference between formal and informal ways of speaking, but pupils lack experience in speaking clearly for a range of audiences and in developing a persuasive argument in a more formal manner. Most pupils limit themselves to everyday words to express themselves and do not include the more varied vocabulary which is evident in their written work. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are represented at every level of spoken ability. They are among the most articulate pupils in every year group. Those who are at an early stage of English language acquisition feel sufficiently confident to try to express themselves in front of the class and they are making good progress. Pupils on the special educational needs register participate fully in oral work and are very well supported in small groups by teachers and learning support assistants who provide very good language role models. The school recognises the need to further develop the speaking skills and has introduced a range of strategies to improve standards.
75. All pupils speak politely to adults and are generally friendly and helpful to each other. Examples of good speaking skills were observed in a higher attaining Year 3 class where pupils clearly expressed their views and preferences about poems they were reading; in a lower attaining Year 4 class where, with skilful questioning, the pupils were enabled to explain the difference between fiction and non-fiction; in a higher attaining Year 5 class where the contributions to a group poem demonstrated good use of alliteration and rhyming words and in a lower attaining Year 6 class where there was a genuine buzz of excitement from the pupils engaged in finding a range of verbs to compose a poem. Opportunities for pupils to ask questions which would extend their learning, such as observed in a history lesson, are underdeveloped.

76. The enthusiastic attitudes to reading which the school successfully promotes through the structured reading scheme, and good home-school links, are having a very positive impact on standards which show steady improvement across the key stage and good improvement in Year 6. Pupils are aware of their reading targets and work hard to achieve them. They borrow books regularly from the school library and progress is reinforced by reading to family members at home and visits to the public library. Higher attaining pupils in every year group achieve age appropriate levels, but a significant proportion of pupils are below national expectations in Years 3, 4 and 5. However, they all make steady and determined progress so that by Year 6 the majority reach their potential. This represents very good progress over time. Overall there is no significant difference between the attainments of boys and girls, although it is the case that there are more boys than girls at the lowest reading levels. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are represented at every level of achievement and are amongst the most advanced readers in the school. By the age of eleven, most pupils read with sound understanding and are developing appropriate intonation and expression. The better readers are fluent and use good expression. They talk enthusiastically about their favourite books and authors but few have the higher order skills of exploring below the surface of the text to gain understanding beyond the literal. Library retrieval skills are well established and most pupils can locate information in reference books. Across the school, pupils use dictionaries and thesauruses regularly and with confidence. In the upper part of the school, the majority of pupils are able to scan a text for specific information and are making good progress in learning to infer meaning from more complex narrative and verse.
77. From the lessons seen in class and analysis of pupils' work, standards of handwriting and presentation of work are a strength of the school which contribute significantly to the good progress across the key stage. Pupils exercise good control over the size, shape, spacing and orientation of their writing, and this has a positive impact on the spelling of common words and sentence formation. In the lower part of the school, the majority of pupils use capital letters and full stops correctly and some use commas appropriately. The clear presentation enables pupils to read back their own work accurately and to identify mistakes. By the age of eleven, pupils have a secure knowledge of basic grammar and punctuation, which they incorporate well into their non-fiction writing. Use of paragraphs is less consistent. Where pupils are encouraged to develop their work, outcomes are good. In a high attaining Year 6 class, when pupils were taught to expand their original sentences with the use of adjectives, they demonstrated the ability to employ a wide range of words and produce imaginative sentences, for example: 'A rough skinned, light brown Tyrannosaurus Rex was sleeping in a remote area'. Pupils write for a suitable range of purposes and for different audiences, varying the style appropriately in most cases. Effective use of verbs and adjectives was observed in poetry writing in all years, but few examples of extended creative writing were seen in any year group. This remains an area for development.
78. Pupils with special educational needs and those at lower levels of English language proficiency benefit from the high levels of good quality support which they receive in class for writing and make steady progress. A minority requires more direct teaching of basic skills on a regular basis in order to improve their standard of written English, and this is a relative weakness.
79. Teaching is very good overall and this is driving standards up across the school. There is a very good work ethic in all classes which promotes high levels of productivity for all pupils. Teachers know their pupils' strengths and weaknesses very well so that the targets set for pupils with specific learning needs and higher attaining pupils are appropriate to their level of development, and serve to move them forward as a result attitudes to learning are very good. Pupils want to learn. They maintain good concentration during lessons and persevere with their work, trying hard to improve. They co-operate well in pairs and small group work, taking turns and listening to each other in a mature and sensible manner. Higher attaining pupils and those on the special educational needs register work energetically and make good progress within lessons.
80. Assessment procedures in reading and writing are rigorous, with the information from the termly tests used to guide the placement of pupils in one of four sets in each year group and to monitor their progress over time. Planning is a model of good practice, with lesson aims and lesson development clearly stated and followed by all teaching and support staff. Marking is up to date

and frequently carried out in class with useful feedback to pupils. The excellent teaching observed in the upper part of the school was characterised by very good subject knowledge, a brisk and purposeful teaching style which set the tone and motivated the pupils, very good pupil management based on respectful relationships and high expectations of what the pupils could achieve. Where teaching was judged to be satisfactory, there was a little time wasted in getting the lesson started, the pace was slow for some pupils and less effective pupil management strategies interrupted the learning of the majority.

81. The subject management team is very ably led by a senior member of staff who facilitates the contributions of her colleagues, and provides clear direction. The National Literacy Strategy has been modified to meet the particular needs of Thornton School and this is having a beneficial effect on standards. The curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced to provide a suitable range of learning experiences for all pupils. The literacy co-ordinator has a high level of expertise which has been invaluable to making improvements. Medium term plans and samples of lesson plans are monitored every week by the team leader and the literacy co-ordinator, who also observe lessons and provide very useful feedback to colleagues. This ensures a consistent teaching approach across each year group and across all learning sets. The drama and library co-ordinators ensure enriched learning experiences for the pupils, and the reading co-ordinator has been instrumental in increasing the pupils' motivation to succeed. Together they form a highly motivated team committed to improving standards of teaching and learning.

MATHEMATICS

82. Standards are similar to those observed at the previous inspection. Observations suggests that most pupils aged eleven, including those with English as an additional language, are likely to achieve standards that will be similar to the national average by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6. A few higher attaining pupils are likely to achieve above average standards. The school has yet to target more precisely the achievement of those who are likely to reach higher levels in National Curriculum tests. Managers are aware of the discrepancies between results in mathematics compared to English and science and are seeking ways to make necessary improvement. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and will achieve standards that are appropriate to their prior attainment.
83. Pupils are grouped effectively according to prior attainment for mathematics lessons. In Year 3, most pupils' count, read and write numbers from 0 to 1000 effectively. Higher attaining pupils understand number sequences, quickly spot the pattern and arrive at the right answer. For example, 29, 33, 37; answer 4. Lower attaining groups count on in 2's from 0 to 10 satisfactorily. Higher attaining pupils in Year 4 continue to develop their mental strategies, and recognise and extend number sequences in two and three digits well. Lower attaining pupils continue to practise number bonds to 10 and 20 effectively. They learn about odd and even numbers appropriately. Pupils enjoy the challenge in the introductory sessions and are keen to answer teachers' questions. The activity part of the lesson builds on pupils' number and measuring skills appropriately. Pupils are well behaved and get on with their work well. This has a positive impact on their learning.
84. Pupils in Year 5 extend successfully their knowledge of numbers. They are able to mentally calculate the difference between two numbers by counting up through the next multiple of 10 or 100 effectively, for example, 78 plus 2 equals 80; 80 plus 20 equals 100; 100 plus 40 equals 140. Pupils in Year 5 learn to recognise types of triangles and their attributes appropriately. They recognise lines of symmetry and use correct mathematical terms such as 'reflective' and 'congruent'. They work well with a variety of shapes to determine how many lines of symmetry each shape has. Lower attaining Year 6 pupils continue to develop and learn number strategies to 1000 appropriately, while higher attaining pupils learn effectively about the properties of rhombuses and parallelograms. They estimate fractions of metres and centimetres well. Pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons they behave well and try to do their best. Higher attaining pupils, pupils with special educational needs and those from the "Lodge" are supported very effectively. This helps them to achieve the standards that of which they are capable.

85. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers display and share the learning objectives effectively. Good teaching observed in mathematics lessons was characterised by the good planning and careful preparation of materials. Teachers ensure that all attainment targets are addressed appropriately. Lessons have appropriate pace and pupils enjoy the introductory sessions greatly; this extends pupils' learning and progress is appropriate for all groups of pupils. They manage pupils well and good classroom organisation ensures that little time is wasted in numeracy lessons. Teachers also ensure that pupils develop their mathematical skills well in other subjects such as science and ICT. Relationships are excellent; pupils and teachers work hard. In the upper school, where the quality of teaching is consistently good and sometimes very good, lessons move on at a very brisk pace, pupils are challenged to achieve well and learning is accelerated for all pupils. The very good support for pupils with special educational needs and those who learn English as an additional language, ensures that these pupils make the same progress as their class-mates.
86. Leadership and management of the subject are effective. All pupils are set according to prior attainment and this is successful in ensuring that the needs of all pupils are met. The National Numeracy Strategy is well established and is having a positive impact on both teaching and learning. There is coherent whole-school planning and provision. The co-ordinator has begun to monitor standards in all classes effectively. Much data is collected from statutory national testing and yearly non-statutory testing. This data is analysed to show where gains in pupils' learning are being made and used to good purpose. The new co-ordinator has a clear view of development in the subject and he leads improvement well. The school sets realistic targets for improvement and these have been consistently achieved year-on-year for the past three years. Pupils are offered extra opportunities to develop their mathematical skills in an after school club run by the co-ordinator and a colleague and this is a positive feature.

SCIENCE

87. Standards of attainment in National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-old pupils have been consistently well above average since 1997. The school's upward trend has been slightly better than the national trend since then. In 2000, 93 per cent of pupils gained the average Level 4 or above compared with 85 per cent nationally, and there was a similarly very positive picture in 2001 test results. Almost a half of the pupils gained the higher Level 5 and some Level 6, which is well above expectations for pupils of this age. This means that the school's overall performance in science tests ranks in the top 5 per cent when compared to similar schools. Inspection evidence judges that attainment is currently well above average and pupils' achievement is very good. This is a significant improvement since the time of the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be average overall. The school has set very challenging targets for 2002, with an expected 96 per cent of pupils to achieve Level 4 or above. The inspection team judges that the school is well on track to meet its targets.
88. Younger pupils have a good knowledge of life and living processes. Higher attaining pupils know what the function of the heart is, and that pulse is a measure of how fast the heart is beating. They locate the pulse in different parts of the body and realise that the heart beats faster after exercise. Their knowledge and understanding is better than expected for pupils of this age. Their well above average knowledge is also seen in other lessons such as design and technology, where pupils consider different food groups such as fats, proteins, carbohydrates, fruit and vegetables, when analysing sandwiches for their health qualities. Lower attaining pupils have knowledge and understanding that is at the nationally average expected level. They know that carbon dioxide is taken into the blood and that the heart circulates blood around the body. They have a secure grasp of the function of the heart at average levels for pupils at this age.
89. Work scrutiny and lesson observations show that this pattern of well above average achievement, with higher attaining pupils reaching well above expected levels for their age and lower attaining pupils reaching average levels, continues throughout Years 4, 5 and 6. At all ages, the majority of

pupils of average attainment reach above average levels against national expectations. There is no significant variation between the achievement of boys and girls.

90. Higher attaining pupils in Year 4 know that friction is a force that cannot be seen but acts upon the movement of objects. Their good knowledge and understanding enables them to work out that, where there is less friction there is less resistance and therefore more movement and also that the converse applies. Lower attaining pupils display wide knowledge of different types of forces such as magnetism, gravity, friction, pushes and pulls and upthrust. They can explain what these forces are and how they affect movement. Pupils in the upper sets in Year 5 know that light comes from both natural and man-made sources, and are able to name and identify a wide range of different sources such as glow worms, electric lights and the sun. Pupils in the lower sets can name a good variety of light sources, which they accurately classify into natural and man-made sources, giving suitable reasons for their choice. They are able to explain, for example, that the sun is a natural light source, but the moon is not and simply reflects the sun's light.
91. Pupils' knowledge is extended well, and by the end of Year 6, attainment, knowledge and understanding is set to be well above average. Pupils in the higher attaining sets know that we see things when light enters the eye. They talk competently about 'transparent, translucent' and 'opaque' materials, and name a number of examples in real life, such as glasses or tracing paper. Some are even able to extend this understanding and talk about air being transparent on a clear day, translucent when misty and almost opaque when the fog is thick or when it is filled with smoke. They know about the angles of reflection when light bounces off a mirror and that this principle can be used in periscopes. Lower attaining pupils know how shadows are created and that the distance of the object from the light source alters the size of the shadow. Through the investigations they carry out, they are able to formulate general rules.
92. At all levels, pupils develop very good observational and investigative skills. From the beginning of the key stage, all pupils develop a very secure understanding of the conditions for fair testing. Pupils in Year 5, for example, are able to devise a test to show that light travels in straight lines and then explain the results of their tests, by making and then analysing their predictions. Numeracy and literacy skills are developed well in science. Younger pupils accurately count their partners pulse rate. They develop good investigative, observational and measurement skills. Each pupil has a science vocabulary book, in which they build their own glossary of scientific terms. Although there is some appropriate ICT software for research, there was little evidence of the use of this to record and display results of investigations. This is an area for development.
93. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Lessons are well organised and move at a brisk pace, ensuring pupils' rate of learning is maximised. Teachers have very good management of pupils. They encourage very good behaviour and hard work and enable pupils to develop very good attitudes to school and work. Teachers use questioning very effectively, directing questions well and ensuring that all pupils are involved in the lesson. Interesting activities stimulate pupils' interest and enthusiasm for learning and supports pupils' achievement to good effect. Teachers usually provide a good balance of teacher and pupil activity, which keeps pupils actively involved and interested, and develops investigative skills well and gives good opportunity for both investigation and for the development of knowledge. However, sometimes lessons provide pupils with insufficient chance to investigate and to have first hand experience. For example, when investigating friction as a force that restricts movement, pupils were not given the opportunity to try out the experiment for themselves, but sat as passive observers rather than active investigators. In other classes however, pupils were given very good opportunities to devise their own investigations. This is an area for development. There is a science club, which focuses on the higher attaining pupils and effectively moves them forward at a very good pace. This means that the achievement of all pupils is very good.
94. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. They respond well with good levels of interest and enthusiasm. High levels of concentration supports their very good levels of learning well. Their very good personal development supports learning very effectively. Pupils work well in collaboration with others and get on with their tasks well. There are very good relationships

between pupils, and between pupils and adults, and pupils co-operate well with each other and respectfully listen to each others' views.

95. Leadership of the subject is good. The co-ordinator is new to the role and has already made a good start in improving the subject even further. There is a good quality curriculum, which is enriched to good effect by the science club, for example. This ensures that pupils at all levels of attainment are given equal opportunities to make very good progress. Good quality assessment procedures are used very well to ensure that work is accurately targeted on pupils' attainment.

ART AND DESIGN

96. Standards were reported to be high in the previous inspection. Now, although satisfactory the art curriculum has suffered to some extent from the added emphasis given to literacy and numeracy. Observations during the inspection indicate that the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, are likely to achieve the expected standards by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6. Some pupils' work is of a high standard for example, pupils in Year 6 who were working on atmospheric perspectives, produced high quality backgrounds for their pictures.
97. Pupils in Year 3 designed and made a printing block that produced a repeating pattern appropriately. Pupils are confident and eager to start their work. They refine their designs effectively as their work progresses. Pupils are proud of their work. Other pupils in Year 3 worked productively on portraits using half a face as a starting point and using symmetry to guide them in completing the face. Many pupils found it difficult, but a few produced very good results which captured the "feel" of people's faces well. Pupils in Year 4 continue to develop repeating patterns satisfactorily when making clay pots. Higher attaining pupils work purposefully and productively. Most pupils are self-critical and refine their work as it proceeds. All pupils show enjoyment and pride in what they create and this has a positive impact on the standards they achieve.
98. Good links with literacy were created in Year 5 where pupils discussed and compared the styles of Lowry and Dali. Their artistic vocabularies were extended well. Pupils used postcards illustrating the work of Lowry and Dali to work in the style of one or other of these artists. A few pupils produced some very effective sketches. In a very good Year 6 lesson, pupils selected their materials well and were enthusiastic about their work, producing some high quality backgrounds that suggested mood and movement very effectively. The enthusiastic teaching motivated pupils to achieve their best. Pupils' attitudes to art are good. They enjoy the lessons and are keen to participate and do as well as they can.
99. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Planning is effective. Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils and they manage and organise classes well. Where the teaching is good or very good pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good or very good progress because they are challenged and stimulated to aim high
100. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory overall. The school has usefully adopted and adapted the new government guidelines for art and design and by following them, ensures that pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are taught effectively. The school has developed appropriate long-term planning for each year group and this ensures appropriate coverage for all pupils. All pupils have sketchpads in which they can draw and refine their work to good effect. The very recently appointed co-ordinator has not yet had the opportunity to evaluate teaching and learning, but monitors the work displayed around the school and discusses with colleagues any issues that arise. Co-ordination of display is very effective. Displays in classrooms and around the school are bright and attractive, providing a stimulating and informative learning environment. Pupils' work is displayed carefully which helps to promote their self esteem and celebrate achievement. Some work of artists from different cultures is displayed appropriately. This has a positive impact on pupils' social and cultural development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

101. By the age of eleven, pupils achieve standards that meet the expectations for their age. All pupils, including those with special educational needs or with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress in design and technology and are being provided with worthwhile experiences in all aspects of the subject. This represents a good rate of improvement since the previous inspection, when significant criticisms were made of both standards and provision. Standards have improved, there is now a well-planned curriculum, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, and was good in the lessons observed during the inspection. The leadership of design and technology is well focused on where improvement lies and the inspection team judges that there is sound capacity for sustaining the good rate of improvement in the future.
102. Teachers place a correct emphasis on the designing element of design and technology. This ensures that pupils of all abilities reach satisfactory standards in the development of their skills in planning and evaluating their designs. This was clearly apparent in Year 4 when the pupils looked at a range of pencil cases bought in a shop and expressed what they liked and what they didn't like about them. Based on their observations, pupils then designed a pencil case and took into account what they wanted the case to hold. Pupils in Year 3 show good skills in investigating and observing different parts of a sandwich. Using scientific knowledge well, they give good evaluations of a product and this gives them ideas about their own sandwiches, which they are about to design as the next stage in the topic.
103. Pupils in Year 5 are using paper mechanics to design and build pop-up cards. They have designed their models and are currently in the process of building them. Their models will include dolphins jumping out of the sea and owls popping out of trees and as yet, are of a satisfactory standard. These same pupils also studied fairground rides and made their own ferris wheels, which moved and the seats remained upright throughout the ride. They used a good range of materials and different ways of joining the parts. The models were of a sound standard and some, particularly of the higher attaining pupils, were of a good quality. Pupils in Year 6 are currently making a 'steady hand game'. Some are making boxes using frame joints from wood. Their measuring skills are accurate and the wood is cut well to size, resulting in an accurate cube in which to fit the circuit. Others use good science knowledge to create and investigate different circuits that are appropriate for the steady hand game. In their investigations they use switches to divert the power and buzzers.
104. There is evidence of other work in which pupils use a range of construction kits to experiment in the early stages. They design a meal for specific festivals, such as Christmas and Eid. Throughout all their work, the evaluation, design, making and appraising processes are complete.
105. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, although much of the teaching seen in the lessons seen during the inspection was good. This ensures that pupils of all abilities build on their developing skills and apply them effectively to their work. Pupils enjoy their work in design and technology. They talk about it with interest and enthusiasm and are keen to show their work. Relationships between pupils are good. This promotes a sense of purpose and co-operation to their work. Teachers ensure that pupils have opportunities to experiment with materials and discuss problems they have met. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers' insistence on accurate measurement and planning provide an effective link between work in mathematics and science and design and technology. Pupils at all levels of attainment, including pupils with English as an additional language or with special educational needs, have equal access to the design and technology curriculum. All pupils work within sets and the work is appropriately targeted to their needs. This is effective in raising their self-esteem. Lessons are well organised and pupils are given good opportunities to work collaboratively or individually. Teachers plan good opportunities to develop their evaluation and testing of appropriate parts of their finished models
106. The leadership of design and technology is effective. Little opportunity has so far been provided for the co-ordinator to observe lessons and this is a key issue for the school to address. Teachers' are

assessing how well pupils learn in their lessons and at the end of each year their assessments are passed onto the next teacher as part of the pupils' record of achievement. This is a useful feature. Resources are good and support a wide range of experiences.

GEOGRAPHY

107. By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve standards in geography that are at the expected level and they make satisfactory progress in learning about the different aspects of the subject. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were sometimes below average, and when progress was unsatisfactory. The improvements are due to a clear and structured development plan and the hard work of the previous co-ordinator. The new co-ordinator is being ably supported by the previous one, so that the steady progress that the school has made should be maintained.
108. In Year 3, pupils undertake a study of the local area. They become involved in the local 'Kingfisher Project', in which they study the effect of pollution on the local river. They have undertaken simple surveys, such as a traffic survey, which they have displayed as graphs using information technology. They have discussed the different way in which they travel to school as they study local maps. In Year 4, pupils have undertaken a study of the city of York. Linking it with a history topic, they have described the different features of the city today and in times past. They have looked at the various reasons why the environment has changed, and the effects of pollution and building programmes on the current city. In Year 5, pupils undertake research and begin to develop their geographical understanding of the usefulness of certain man-made projects to the communities that they serve. For example, they have studied the effects of the Aswan dam, asking questions about its feasibility, usefulness and effect on the local community. They have also been looking at the different habitats needed to set up a wildlife garden at the school. In Year 6, pupils undertake an in-depth study of the island of St Lucia. They study land use, draw simple maps, and recognise why certain features have led to the development of ports, towns and buildings. They offer appropriate explanations for different aspects of life on the island, and discuss the economic importance of the main crop, bananas. They show that they are beginning to understand wider geographical locations, and use vocabulary well to develop their discussions. Pupils' geographical knowledge is developing appropriately across the key stage. Enquiry skills are weaker due to lack of opportunity to undertake research using ICT.
109. The quality of teaching in geography is satisfactory, with some good teaching where teachers have good subject knowledge and make good use of resources. For example, in one Year 6 lesson, pupils made good gains in learning about the reasons for the development of the capital city of St Lucia, because the teacher provided good pictorial resources and maps so that they could undertake their own research. They were able to recognise the need for employment, shelter and food, and could describe the effects of these on the development of the city. The good resources had a positive impact on learning. Teachers manage pupils very well and organise groups effectively so that the best use is made of the available time. Appropriate use is made of local resources, such as the park and the local shops. Good provision is made for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. The high level of support that these pupils receive in lessons helps them to follow the lesson and learn appropriately. Teachers make too little use of computers and ICT to enable pupils to find out information for themselves.
110. Leadership of geography has recently changed, but the planning and organisation of the subject are secure. Good support is being provided for the new co-ordinator. Resources are good, easily accessible and well used in lessons. The curriculum offers an appropriate range of activities to support learning. Assessment is at an early stage of development, and is under-used in most lessons. The lack of Internet access is a weakness that the school is rightly beginning to address. The lack of monitoring of teaching and learning is a weakness, and too few steps have been taken to evaluate training and learning needs. This is a key issue for the school to address.

HISTORY

111. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection at a satisfactory level. Pupils make slow but steady progress in the lower school and satisfactory progress in the upper school in developing skills of historical enquiry and in gaining historical knowledge and understanding. By

the age of eleven, most pupils are attaining the expected level of work. Pupils with special educational needs and those with limited English language skills receive appropriate support to participate fully in lessons.

112. In Year 3, pupils understand that the passing of time produces change. They make simple comparisons between objects used in the past and present and they demonstrate an emerging sense of chronology. Pupils with limited English vocabulary find it difficult to recognise and name unfamiliar objects that are outside their experience. Pupils consider change from a personal perspective. A patch-work quilt of memories produced by the pupils effectively recorded changes in their own lives over time. Year 4 pupils can locate the period they are studying on a time line and, with help, can identify which events occurred first. They understand that the Romans, Anglo-Saxons and Vikings were invaders and with prompting, can explain what this means. When looking at the different styles of dress for each period, pupils were able to suggest some of the reasons, for example the differences in climate in the countries from which the invaders came. They are at an early stage of learning how to look for information from different sources. Pupils have difficulty in remembering new vocabulary so that they need much prompting and reminding in order to move forward in their learning. Progress in the lower school is slow but steady for all pupils.
113. In the upper part of the school standards are satisfactory and sometimes good. Here pupils develop their knowledge and understanding through techniques such as 'hot seating' when they role play characters from Ancient Greece and make comparisons between the great city states of the time. In Year 5, pupils formulate appropriate questions to extend their understanding. The majority of pupils have satisfactory recall of earlier learning and can explain why the military was so important in Greek society. They are able to suggest a range of sources of evidence from which they might find out about the life in Ancient Greece, but are uncertain about the differences between primary and secondary sources. Year 6 pupils produce satisfactory pen portraits of Henry VIII, demonstrating the ability to investigate a variety of sources such as paintings from the period. Written accounts of life under the Tudors are, however, brief and do not extend the higher attaining pupils.
114. Pupils are keen to talk about history. Younger pupils enjoy role play and dressing up in clothes from the period which stimulates their interest to find out more but the majority have limited recall of past learning upon which to build their knowledge and understanding. Older pupils also participate enthusiastically in role play and contribute well to discussion. They work well in small groups, sharing resources and helping each other.
115. Teaching is satisfactory overall with examples of very good practice. Lesson planning is good and most lessons are well prepared. Where teaching is very good, the teacher demonstrates sound subject knowledge and enthusiasm so that the pace of teaching and learning is brisk, with all pupils suitably challenged by the work. Where teaching is just satisfactory, the work is beyond the knowledge of most pupils who require high levels of teacher intervention to succeed. This slows the pace and has a negative effect on pupils' confidence. Some teachers usefully incorporate a multi-cultural dimension into their planning, but this is not yet a consistent feature of teaching. Teachers' assess pupils' progress and attainment in history at the end of the year and information is passed onto the next teacher to help guide pupils' learning. There is less consistent use of assessment to inform teachers' planning in history, and this is a missed opportunity.
116. The subject is satisfactorily led at present by a new co-ordinator who has good subject knowledge and has a clear vision of where to take this subject in the future. Monitoring of medium term plans and samples of work enable the co-ordinator to have an overview of the subject, but the development of a portfolio of work to monitor standards is at an early stage of development. There has been no direct observation of teaching and learning to assist in the raising of standards. Resources are satisfactory but there is a shortage of artefacts to support learning. The curriculum is broad and balanced with a suitable focus on developing pupils' knowledge and skills through historical enquiry. History days when the whole year group focus on a particular aspect of history are very effective in extending the curriculum and establishing useful cross-curricular links. The

delivery of the curriculum has been affected by the school's decision to focus on the core curriculum so that pupils learn history once a fortnight. This appears to be having a negative impact on the younger pupils' recall of earlier learning. Also, the sequence of the periods taught across the school is confusing for many pupils whose grasp of chronology is insecure.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

117. Standards in ICT are below the expected level for eleven-year-olds. This is a similar picture to that at the previous inspection. However, there have been many improvements in the provision and it is an improving subject. The new suite is a real strength; problems yet to be resolved centre around the move from class-based teaching and learning to the timetabled use of the suite. Aspects of ICT have yet to be fully resourced. The school is aware of all of these issues and has a sensible action plan set up to drive improvement at a good pace. Nevertheless, ICT is a key issue for the school to address.
118. Although standards remain below average, this is because the new suite of computers is very new, and the past lack of facilities to teach a whole class has had an impact on learning. The quality of learning is sound overall. Pupils across the school make satisfactory progress in ICT. They are benefiting from the good quality new computers, and from well-structured lessons, which are helping them to make appropriate gains in learning. For example, pupils in Year 3 are beginning to use a word processing package appropriately. The highest attaining pupils in the year group can change font sizes, colour and style, independently. They produce good quality work. Lower attaining pupils can use the mouse appropriately to make a choice, enter and save their work. Although their skills are below those expected, they show that they are improving by asking questions and practising the skill that they are trying to achieve.
119. In Year 4, pupils use their own disks to save their work. In one lesson observed, pupils were learning to edit lists from a prior literacy lesson. The highest attainers were able to cut and paste sentences to make a sensible list of instructions. Lower attaining pupils were able to load their task, save it, and exchange ideas. Pupils enjoy talking about their work and have positive attitudes and behave well. They treat the new resources with respect. Pupils in Year 5 were observed using a spreadsheet to plan a party for five people. They made good use of technical vocabulary as they copied the teacher, and had a secure grasp about the facilities of the program that they were using. They benefited from confident teaching and good quality support.
120. Pupils in Year 5 have also used an art package to create covers for their own story-books. Higher attaining pupils in Year 5 attain broadly average standards as they work together to complete given tasks. They confidently follow straightforward lines of enquiry, and share information with each other. Lower attaining pupils are catching up fast and, although they still require high levels of support, they are growing in confidence.
121. In Year 6, pupils were observed using Microsoft Office to learn about percentages in mathematics. They were keen and eager to start working and were able to input information accurately into a spreadsheet. The highest attaining Year 6 pupils show emerging understanding of the need for care in framing questions and following instructions. They were able to add to and correct their own work, and made good progress in skill during the lesson. Lower attaining pupils in Year 6 undertake similar tasks and achieve appropriately due to good support.
122. The quality of teaching in ICT is satisfactory overall and often good in lessons. It is very good when taught by the co-ordinator. At these times, pupils make good gains in learning due to extensive teacher knowledge and understanding. For example, in the best lessons observed, very good, sharp introductions and demonstrations, enlarged for all to see, provide a clear focus for the lesson. Effective questioning encourages pupils to think carefully about what they have learned, and helps them to understand the next step. Well-focused guidance by the teachers leads to pupils' confidence growing and their willingness to 'have a go' developed. In less successful lessons, teachers lack the skills and necessary knowledge to fully teach the tasks. Demonstrations are

unclear and all pupils cannot always see these demonstrations. Lessons are often too short for all pupils to have a turn, and together these shortcomings have an impact on standards and inhibit progress.

123. Leadership of the subject is good. The newly established suite is having a positive impact on raising standards, and the good practice of monitoring lessons is helping to improve the quality of teaching and learning. There are occasions when the timing of lessons is inappropriate. For example, a planned, half-hour lesson is unsatisfactory because of the time it takes to move to and from the suite. In these lessons not all pupils have time for a turn, and teachers do not have sufficient time to demonstrate the tasks adequately. The use of computers to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs is sometimes weak. Also, the use of ICT to support other subjects has not been sufficiently rigorous, and not all staff are aware of how this can be achieved. In some classes, not enough time is allocated to the subject to enable sufficient improvements to take place. ICT is not always used well enough to support pupils' learning across the curriculum.

MUSIC

124. Standards in music are broadly in line with the expected level with good features. This is a similar picture to that found at the time of the previous inspection. The range of extra-curricular music activities have been enhanced considerably since then however, they are a real strength and are helping to raise standards significantly. Singing is sweet, enthusiastic and tuneful. Pupils show expression and enjoyment in singing and it was observed to be uplifting.
125. Pupils in Year 3 achieve broadly average standards as they use hand signs to control the playing of simple instruments, and as they sing expressively during hymn practice. They take turns well as they design their own signs, listen carefully and refine their playing. They are beginning to recognise how sounds can be organised and changed to create a simple piece. They organise their own groups and perform sensibly. The Year 4 pupils were observed using simple percussion to create a piece of 'water music'. They worked in small groups to compose their own pieces with a simple beginning, middle and end. They enjoyed experimenting, exploring and creating music, achieving appropriate standards for their age. In Year 5, pupils responded very well to different kinds of music. Their ability to explain the differences showed that they had listened carefully. They were able to analyse the mood and tempo of pieces of music from different countries. They were able to identify, for example, that the guitar was keeping the rhythm in one piece, and leading the melody in another. They listened attentively to the quality of sounds and noticed differences in musical elements. Pupils in Year 6 enjoy all kinds of music-making. In one lesson, they were observed performing and refining simple percussion pieces which they had previously composed. They were able to combine different sounds expressively and suggest to each other how improvements could be made. Standards across the school are supported by the numerous clubs after school time. For example, all year groups have the opportunity to learn to play the recorder, or sing in the choir. At these times, pupils enjoy themselves and learn many new skills. They improve their performance significantly as they practice regularly, and learn about notation and presentation as well as the musical elements of pitch and tempo.
126. The quality of teaching in music is good overall, with examples of very good teaching where teacher's knowledge and skill are of high quality. In the best lessons, teachers plan well, with detailed clear steps to ensure progress. They use very good subject-specific vocabulary and move lessons along at a brisk pace. At these times, pupils respond and behave very well and make good gains in learning. For example, in one lesson, the very high quality of the teaching was characterised by a supportive attitude in which the teacher and pupils evaluated playing skills together, so that further improvements could be identified. Where lessons are carefully organised, so that the best use is made of time and resources, pupils learn well. They are then enabled to have the maximum learning time available to develop their musical skills. Less successful lessons occur when too much time is taken giving out instruments and organising groups. This reduces the time that pupils can play or sing.

127. Leadership of music is good. The co-ordinator shares expertise well and promotes confidence by teaching alongside other teachers. This represents good practice and is helping to improve teachers' skills and confidence. There is a clear overview of provision, and staff work very hard to provide the good musical clubs. Resources are well used to support learning and are of good quality. They are well organised and easily accessible. Too little use is made of ICT, however, to support music, and there are too few opportunities for pupils to hear real musicians, or take part in music-making activities with pupils from other schools.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

128. At the end of Year 6, when pupils leave the school, standards of physical education (PE) are below the expected national level and pupils' learning is unsatisfactory. During the inspection, standards observed in gymnastics and games throughout the school were below the expected level, standards and progress in swimming were satisfactory for Years 3 and 4, and no judgement was possible for dance (which is scheduled for next term), where no evidence of standards was offered by the school. This is a similar situation to the previous inspection, which found standards and progress to be less than satisfactory. Therefore, there has been no improvement in PE, which was identified as a key issue in the last inspection and as this is still a key issue for the school to address.
129. This is a disappointing situation for the school, and is caused by three major factors. Firstly, the hoped for new school hall has been persistently delayed for several years, although the school has been assiduously building a substantial financial reserve to fund its construction. The unsatisfactory state of the present hall, which is in a poor state of decoration, and contains a considerable amount of lunchtime furniture, occupying 25 per cent of floor space, not only is a safety hazard for pupils, but also a hindrance to the development of better standards. Secondly the standards of PE on entry in Year 3 are below those expected, because pupils have low experience of physical activity and a significant number are physically unfit. This is the case throughout the whole school. Thirdly, the leadership and management of the subject has shown insufficient urgency in finding strategies to improve standards, which is unsatisfactory. The recently appointed co-ordinator has yet to make the necessary progress in these areas, although she has helped to improve the provision of after school games clubs, which is now good. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported, and although standards are similarly below national expectation, their progress is satisfactory.
130. Pupils in Year 3 can devise simple rolling and balancing movements on benches and mats, and understand the need for safe handling of equipment. All pupils in Years 3 and 4 understand the rules for safety in water; there is a wide range of standards in swimming in these year groups, from at least 25% non swimmers to a smaller percentage who can swim at least 25 metres using a stylish backstroke. Due to constraints of space, some pupils in larger groups have to spend some time waiting their turn in the water. Most pupils in Year 4 can throw accurately small balls and bean bags to each other from about 1 to 2 metres away, but find difficulty catching when throwing them in the air. Some pupils can devise short balancing sequences on apparatus, although their landings are often careless. Pupils in Year 5 have well developed ideas on safe movement, understanding the effects of jumps on their backs and knees. They are always eager to demonstrate their versions of 'star jumps' and in one entertaining example, a 'backward hop/jump'. The quality of their creations, though, is generally below that expected for their age. Some Year 5 pupils show satisfactory levels of movement in offensive, defensive strategies, dodging and marking. Year 6 pupils know how to warm up independently and safely in a cramped environment, listen carefully to instructions, and a majority can pass a ball by hand into a space indicated by a partner. A significant number, though are inaccurate or have little spatial awareness.
131. Although standards are unsatisfactory, all teachers observed worked very hard to help pupils improve. Most have a good subject knowledge, plan carefully and have very good relationships with the pupils; as a result, teaching in lessons is always satisfactory and sometimes good. The main weaknesses of the teaching, are the constraints teachers feel in working in the hall, and the

lack of expectation of their ability to improve standards due to these constraints. As a consequence they are, as yet, insufficiently demanding in the need for higher quality skills development.

132. The pupils themselves, greatly enjoy their opportunities for physical activity. They listen well, work cheerfully and are very sociable in their group and paired work. A significant number, though, see participation in PE as a 'fun' activity rather than an opportunity to improve their physical skills. A considerable number become easily tired, apparently, and cannot sustain vigorous activity for very long. During most lessons, several pupils on occasion would indicate some slight injury and were 'sidelined' for a few minutes with no apparent discomfort. Some pupils frequently forget their PE kit and are allowed to 'sit out' the lesson. Non-participating pupils often do very little during the lesson as their work targets are insufficiently focussed. The school has a fully inclusive policy for PE, although a small minority of pupils choose to exclude themselves on occasion by feigning tiredness during lessons and requiring time out.
133. In order to improve standards, the school should endeavour to raise the expectations of both pupils and teachers, ensure, with the support of the LEA, that the promised new hall is constructed as a matter of urgency, work with parents to improve the overall fitness and health awareness of pupils, and encourage and support a more dynamic and demanding leadership of the subject development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

134. By the age of eleven, pupils attain standards in RE that are in line with those expected by the Locally Agreed Syllabus. In this respect the school has maintained its position since the last inspection. Pupils study the world faiths of Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism alongside Christianity in line with the scheme of work as set out by the Locally Agreed Syllabus. This gives them good insights into the faith and beliefs of others and is a contributing factor to the very tolerant and respectful attitudes pupils show to one another.
135. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs and those who learn English as an additional language, make good progress. As a result of the good support that they receive from learning support assistants, and the different work set to meet their needs, they achieve in line with that of the rest of their class mates. Challenging work is set for the higher achieving pupils that extends their learning equally well. There is no discernable difference in the progress of girls or boys.
136. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good with some examples of very good attitudes and behaviour. For example, in a lesson observed in Year 5 on fundamental moral questions, pupils listened to each other with respect; sustained concentration, listened attentively and responded enthusiastically.
137. Pupils in Year 3 are introduced to the main elements of Christianity and explore their own ideas and beliefs about God. In one Year 4 lesson, pupils learned about the world in which Mohammed lived as they re-enacted an aspect of life during those times through role-play. In a different Year 4 lesson, the teacher took the pupils on a vivid virtual walk of life in Ancient Arabia as they learned about the world in which Abraham lived and considered the implications of the different beliefs held during these times. In Year 5, pupils make effective use of drama to reflect on fundamental moral questions and relate the work to their own circumstances. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher made good use of artefacts to assist pupils' understanding of the importance of the 5 'K's to the Sikh faith. This was a useful way of describing and explaining how people show their beliefs and how others should show respect for the beliefs and customs that may be different to their own.
138. The quality of teaching is good and this enables pupils who are coming from a low starting point in literacy to achieve average satisfactory. Planning is detailed and well focussed. The pace of lessons is brisk. Teaching is confident and well informed. Lessons have a good structure to enable the pupils to attain the high standards set by the teachers. One lesson observed was unsatisfactory because behaviour management was not effective and this impeded the rate at which pupils

learned. This is the exception to the otherwise very positive picture that reflects both teaching and learning in RE.

139. Pupils make good progress over time. In Year 3 they are still only just beginning to identify aspects of their own experience and feelings. They have misconceptions as to whether there is a difference between religion, fairies and magic. By Year 6 pupils not only show a good knowledge and understanding of other faiths and beliefs, but also are able show an understanding of the ways that people show that they belong to different religions. They are able to use the examples of the 5 Ks from Sikhism to make links their own and other people's ideas. The learning in lessons seen was good. As a result of the teacher's vivid portrayal of the life and times of Abraham for example, pupils in Year 4 were able to re-enact the events in the story with confidence and expression, and were keen to recount their new found learning.
140. There is a newly appointed subject manager who has good subject knowledge, enthusiasm and application. So far, she has had too little opportunity to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning across the school to be influential in promoting the best practice that will lead to increased standards in RE. Teachers assess pupils' progress in RE at various times and pass on this information to the next teacher at the end of the year. There is little use of assessment to chart pupils' on-going progress in RE or in literacy skills development for example. These are missed opportunities and as such key issues for the school to address.