

INSPECTION REPORT

ST PATRICK'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bircotes, Doncaster

LEA area: Nottinghamshire

Unique reference number: 122816

Headteacher: Mrs S McDermott

Reporting inspector: A C Davies
3639

Dates of inspection: 4-6th June 2001

Inspection number: 194419

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Whitehouse Road
Bircotes

Postcode: Doncaster
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Telephone number: 01302 743145

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Rev Fr. J H Jackson

Date of previous inspection: December 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3639	A C Davies	Registered inspector	Mathematics Science Information and Communication Technology Physical Education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and achievements. How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
19426	C Ferris	Lay inspector		How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with its parents?
27777	R Greenall	Team inspector	Special Education Needs Equal Opportunities English Art and Design Design and Technology Geography History Music	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Patrick's is a small Catholic primary school situated in the mining village of Bircotes on the outskirts of Doncaster. It serves the parish of Harworth and draws pupils from the three villages of Bircotes, Harworth and Styrrup. Ninety-five pupils, grouped into three classes, attend. The school has set-up an early years class which most children attend before they start school. The immediate area has high levels of unemployment, resulting in an above average number of pupils being entitled to school meals free of charge. Two pupils have English as an additional language. Nearly half of the pupils are on the special educational needs register which is well above the national average. When they first start school the vast majority of pupils have academic and personal skills which are below that expected for their age. The school does not have a hall large enough for all pupils to sit-in comfortably and there are no opportunities for indoor physical education to take place.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving school where the strengths just outweigh the weaknesses but it does now have the capacity to improve still further. Standards remain low but there are systems already in place to help the school ensure that most pupils are achieving appropriately. Teaching is satisfactory but is not having the impact on pupils' learning that it should. The relatively new headteacher has worked hard to give added importance to raising standards. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher has been successful in raising the staff's aspirations and has put in place many new ideas to help the staff raise standards.
- Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported and this is helping them to make good progress in their work.
- The behaviour of pupils in lessons and at lunchtimes is good.
- The school's decision to fund an 'early years' group is helping young children start school feeling more confident and being better prepared for school life.
- There is good attention given to pupils' personal education as well as ensuring that they have a strong sense of spirituality.

What could be improved

- A significant number of older, more able pupils, do not achieve their full potential.
- Pupils' spoken vocabulary is limited and this adversely affects their ability to write in an interesting and exciting way.
- Pupils' response to mental mathematics is not brisk enough nor is their ability to solve mathematical problems.
- Teachers do not follow up the remarks they make on pupils' work well enough, allowing the same errors to occur time after time.
- Pupils' work is often presented in an untidy way with little sense of care or pride evident.

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 December 1996 and it has made satisfactory progress since that time. The school has gone through a difficult period in the past few years but there is every indication that it is now improving. The many staff changes that have

occurred, together with recruitment difficulties, have resulted in the school experiencing difficulties. Standards are still too low and teaching is not having enough impact on pupils' learning, especially the more able. However, the new headteacher has helped the staff to pull together to improve pupils' working habits. The main issues identified at the time of the previous inspection have been dealt with but have had limited impact on the standards being attained by the pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are now better provided for. The curriculum is planned more effectively enabling work that is carried-out in one class to be developed appropriately in the next.

STANDARDS

The school has relatively small numbers taking the national tests for 7 and 11 year olds and it is therefore difficult to use national comparisons to work-out how well the school is doing. However, standards of work seen in classrooms are low with the older, more able pupils, in particular, underachieving. In the past two years there are too few 7 and 11-year-old pupils attaining beyond the levels expected for their age in the national tests. There is also a very large number failing to attain the level expected for their age. The present Year 2 and Year 6 pupils show signs of some improvement but there remain concerns about the standards attained in English. The school did not meet its targets for the past two years but there is every indication that they will for the current year.

There is a very large percentage of pupils (almost 50 per cent) in each group that is identified with special educational needs. These pupils make good progress but, as a result, the needs of the more able pupils are sometimes not appropriately addressed. When they first start school pupils have poorly developed personal and social skills. There is satisfactory progress made in the first few years at school but pupils' poor speaking and, to a slightly lesser extent, listening skills are stopping them making more headway in English. Similarly, pupils' poor literacy skills are preventing them understanding mathematical problems when presented in a written form. By the time they are 11 standards are well below average in English and below average in mathematics. Standards in most other subjects are badly affected by the pupils' poor written skills. There has been, however, rapid improvement in information and communication technology due to the effective link the school has forged with the local secondary school.

CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Most pupils are keen to learn but there are a few in each class who need motivating.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are mostly polite and well mannered and this is seen at its best during playtimes and in the dining hall.
Personal development and relationships	Good. There is very effective links made between older and younger pupils. This is giving older pupils a sense of responsibility, which they use positively.
Attendance	Well below average. Too many parents do not ensure that pupils arrive on time and, in too many cases, pupils are allowed to stay at home when they could be at school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	satisfactory	satisfactory	satisfactory

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

The school has undergone a difficult period with many staff changes having occurred very recently. The overall position is that teaching is largely satisfactory but with limited impact being made on pupils' learning. Teaching is good in 22 per cent of lessons, satisfactory in 71 per cent and unsatisfactory in 7 per cent. The unsatisfactory teaching represents two lessons taught by a temporary teacher.

There is a contrast between the way pupils with special educational needs are well supported and the lack of challenge that sometimes exists for older, more able pupils. The added concentration that is necessary to deal with the pupils who have learning difficulties sometimes results in more able pupils not working hard enough. During literacy lessons, the failure to have a method of dealing with the pupils' poor speaking skills is resulting in written work being badly affected. This, together with the pupils' untidy presentation, is not helping pupils make the necessary progress in their English work. In mathematics, there is often a lack of appropriate pace to the mental and oral session at the beginning of the lesson, resulting in pupils not having a sense of urgency about their work.

Pupils do not have enough knowledge about what they need to do in order to improve their work. Teachers do not ensure that remarks made in pupils' books have an impact on their future work. There are times when the attitudes of more able pupils are not aiding their learning. A few older pupils who have the potential to do better are therefore not reaching their full potential. There is better teaching in the first class with pupils being provided with the necessary practical tasks to help them learn by direct experience.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Although pupils are provided with a full curriculum, the impact of pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy is limited in other subjects. There are good links established with the local secondary school to enable pupils to have access to good provision for information and communication technology and physical education.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Good. This is one of the school's strengths with good support provided for these pupils in each of the three classes. Good use is made of specialist classroom support to help in this respect.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. There is good effort made to help pupils understand what is, and is not, acceptable by way of their behaviour. There are good friendship groups established with pupils of different age groups playing well together. Pupils' spiritual awareness is helped by the good attention given to spirituality in lessons as well as in assemblies.
How well the school cares for its children	There are good procedures in place to help pupils behave well and to raise their awareness of the needs of others. Although there are satisfactory systems in place to check on the academic progress made by individuals, more could be done to

	share this type of information with the pupils.
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The parents feel positive about the school and appreciate the range of information that comes to them about the events that are happening in the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The new headteacher is beginning to make an impact on the way the school is working. She uses the school's mission statement and aims to focus on areas requiring improvement very effectively. Her friendly manner and approach to staff is helping them to be open to changes and to work to a common goal.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are prepared to work very hard to improve the provision for pupils. They have named governors for many areas of the curriculum and do check on the school's performance by analysing test results. They also use local information and knowledge to good effect to help them in their role.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The new headteacher analyses test results and other information effectively. There is also regular and helpful checking on the quality of teaching taking place. All staff are provided with clear information that is enabling them to improve.
The strategic use of resources	The school has decided to continue to use money to fund an 'early years' group for children of pre-school age. This, together with the use of money allocated to support pupils with special educational needs, is evidence of the school thinking about the best ways to improve overall standards.

There is adequate staffing for this small school. However, there have been problems in recruiting teachers in the recent past. This has left the school in a difficult position with some classes being taken by a number of temporary teachers before a permanent member of staff was appointed. The accommodation is very limited. As a result, the school has to rely heavily on the local secondary school to provide appropriately for physical education and information and communication technology. Learning resources are broadly adequate for most subjects.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That children enjoy coming to school. • That children have to work hard at school. • The teaching is good. • The children make good progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The homework arrangements. • The information they receive about how well their children are getting on. • The range of extra-curricular activities available to the children. • The school working more closely with parents.

Only one parent attended the pre-inspection meeting although nearly half returned the questionnaire that was sent out. The parents are accurate in their reflection that most children enjoy coming to school. However, a significant few children do not work hard enough. The teaching is mostly satisfactory and children with learning difficulties make good progress. However, more able children do not always achieve their full potential. Homework arrangements are satisfactory and the range of extra curricular activities is good. The school has tried to work more closely with parents and have done everything that can be reasonably expected to involve them more fully. The school provides

appropriate information to parents about the way their children are getting on and the inspection team disagrees with parents who feel this aspect is not adequate.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 The number of pupils in each year group is very small and it is not appropriate for using the national comparatives only as a true measure of how well the school performs. This is confirmed by the high levels of variation seen in the national test results for 11-year-olds. The fluctuation indicated by these is very extreme. For example, in 1998 pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science were very high in comparison with the national average. In 1999 and 2000 the school's results were well below average or very low by comparison. The very small numbers taking the tests and the varying number of pupils on the special educational needs register cause this great difference.
- 2 The present Year 6 is performing at well below the levels expected for their age in English and below the level expected for mathematics and science. In English the main difficulties surrounds pupils' spoken English. Although they are very confident communicators, the pupils' day-to-day vocabulary is limited and their use of Standard English is poor. This is transferred directly into their written work, which is generally devoid of exciting descriptive extracts. In mathematics, the pupils are handicapped by any mathematical problems which rely heavily on pupils' needing to comprehend what they read. Their response to mental mathematics is not particularly brisk, although this is improving. In science, pupils' limited literacy and, to a certain extent numeracy skills, are handicapping their ability to record work appropriately. Standards are appropriate for younger pupils in information and communication technology due to the good levels of support the school receives from the local secondary school. However, older pupils have not benefited from the same level of support throughout their school life and their skills in information technology are therefore below those expected for their age.
- 3 The national tests for 7-year-olds show that reading results have been well below the national average for some years. The writing results have been better. Whilst very few pupils are attaining beyond the level expected for their age in reading, they do so in writing. In mathematics, the national test results for 7-year-olds have been well below average for several years. The present Year 2 is performing at well below the level expected for their age in English and below the level expected for mathematics and science.
- 4 Girls are performing better than boys. The school is fully aware of this and is trying to improve the standards being attained by boys. It is too early to see if this is having the necessary impact but the school has recognised the problem and developed a strategy to try and deal with it. The school did not meet its literacy and numeracy targets for the past two years. In many respects the targets were too demanding. However, there is every indication that they will be attained this year.
- 5 Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress overall. Their various individual needs are identified as soon as possible after they enter the school. The co-ordinator for special educational needs (SENCO) works closely with her colleagues and, wherever appropriate, outside agencies, to ensure that these pupils have individual education plans that are well designed and maintained. Teachers take account of these plans in providing relevant learning activities and

good support in lessons. The progress of these pupils is carefully monitored and their targets are reviewed and adjusted to maintain their rate of progress. By contrast older more able pupils, are not making the progress expected. In too many lessons they are not sufficiently challenged and some have now developed unsatisfactory attitudes. There is a tendency for these more able pupils to cover the work set for everyone before they move on to more demanding work.

- 6 When pupils start school their personal and academic skills are well below the level expected for their age. They are particularly poor in communication, language, literacy and mathematics. During their time in the reception class they make satisfactory progress, with some evidence of good progress in aspects of communication and mathematics. However, by the time they start Year 1 the majority have not yet reached the learning goals anticipated for their age in each of the six areas of learning, although more do so for physical development. The early years group, which has been established in the school for some years, is helping to make a difference. Most of the children attend this group for a year before they start school and as a result they do make significant progress in their personal skills and get used to routines in the school. The provision for these young children is good and, although it is still an 'unofficial' part of the school, it is none-the-less having an impact on the overall standards attained by the pupils. Without this start, the pressure on the adults working with the reception class would be increased.
- 7 As pupils move through the school they make satisfactory progress overall. There is a major issue related to pupils' speaking and listening. Too many pupils are not attentive listeners whilst others find it difficult to comprehend what is said to them. In this respect, there are problems when it comes to helping pupils widening their vocabulary. Even at the age of 11, the listening skills of many pupils remain poor. Answers to questions often do not reflect what has been asked, indicating weak comprehension of the questions posed. The pupils' tendency to call-out an idea that randomly springs to mind reveals an inability to listen to others in order to build a coherent discussion. As a result, teachers find it difficult to keep a discussion on-track so as to promote ordered and effective learning. The pupils' writing is particularly badly affected. Their stories do not contain the range of words and phrases one would expect for their age. Therefore, very few pupils are able to use writing effectively to support and record their learning. The progress they make in speaking and listening is satisfactory with the school being very conscious of providing opportunities for these pupils to speak in front of others. The development of circle time, (a time when pupils can present their views to others in a carefully structured way) has helped in this respect. The pupils' listening skills are certainly improved but it has not made a discernable impact on their speaking.
- 8 The pupils make satisfactory progress in their reading although their immature speech is handicapping them. Many pupils are far more adept at reading the words on the page accurately than in comprehending what they say. Throughout the school pupils achieve better in reading than in writing because of the way teachers use books that build on what they already know. The homework and regular work related to the National Literacy Strategy is helping to move their learning forwards. By the age of 11, the highest attaining pupils read efficiently and accurately, but without clear pleasure or expression. They pick-out the elements in a story, which reveal a particular point of view, although their explanations of the effect of this point of view are confused. The pupils with special education needs make better progress. This is because the support for them is good with focussed attention on

improving reading skills. The school has tried to widen the pupils' reading by ensuring that they make regular visits to the library.

- 9 It is in the area of writing where most of the concerns lie. The pupils are not making satisfactory progress in this area. Despite the school's best efforts there is little sign of improvement. However, the strategies adopted are relatively new and will need more time to have an impact on the overall standards. Much of the written work is poorly presented and there is a lack of care about the way work is finished. Spelling and handwriting standards are also well below the levels expected for pupils of their age.
- 10 There are signs of improvement in mathematics. Progress is satisfactory in this area with indications that there is the capacity to improve still further. Pupils' response to mental agility work is too slow and they find it difficult deal with problems that are in written form. However, the staff are now more confident about tackling this area and they are beginning to make an impression on the amount of progress being made.
- 11 Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are not being used effectively enough in other subjects. There are good examples of pupils reading information from the website to find-out information in geography. The poor written standards do, however, inhibit the opportunities they have to develop their literacy more fully in other subjects. In numeracy there is not, at present, a planned programme for using the pupils' numeracy skills in other subjects. There are examples of this happening quite effectively in science but it is not consistent enough. The good developments for information and communication technology have allowed the pupils and staff to be more confident about using ICT in other subjects. This is growing and pupils are now far more familiar with the basic skills involved to give them enough confidence to use computers more effectively. However, this is still at a relatively early stage of development.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 12 Pupils' attitudes to their work are satisfactory. In many lessons the pupils show a lively interest in their work and are keen to make progress. However a minority of lessons in which some pupils take little interest, often distracting the learning of their classmates, spoils the overall picture. Pupils' attitudes are directly affected by the lesson content. An interesting practical lesson motivates them well whereas a long introduction by the teacher leads to pupils' attention wandering with consequent poor listening. Pupils work amicably in pairs and groups but in some lessons they show little sense of urgency in their work. They take pride in producing a piece of good work but many do not have the automatic motivation to do their best all the time. Pupils admit that they could try harder if they were pushed more.
- 13 The behaviour of the pupils, both in and out of the classroom, is good overall and pupils generally move around the school in an orderly way. They show appropriate respect for property and treat books and equipment with due care. Pupils have a well-developed sense of right and wrong and even the younger pupils know that they are responsible for their own behaviour. Behaviour at lunchtime is very good and the meal is a pleasant social occasion with pupils sitting in mixed age 'family groups'. Behaviour is also good on the playground. No oppressive behaviour was seen during the inspection and parents and pupils do not see it as a particular problem. There were no exclusions during the past year.

- 14 Relationships at all levels are good, both among the pupils and between pupils and staff. Pupils are made to feel special and appreciate that their best efforts will be noticed and praised. There is good mutual support between pupils and they are quick to comfort a classmate in distress. All ages mix well together at playtimes and lunchtime and pupils are very tolerant of the foibles of others.
- 15 Pupils respond well to the school's provision for their personal development, including opportunities to assume responsibility. For the younger children this includes tidying-up activities and taking the register to the office. The duties increase as pupils move through the school and, by Year 6, pupils have a range of responsibilities. These include helping support younger children as 'friendship partners' and with shared-reading. All this helps in the smooth running of the school. Pupils have shown initiative in organising activities for 'fun' afternoons and in support of fund-raising. The recently introduced 'circle time' is helping to develop the pupils' listening skills as well as their confidence.
- 16 Attendance during the year 1999/2000 was 92.6 percent, which is well below the national average and is poor. Unauthorised absence was above the national average. The figures were adversely affected by a small number of pupils with specific problems of attendance and the school is working closely with the education welfare service to effect an improvement. Registration meets statutory requirements and registers are properly maintained. Although punctuality is generally good and lessons start on time, pupils in some classes do not settle down quickly and registration takes too long.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 17 The teaching is satisfactory overall. It is not as yet having the impact on pupils' learning that the school would desire. However, there are reasons for this. There have been many staff changes recently and a temporary teacher taught one of the three classes at the time of the inspection. The relatively new headteacher has therefore not had the benefit of a stable staff to help her make the necessary improvements. As from next term the school will, for the first time in a number of years have a full staff.
- 18 Teaching is good in 22 per cent of lessons. These lessons are normally practical in nature and the teacher has been able to stimulate and motivate pupils to the extent that they want to work and want to do well. In 71 per cent of lessons teaching is satisfactory. In these lessons, although the preparation and planning is effective, the failure to challenge more able pupils is a prominent problem. In 7 per cent of lessons, (2 lessons taught by a temporary teacher) the teaching was unsatisfactory. In the first of these more able pupils were not able to get-on with their mathematical work until the last 5 minutes because the introduction was too long. In the second, the pupils were confused by the teacher's explanations during a science lessons and ended up with incorrect information about the way the Sun, the Earth and the Moon are inter-related. When compared with the previous inspection the teaching is not as strong but this does not take into consideration that there have been major changes in the school since that time. It is clear that the position is an improving one with the present staff, including temporary teachers, being very committed to improving standards.

- 19 The one area where teaching is good is in the way pupils with special educational needs are supported. In the context of the school's mixed-age classes, these pupils are placed, for English and mathematics, with other pupils of similar attainment. The school uses expert advice and good assessment information to ensure that individual learning plans identify precise and achievable targets in relation to literacy, numeracy, and social behaviour. Teachers work closely with classroom support staff to ensure that good use is made of their time and talents. As a result, pupils usually receive the help they need to progress towards their personal targets. The SENCO and her colleagues continuously monitor individual progress and further action is planned accordingly.
- 20 In contrast to the good support provided for pupils with special educational needs, there is a lack of appropriate support for older, more able, pupils. The main difficulty sometimes surrounds the additional amount of attention that is needed to be given to less able pupils. This results in adults having to support their needs and provide activities for the more able pupils that they are able to get on with. In one mathematics lesson, for example, the added attention given to pupils with learning difficulties during the mental and agility session left more able pupils waiting for some time for a challenging question for them. This was followed by a very protracted period of explanation as to what pupils were going to do for their main task. In the end more able pupils found themselves with only a few minutes to complete their task. They set-about the task with much verve and completed a great deal in the short period allocated. However, they could well have been working on more challenging work from much earlier on. The scrutiny of pupils' work also revealed that over time more able pupils are not appropriately challenged. The written work showed that they very often did the same task as others and that, although the marking picked up aspects for them to work at, they frequently made the same errors the next time. Discussions with these more able pupils revealed that many found the work boring and did not have the necessary motivation to work any harder. This was particularly the case for more able boys in Class 3 (Years 5 and 6).
- 21 There are many occasions when the teaching does reflect the more demanding pace from the pupils that the headteacher has talked with the staff about. Inevitably, when this happens there are greater demands put on the pupils' speaking. In one English lesson in Class 2 (Years 2, 3 and 4), for example, the teacher was dealing with 'nonsense verses' and he managed to get the pupils to explore the language used and they show much enjoyment when doing so. The pupils are eager to respond to the teacher's focussed questions. He managed to move the pupils' responses on from, 'it is funny' to, 'it is funny because...' In doing so the teachers is beginning to get the pupils to extend their use of vocabulary and also makes greater demands on them in terms of the speed of the responses. In Class 1 the same was apparent as the teacher used the pupils' own toys to help them understand about forces. They were able to work out how a pull differs from a push. This same demand is seen during one circle time session in Class 3 (Years 4, 5 and 6) when the teacher is seeking to extend pupils' vocabulary by getting the pupils to focus on a personal experience. In these sessions the responses from the pupils are clear and they also show an awareness of the audience. Despite their descriptive skills being limited, most get their points across.
- 22 In contrast to this, there are too many examples when pupils are not provided with clear guidance related to what is and is not acceptable quality work. In some of the lessons there is a lack of 'quality control' over the work that is produced. This also extends to the quantity produced. It leads to work remaining unfinished in quite a

great deal of the work seen in pupils' books. Perhaps more worryingly, it leads to much of the work being poorly presented and in pupils lacking that sense of pride.

- 23 By and large the teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and do concentrate on basic skills when teaching literacy and numeracy. However, on too many occasions, the introductions are too long resulting in pupils becoming fidgety and losing interest. The quality of these introductions is often appropriate but there is a need for teachers to consider the length of time younger pupils, in particular, is passive listeners. They need to try and work at ways of breaking-up sessions when pupils are likely to be sitting for too long. One of the main problems is that in a small school the age range of pupils in one class is inevitably wide. This is particularly difficult for the teacher of Class 1, who is attempting to cater for the needs of reception aged pupils, requiring much practical experiences, and pupils in Year 1 who are more than ready for more direct teaching. In the one lesson where the teacher's knowledge was lacking there was some confusion for Class 3 (Years 4, 5 and 6) pupils about the inter-relationship between the Sun, Moon and the Earth.
- 24 The teachers mark work conscientiously. However, the remarks or comments made, which are often concise and evaluative, do not have the necessary impact on the pupils' learning. Too often when a comment is made about such things as 'punctuation' or 'presentation' there is little impact on the next piece of work. The pupils have limited knowledge of what they need to do in order to improve their work. When questioned, most had little idea about what they could do to make their work better or to improve the standard of the work produced.

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

- 25 The quality and range of learning opportunities provided by the school are satisfactory overall. Good features are:
- the provision for the high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs;
 - the personal, social and health education provided by the school;
 - the constructive relationships that have developed with other schools for the benefit of pupils;
 - the provisions for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.
- Unsatisfactory features are:
- the school's strategy for teaching literacy skills, particularly in writing;
 - certain aspects of the arrangements for equality of access and opportunity.
- 26 Children in the reception class are provided with the full range of activities that cover all the areas anticipated for their age. The school has embraced the new foundation stage of learning and is using the guidelines well to prepare and plan. As a result there is a good mix of practical as well as direct teaching. One of the inevitable difficulties is that in a class which has pupils from a wide age range, it is difficult to give full and undivided attention to the needs of just the younger ones, especially when their early literacy and numeracy skills are poor. The adults working with the youngest children have good levels of expertise and manage the arrangements well but with some organisational difficulties inevitably handicapping the way they are able to challenge all pupils.
- 27 The curriculum has satisfactory breadth and balance and meets statutory requirements. It includes all subjects of the National Curriculum, together with religious education. The allocation of time to subjects achieves a reasonable balance between pupils' needs, the school's aims and the constraints imposed by mixed-age classes. It shows a necessary emphasis on basic skills in literacy and numeracy. The weaknesses noted in the previous report have been tackled, so that curricular planning is now satisfactory. The school has adopted national guidance in all areas of the National Curriculum. As a result, up-to-date policies and schemes of work guide teachers' planning and ensure improved balance and coherence in pupils' learning experience. However, much has yet to be done to ensure that planning leads to higher achievement for all pupils. For example, it does not yet ensure that pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and information technology both support, and are rigorously supported by, their learning in other subjects.
- 28 Provision in English and mathematics has been strengthened by the official frameworks of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, both of which the school has fully embraced. All pupils have a lesson each day both in numeracy and in literacy. Strategies for teaching numeracy are making a satisfactory impact on standards. However, this is not yet the case in writing. Although a whole-school approach is using assessment to identify areas in need of improvement, this has not yet led to the necessary changes in the curriculum. Currently, pupils do not have enough range and quality of opportunity to write at length in different subjects and expectations are too low, especially for the more able pupils. Achievement in speaking and listening is also unsatisfactory for similar reasons. A good homework policy has been agreed which clearly sets out a programme to support the

curriculum. This gives due emphasis to language development but, in practice, it more effectively supports reading than writing.

- 29 Provisions for the large proportion of pupils with special educational needs are good in most respects. The weaknesses noted in the last report have been remedied and provision complies with the official Code of Practice. The school seeks specialist help to establish accurate assessments of pupils' needs and uses these to write good individual educational plans. The targets in these plans are specific and realistic and class teachers plan a suitable curriculum based on agreed objectives. Teachers pay careful attention to pupils' needs in lessons and make good use of the skills of classroom assistants to support pupils' development and ensure their inclusion in all activities.
- 30 There is, however, unsatisfactory provision for pupils to have equal access to the curriculum and equality of opportunity within it. The school endeavours to work as an inclusive school that values the contribution that every pupil makes to its everyday life. As a result of the school's effort to equalise the numbers between its three mixed-age classes, each class contains pupils from three Year groups. Two concerns arise from this arrangement. Firstly, pupils in the same year, but in different classes, do not cover the same work in all subjects, particularly in English and mathematics. Teachers plan subjects on a two-year cycle so that work is not repeated, but this planning comes under strain when three year-groups work together and medium-term plans are not monitored strictly enough to ensure that provision is equal. Secondly, pupils in these classes are not consistently offered subject matter in terms that take account of both their age and their attainment. This is difficult for the school, but it is a significant issue that affects all pupils to an extent and the higher attaining older pupils in Key Stage 2 in particular. Over time, the negative effect on pupils' achievements is most evident in the low number attaining the higher level in national tests in English, mathematics and science, but there is a similar effect in other subjects.
- 31 For a small school, the range of extra-curricular activities is good. In addition to after-school clubs for information and communication technology, football and netball, the school offers a lunchtime guitar club, special classes to boost attainment in literacy and numeracy, instrumental tuition provided throughout the year by teachers from the local music service, and a 'Rainbow Programme' to support children in distress. The school also makes good use of visits, for example to the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, and visitors, such as the children's author, Paul Cook, to extend and enrich pupils' learning in most subjects. Most notably, the school offers a week's annual residential experience at an outdoor pursuits centre such as Hazelhead to all pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6.
- 32 The school's provision for personal, social and health education is also strong. The good programmes for drugs and bodily awareness noted by the last report have been maintained. The school participates fully in the 'Healthy Schools' programme. In relation to this, it is developing a 'Playground Peacemakers' scheme to improve the quality of playtimes. It is also using 'circle time', in which pupils take equal turns to discuss their thoughts and feelings on matters important to them, as a basis for a school council. These initiatives are beginning to contribute significantly to the development of pupils' inter-personal skills and their sense of responsibility and self-esteem.

- 33 The school has worked hard to build sound links with the local community and good relationships with other schools. A stronger working relationship with the parish and with institutions such as the public library brings significant benefits to pupils. Good collaboration between schools in the local 'family' of primary schools brings valuable support, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and for the development of new curricular initiatives. All pupils gain from the very close ties with the adjacent community high school. These ties not only partly help the school to overcome the consequences of its lack of accommodation for indoor physical education and an ICT suite, but also ease the transition to a large school when pupils leave.
- 34 The school makes good provision overall for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils. It has maintained this quality of provision since the time of the previous inspection. Its aims stress that active moral and spiritual values and social togetherness are at the heart of its work. Its effectiveness in this area ensures that these aims are reflected in its daily life. As a result the school provides a caring, secure and optimistic environment that counters the fragmented society around it and promotes pupils' growth as responsible citizens.
- 35 In keeping with its mission statement, the school's good provision for pupils' spiritual development is based on the teaching of the Gospels and the qualities of belief, faith and trust which permeate its work as a Catholic school. Acts of collective worship more than meet statutory requirements and are well-received by pupils. They arise not only in assemblies but also in the reflective sharing of familiar prayers and hymns that opens and closes each session in every classroom. Assemblies are carefully planned occasions in which staff and pupils contribute directly to the development of themes and stories that link well with pupils' lives. In one quietly moving assembly, pupils spontaneously shared the different choices they had made, whether big or small, difficult or easy. Everyone listened intently as these threads were drawn together through effective talk and prayer. The increasing use of 'circle time' is also focused on raising self-awareness and esteem and on developing a respectful understanding of the beliefs and values of others. Strengthening links between Church and school also connect the spiritual calendar with everyday life, whilst subjects such as art and music provide some opportunities for pupils to learn to appreciate beauty.
- 36 The good provision for moral development links closely with the clear spiritual and social values that all staff reinforce actively by the example they set. The school's full and well-written behaviour policy is reinforced by a home-school agreement and underlined by clearly displayed rules in each classroom. These rules are respected by pupils, including those who have challenging behaviour, because they are consistently and fairly upheld by staff at lunchtime and in all other settings. The school promotes moral awareness in terms of the choices which individuals make. The move to develop 'class councils' emphasises this ethos by giving pupils more of a say in classroom affairs and helping them to learn to make decisions on the basis of good reasoning and the prediction of consequences.
- 37 Expanding work in personal, social and health education (PSHE) strongly supports the school's good provisions for pupils' social development. A good programme of Education for Personal Relationships effectively links work in PSHE with the school's 'Here I am' syllabus in religious education. Pupils are encouraged to help each other in many contexts both within and outside lessons. The development of 'Playground Peacemakers', 'Friendship Partners' and family groups effectively

promotes attitudes and skills of negotiation, cooperation and care. The school's work on the 'Rainbow Programme', the parenting course and lifelong learning demonstrate its active commitment to care and social welfare. The school aims to involve pupils in helping to organise a social event each month and soon they will begin to initiate and organise the annual 'Strawberry Fair'. Pupils are also involved in organising charitable efforts for good causes such as the 'Shoebox Appeal'. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 benefit from a residential week at the Hazelhead Centre. In their reports on this experience, pupils constantly reflect on what they learned about the skills and values of teamwork. In many ways, therefore, the school effectively promotes social awareness and responsibility. It is, however, less effective in providing opportunities for pupils to develop personal initiative, or responsibility for their own learning. For example, older pupils are seldom encouraged to design and carry-out their own investigations.

- 38 The school's provisions for pupils' cultural development are satisfactory. A range of visitors and visits combines with work in geography and history to promote pupils' appreciation of the heritage and traditions of their community. Work in art and music introduces pupils to the achievements of European as well as of British culture. The school is also working hard to develop a multi-cultural approach to the curriculum. For example, it has checked its books and the use it makes of them to ensure that gender stereotypes are countered and that books promote positive images of other races and cultures. During the inspection, for instance, pupils in Class 3 enjoyed James Berry's stories about growing up in the Caribbean. A multi-faith element in religious education gives pupils opportunities to celebrate the special occasions of other faiths, for example, the Passover, as well as the festivals of the Christian year. However, these worthy initiatives are only in the early stages of a development that is an identified priority for the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 39 Overall, the school cares for pupils well and there are effective procedures in place to ensure their safety and well-being. This is a similar situation to that found at the time of the previous inspection. At a practical level, the school is a warm and friendly place in which pupils are happy and secure and able to learn without fear. All staff provide good support for the pupils and relationships between adults and pupils are relaxed. As a result, pupils feel comfortable talking to staff about any worries or problems they may have. Child protection procedures are fully in place. The deputy head has designated responsibility and has had relevant training; staff are briefed on any concerns.
- 40 The school has a comprehensive policy for health and safety and the management of this on a day-to-day basis is good, although there are some shortcomings. The school environment is well maintained and any safety concerns are quickly and effectively dealt with. The safety committee carries out termly inspections and regular risk assessment takes place. Fire drills should be held each term and the fire alarm tested weekly but both routines have slipped badly and need to be reinstated as a matter of urgency. Fire appliances are tested annually and testing is up-to-date. Testing of portable electrical appliances is properly carried-out and appliances are marked accordingly. First aid procedures are satisfactory. Accidents, other than superficial, are properly logged and parents are notified in writing of any injuries or bumps to the head.

- 41 There are satisfactory procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance. The importance of regular attendance is emphasised to parents. Registers are regularly checked and any unexplained absences are followed up, using the educational welfare service where appropriate. Attendance details are analysed using a computer-based programme. The school's management of behaviour is generally good, although there are occasions when the level of noise in class is insufficiently controlled and teaching loses its impact. There are few formal rules but those that there are, coupled with the good example set by all staff (who have high expectations of pupils), lead to a satisfactory learning environment. Midday supervisory staff maintain good order and provide good support on the playground. This has a positive effect on behaviour and safety.
- 42 Assessment procedures have improved since the previous inspection and are now seen as good overall. There is a sound policy and good progress has been made in collecting details of pupils' attainment and progress in the core subjects of English mathematics and science. Less information is recorded of their attainment and progress in other subjects. The use of this assessment information to move pupils on to the next step in their learning, whilst satisfactory, is currently limited. This has already been recognised by the school and is being addressed as part of this year's school development plan. The adults working with young children have not yet devised a system for tracking the progress of these youngsters towards the learning goals in the six areas of learning identified within the foundation stage of learning. This is something that will need to be addressed in the near future.
- 43 The school's support for the pupils' personal development is good overall. Teachers know the pupils well and any concern over a pupil's development is quickly recognised and followed-up. There is a newly introduced programme of personal, social and health education which helps to develop pupils' self-knowledge and social awareness and this, together with the constant encouragement and support from all staff, is helping to build independence and self-confidence in the pupils.
- 44 The school has good systems of support, guidance and welfare for pupils who have special educational needs. Regular liaison with a range of support services is used effectively to benefit identified pupils. Teachers and classroom assistants give these pupils positive encouragement to promote their self-esteem and enable them to play a full part in all aspects of school life. Their needs are regularly reviewed and relevant information properly recorded and used so that their progress towards their academic and personal targets is promoted and monitored effectively. Detailed records are carefully kept and passed on to receiving schools when pupils leave.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 45 The school has a developing relationship with the parents and is trying to work more closely with them on the education of their children. Overall, this is a similar situation to that reported at the time of the previous inspection. The views of parents expressed in the questionnaires are mostly strongly supportive of the school. Parents see the school as being caring and promoting a positive work ethic. They find the school and staff very approachable. They see their children liking school, being well looked after and making good progress as they grow and develop. The inspection findings generally confirm these positive views. On a less positive note the responses show concerns over the extra-curricular activities provided by the school, the information provided to parents on their child's progress and homework.

The inspection finds that the extra-curricular provision, including out of school visits, is good overall although the availability of some after-school activities excludes younger pupils. The programme of residential trips is better than found in many schools. The school's homework arrangements are broadly satisfactory.

- 46 The school provides parents with a good level of information about their child's progress and about general matters. There is a regular newsletter from the headteacher that includes details of topics and the curriculum for each half term. The prospectus and governors' annual report both contain a wealth of information but omit a small number of details statutorily required and the headteacher has been made aware of these. Pupils' annual reports give appropriate details of their attainment and progress and meet statutory requirements. New parents are provided with good information on how they can help support their child's learning at home. There are consultation evenings each term and parents are involved in agreeing and setting learning targets for their children. Workshops have been held to bring parents up-to-date with developments, for example in literacy and numeracy, but the attendance at these was limited. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs are kept well informed and involved in regular review meetings.
- 47 Parents make a satisfactory contribution overall to the learning of their children and to the life of the school. The headteacher firmly believes that parents have a significant part to play in the education of the child and tries to increase their involvement at all levels. A few parents help in the school and on outside visits and provide valuable assistance that the school itself could not afford. Some parents provide help to their children at home with their reading and other homework. The school's homework policy provides a structured programme that extends the pupils' abilities and helps them develop good learning habits. Parents take part in fund-raising events that help to strengthen the bonds between home and school as well as providing valuable funds to improve the school facilities.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 48 The headteacher is at a relatively early stage of her headship and she is making a difference to the way the school is organised. However, it is taking some time for this to have an impact on the overall standards that are being attained. The main reason is that the staffing has hardly been stable since her appointment and it is therefore taking longer for her to get the common message across so that all can be focused on raising standards. The sound leadership noted at the time of the previous inspection has been improved so that the leadership is now effective although it is recognised that there is still much to be done. The main improvements have been in the areas of developing a common set of aims through the school's mission statement and improved monitoring.
- 49 The headteacher has put a great deal of emphasis into the mission statement and school aims. They are a very important part of what happens in this school. It has ensured that the school now has a distinctly Catholic ethos and that pupils are beginning to respond positively to this. All staff, including those who are temporary, are clear about the mission statement. However, there is still some way to go before all pupils are appropriately challenged; a point outlined in the aims.
- 50 There is good leadership demonstrated by the SENCO (special education needs co-ordinator) who ensures that all pupils are assessed as early as possible and gives due consideration to their needs. The individual education plans that are drawn up are specific and teachers are well informed about the support they need. The plans identify small steps that can be used to help these pupils improve and most make good progress as a result. Reviews are set up regularly and new plans drawn up as a consequence. In other areas, the headteacher has taken a leading role in co-ordinating many important areas, including literacy. She has begun to lead the development of better systems to establish a basis for raising attainment. These systems are at early stages of development but appropriate monitoring has helped to identify weaknesses.
- 51 The headteacher is very clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses. She has already begun to make a difference to the quality of teaching and has discussed with individual members of staff what they need to do in order to improve their practice. She is well respected for this which confirms that she has a firm, but sensitive, approach. Her presence is making a real difference to this school and is the main reason why the school is improving. Teachers value the feedback they receive and work very hard at issues that have been mentioned to them. This has resulted in there being a strong sense of teamwork being apparent. This has made it that much easier for new staff, including temporary ones, to join the school. There are effective systems now outlined to help new staff settle quickly into routines. The deputy headteacher, who has been in post for some time, is also now more focussed on her management role.
- 52 The school uses the information received from the Local Education Authority and Diocesan Director to effectively check on the school's performance in relation to the national tests. Despite having very small numbers taking tests at any given time, the school does attempt to learn whatever it can about the comparative results. There is now good analysis of the performance of individual pupils and better systems in place to track their progress. The headteacher and deputy headteacher use this information effectively in setting future targets. They also use the information to prioritise future actions that are required for improvement. This has made the

school's current development plan effective and clear to follow. The actions the school is taking are sensible and focussed on important areas, such as writing development.

- 53 The governors are a very committed group who are very supportive of the school. They have appropriate systems in place to ensure that they are efficient in their role. They have named members who have specific responsibility for religious education, the core subjects, information and communication technology and special educational needs. They are regular visitors to the school and know the staff and pupils very well. At present they do not have procedures in place to help them check formally on the impact of their spending decisions. They do, however, value the responses they get from members of staff and feel able to determine whether their decisions have been appropriate. Most governors know the local community very well. This is a great advantage when it comes to fulfilling their role. They recognise the difficulties that the local community has undergone in the past and know the families very well.
- 54 The school's budget is effectively managed. Money is allocated to areas according to the priorities identified on the school development plan. The checking of spending trends is well monitored by the clerical support assistant who also ensures that day-to-day administration is effective. There is good use made of information technology systems to keep track of spending. The governors have good knowledge of the allocation of spending to different headings and the finance group support the headteacher in setting the budget each year.
- 55 The school has taken the unusual step to support and finance an 'early years' group. There is, however, good reason to suggest that this is a sensible decision to take in view of the very low skill levels of many of the children in personal and academic development, when they first start school. The work carried-out with this group is making a real difference to the way the school is able to organise for the new entrants each year. When taking everything into consideration, the school's decision to fund this group is paying dividends because there is a definite difference to the standards being attained by children when they first start in the reception class. The fact that the nursery nurse, who works with the early years group in the morning, is the support in the reception class in the afternoon is very helpful in aiding the process of young children settling into school life.
- 56 The school's accommodation is unsatisfactory. At present, it has to rely heavily on the local secondary school to provide appropriate provision for physical education. Without this goodwill the school would find it difficult to meet the demands of this part of the curriculum. There is no hall and this results in assemblies being conducted in an area that is no better than a foyer. Clearly this is not helping to provide for appropriate place for collective worship. The school does make the most of the facility and there is great effort put into creating an appropriate ambience for assemblies. However, it has to contend with the fact that this part of the school is a thoroughfare and it has to make special arrangements to stop it being used as such during times when collective worship is taking place. The school is hoping that a new hall is imminent but the present accommodation is inadequate. Learning resources are mostly adequate, provided the use of the computer suite in the secondary school is taken into account. There is an adequate number of books available for the needs of pupils and these are well looked after and made accessible to the pupils.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

57 In order to continue the momentum of improvement noted in the last few terms the governors, headteacher and staff need to focus on the following issues:

- **Ensure that systems are in place to enable the older, more able pupils to be more effectively challenged.** (Paragraphs 5, 8, 18, 20, 30, 49, 95, 99, 101, 104, 112 and 127)
- **Develop systems to help pupils to extend their spoken vocabulary and to improve their use of Standard English. When doing so the school needs to be alert to the impact this is having on pupils' written work.** (Paragraphs 2, 6, 7, 8, 21, 25, 28, 68, 90, 91 and 93)
- **Continue to help pupils to respond more rapidly to mental agility work by giving even greater emphasis on pupils' knowledge of times tables, and**
- **Help pupils be more confident in dealing with mathematical problems that are presented in written form.** (Paragraphs 2, 10, 18, 20, 73, 100, 101, 102 and 104)
- **Give greater attention to following-up the remarks made by teachers on pupils' books so that pupils are better informed about what they need to do next to improve their work.** (Paragraphs 24, 93 and 115)
- **Put more emphasis on the way pupils present their work. Look to improving this so that pupils are taking greater pride in their finished work.** (Paragraphs 9, 22, 93 and 114)

58 As well as the main issues outlined above the school also needs to deal with these important, but less pressing, issues:

- Improve the attendance rates; (Paragraphs 16 and 41)
- Develop systems for tracking progress throughout the foundation stage of learning; (Paragraphs 42 and 62)
- Ensure that fire drill are carried out regularly. (Paragraph 40)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	28
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	45

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
		22	71	7		

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		95
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		16

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		45

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.5
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.9
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	6	4	10

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	3	4	4
	Girls	4	4	4
	Total	7	8	8
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	70 (69)	80 (77)	80 (69)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	4	3	6
	Girls	4	3	3
	Total	8	6	9
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (69)	60 (77)	90 (69)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	2	3	5

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	1	1	2
	Girls	1	0	2
	Total	2	1	4
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	40 (54)	20 (46)	80 (54)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	0	0	0
	Girls	1	0	0
	Total	1	0	0
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	20 (38)	0 (46)	0 (46)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	80
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	31

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	79

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	n/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	199,622
Total expenditure	198,576
Expenditure per pupil	2,183
Balance brought forward from previous year	15,441
Balance carried forward to next year	16,487

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

46.3%

Number of questionnaires sent out	95
Number of questionnaires returned	44

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	48	48	2		2
My child is making good progress in school.	50	43	7		
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	52	11		3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	45	11		8
The teaching is good.	59	34	7		
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	57	22	16	5	
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	39	9		
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	34	2		3
The school works closely with parents.	43	41	7	9	
The school is well led and managed.	54	34	7	6	
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	32	14	2	
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	36	18	9	5

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR PUPILS IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

- 59 All the children in the foundation stage of learning, that is reception-aged children, are accommodated in Class 1, which is made up of 15 reception and 15 Year 1 children. These children have not benefited from any official pre-school education but the school has set-up an 'early years' group within the school premises which they fund. Almost all children have attended the 'early years' group, which is run along the same lines as a part-time nursery class, before they start in the reception. The 'early years' group is organised and managed by a very able nursery nurse, who also works in the reception class in the afternoons. The school sees the 'early years' group as an important part of its life. It justifies the additional money being spent on this 'unofficial group' by pointing-out the help that is given to the children to enable them to settle more quickly into school routines when they start in the reception. This is certainly the case, with the children showing much improvement in their communication and personal skills during the year they spend in the early years group.
- 60 The early years group makes a great deal of difference to the skill level of children by they start in the reception class. Although it is not recognised as an 'official' nursery it runs along the same lines as one. However, the main difference is that the accommodation does not meet the requirements set out for a school-based nursery. Most of the activities take place in the 'foyer' (or school entrance) which is also used for gathering the whole school for assembly. The school has taken the view that they want to support the education of children at an early stage because it raises standards by the time they start in the reception. This is a valid point and the evidence strongly supports such a position.
- 61 The quality of work undertaken with the early years group is good. They are provided with a full range of activities based on the foundation stage of learning curriculum. The group is made of approximately 13 children and is staffed by the nursery nurse and two trainee volunteers. The nursery nurse is very well qualified and has very good levels of expertise for dealing with very young children. She is particularly aware of many children's impoverished speaking skills and is able to work at improving them. Approximately a third of the group currently attending the early years group is in need of support from a speech therapist. The establishment of the group is helping staff to alert parents of these issues. Children who attend the early years group also require much personal support. Some come to the morning sessions not being able to play with, or co-operate with, others. The staff are quick to spot children who are having difficulty and enable them to play in isolation until they are ready to be more sociable. In each of the sessions observed, a purposeful atmosphere is quickly established. Despite the physical difficulties posed by the positioning of the group, there is good learning taking place. The creation of the group, which has been in existence for some time, is helping the school to raise standards. It is helping the children who start in the reception class to have more advanced skills in key areas than would otherwise be possible.
- 62 Despite all the good work that is happening in the early years group, the majority of children start in the reception with academic and personal skills being well below the levels expected for their age. These would undoubtedly be lower if it was not for the good start they get in the early years group. The children are assessed when they

first start in the reception and the Local Education Authority's initial assessment system (baseline) is used. This reveals that children start with very low attainment in communication, language and literacy and mathematics. The present reception group is slightly stronger than previous ones because it is made up of a very large group of girls (12 out of 15). At present, the staff are working at developing a suitable system for tracking the progress of children towards the learning goals for each of the six areas of learning. The school has, however, embraced the new guidance for the foundation stage of learning and this is working well in aiding staff preparation and planning.

- 63 One of the main difficulties encountered by the staff attempting to provide appropriately for the reception-aged children, is the fact that half the class is following the foundation stage of learning and the other half is following the National Curriculum. This inevitably provides organisational and management difficulties for all the adults working with Class 1. However, they make good attempts to overcome the difficulties and the reception-aged children are therefore provided with an appropriate curriculum when they start school.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- 64 When children first start school they display personal skills that are well below the level expected for their age. Despite good progress being evident in this area, many are not on-course to meet the learning goal identified for this area of learning by the time they start Year 1. This present reception class is slightly better than previous ones with more children showing levels of maturity that approximate to their ages. The adults working with these children recognise this area as a very important part of their work. Many children come to school not having yet established confidence in working with unknown adults. This is particularly the case for girls and males who are not known to them.
- 65 During the reception year children learn to share equipment well. They are able to play together purposefully even when not directly supervised. However, the occasional squabble still occurs. Aspects of immaturity still exist even when they have completed well over half of the year. This is seen when a few children found it difficult to remain sensible during a 'smelling game' that the teacher introduced. Many giggled at any suggestion made and a significant number find it difficult to settle appropriately. The other problem is that many have not yet learned how to respond appropriately when being addressed by the teacher as part of a whole class. Children will make remarks that are not directly related to the topic in hand. For example, answers to questions or remarks made can often be self-centred, 'My dad says...', or 'At home...'
- 66 The teaching is good for this area. This is mainly as a result of the adults working with these young children knowing them and their families very well. This helps them to assess what they should expect from the children and the adults are therefore able to set high expectations and make reasonable demands of them.

Communication, language and literacy

- 67 This is a very difficult area for the school to deal with because so many children start reception with poor communication skills. This is particularly the case in respect of their listening skills. During their time in the reception class some children make

satisfactory progress, which still leaves the majority not being on course to meet the learning goals identified for this area of learning.

- 68 Many children find it difficult to listen appropriately. They struggle to concentrate for long periods but there are times when the adults are not making as much impression as they could in helping children. During the first half an hour of the day, for example, children tend to chatter during registration and they pay little attention to the continual 'shushing' of the adults. Children's speaking skills are equally as poor as their listening. Most tend to talk in short phrases and find it difficult to sustain an explanation. Remarks like, 'It is sticked' are frequent. There are also a number of children who require speech therapist support.
- 69 Many children have limited pre-reading skills when they start school with many children having few books at home. There is a high priority given to helping children listen to stories and the adults recognise that there are many words in even the most basic stories that the children will not understand. For example, words like 'cottage' are not understood by all. The adults are very alert to this and do have appropriate strategies for helping the children. Much time is given to reading and the children respond well. Most learn to enjoy stories and can re-tell extracts without too much difficulty. The staff has taken the effective step of setting up reading partners for the reception children with older, Year 5, children.
- 70 Children have also very limited pre-writing experiences before they start school. There is much time needed to help children to use a range of writing tools. Most have learned to write their own first name by half-way through the reception. However, even the most able children who are able to form letters correctly find it difficult to link what they say to what they write. One example saw an able reception child write, 'once upon a time' as 'waqat tatnh tha'. This is not untypical of much of the writing.
- 71 The teaching is satisfactory for this aspect of learning although more could be done to support aspects of listening and speaking.

Mathematics

- 72 Children's skills in mathematics are very poor when they start. The baseline suggests this area is the poorest as far as children's initial skills are concerned. However, good progress is seen as children move through the reception class. This still results in many children not reaching the learning goal for this area of learning by the time they start Year 1.
- 73 The children are quick to pick-up on aspects of sequencing numbers and many can count to 10 and count on in 10s to 100. When it comes to writing down numbers their skills are not as advanced. Many reverse numbers and others are not able to write a number so as it can be clearly understood. More able children attempt to write two-digit numbers but 30 is often recorded as 03. Although there is evidence of much improvement in their mathematics, there are also concerns about the length of time the teacher works with the whole class. The thirty-minute mental and oral work with the children saw many lose concentration and gradually get fed-up and, at worst, begin to distract others. Too often the noise levels began to rise and this made concentrating difficult.

- 74 There is, however, a big emphasis on developing number rhymes. There is recognition that there is very little by way of number games done at home. The school has therefore provided suitable 'home packs' for parents to work with these young children. There is also much time devoted to mathematical games and providing practical mathematical experiences for the children. The teaching is satisfactory for this area but there is a need to be more aware of the time allocated to working with the whole class. The strongest aspect of the teaching for this area is the appropriateness of the tasks provided for children of different abilities.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

- 75 The vast majority of children have limited general knowledge. Many are not able to relate to their immediate environment and very few would be able to explain that they live near Doncaster. They have limited experiences about things from the past or about growing-up. During their time in the reception class they make satisfactory progress although this still leaves many not being able to achieve the learning goal for this area by the time they start Year 1.
- 76 The school does attempt to widen the children's general knowledge by providing a range of experiences for them both within and outside school. For example, in one lesson the teacher had bought in a fish for the children to touch, smell and see. Many had not experienced seeing a fish so close before but their responses tended to be either, 'ugh!' or 'smelly'. Similarly, the school has had visits from poets or theatre groups to help to stimulate children's interest. Patrick Bear, the class mascot, visits various places of interest with the adults and children who go on holiday and a record of his exploits is set out in a book. The children are then better able to relate to distant places because it is somewhere where Patrick has visited.
- 77 During a topic on toys, the children have opportunities of looking at old toys that have been bought in from the museum service. They also have opportunities to discover the different forces that can be applied to make their own toys move. Some are able to talk about the difference between a 'push' and a 'pull' as a result. Children are able to make use of the computer suite in the local secondary school and are now familiar with using a range of programs. They can move a cursor across the screen to create a picture using a special 'art' program.

Physical Development

- 78 In this area children display a better range of skills than other areas of learning. When they first start school many children have appropriate physical skills and are confident in using ball and other small apparatus. They are not as advanced in the physical skills that involve working with scissors, glue and other such table top items. During their time in the reception class children make satisfactory progress which results in a good number being on course to reach the learning goal for this area of learning.
- 79 The reception aged children, as well as the early years group, have regular swimming time for two of the three terms. They have gained confidence in water as a result with many being able to begin to swim for a short distance, unaided.
- 80 During physical education lessons, some of which take place in the local secondary school's hall, they show that they can handle a range of equipment, such as balls and bats well. About half the group can throw a ball about a metre in the air and

catch it. The vast majority can roll a ball away from them and run to catch it before it stops. During warm-up sessions they display appropriate running and catching skills and show reasonable levels of co-operation, although there are those who want only to play certain roles. The school is conscious of the need to provide more opportunities for children to have more access to outdoor play. This has been started and a small, but largely adequate, area has been developed for this purpose.

- 81 Children are provided with a range of activities that help them to improve their manipulative skills. Many of these activities involve them in cutting-out or gluing items to make cards or their own books. The teaching is satisfactory with good organisation apparent during physical education lessons. However, there are times when limited teaching of techniques for such things as catching a ball is not improving children's skill levels.

Creative Development

- 82 When children first start school they display poor creative skills. Many find it difficult to move into an imagined world during play and they need to be encouraged to put brush to paper when painting. During the reception year the adults do a great deal to try and get them to improve their skills in this area. This helps the children make satisfactory progress but still leaves many not being able to reach the appropriate goal for this area of learning by the time they are starting Year 1.
- 83 During the inspection the adults had created many different environments for the children associated with the holiday theme. There were two 'play tents' set up outside for them to experience being inside a dark, confined area. In the sand and water trays a set of shells had been added to help children think about holidays.
- 84 The children have had opportunities to make three-dimensional models using clay and pipe cleaners. The children need much support when it comes to thinking of creating something they cannot see. In music, a few children find it very difficult to follow a beat and repeat a rhythm which is clapped to them. The staff help the children to participate in a range of interesting activities associated with music. A few children show that they can use instruments effectively but others lack the necessary concentration when things are being explained to them.
- 85 The teaching is satisfactory for this aspect of children's work with a great emphasis given to providing a range of stimulating experiences for the children. However, the children are not always able to take full advantage of this, therefore hindering their learning.

Teaching and Provision

- 86 The teaching is satisfactory overall with some good work happening in developing children's personal, social and emotional awareness. The classroom is well organised and stimulating. The management of children is also largely satisfactory although there are times when less time spent talking to the whole group would be advantageous. The adults working with these young children know them and their families very well and this is most helpful when it comes to planning activities to meet their individual needs. The children who are recognised with learning difficulties are effectively provided for.

- 87 One of the weaker elements of the teaching for this age group is that there are times that there is not enough focus on the learning objective (what it is the children are to learn). On occasions there is more time devoted to ensure that all are occupied rather than on ensuring that they are learning.
- 88 The staff have worked hard to embrace the new foundation stage of learning guidelines. They have taken on-board the main issues and this is seen in the planning. However, they have not yet had the opportunity to develop appropriate procedures to track children's progress towards the learning goals in each of the six area of learning. This is an issue that is to be worked on in the near future.

ENGLISH

- 89 Standards in English are well below what is typical for 7 and 11-year-olds and too few pupils attain the higher than expected levels. When pupils enter Year 1 their basic skills in language and literacy are well below those expected for their age. Thereafter, pupils' achievement in reading and in speaking and listening is satisfactory. In writing, however, it is unsatisfactory. Standards are poor in handwriting and presentation, punctuation and the control of length, structure and style. Very few pupils are able to use writing effectively to support and record their learning.
- 90 The school has identified writing as an area for improvement and has used assessment to prioritise certain areas across the school. However, these areas have not yet been tackled systematically nor for long enough to raise standards. Whilst these judgements broadly correspond to the school's results over time, test results are an unreliable guide to the quality of the school's work. Year-group numbers vary, but are normally small. Also, the proportion of pupils with special education needs (SEN) varies from year to year, but is usually large. To take an extreme example, three of the five 11-year-olds who took the national tests in 2000 had SEN. In such a context, results-based comparisons with national averages can only mislead. It is clear, however, that girls normally do better than boys, that the older and more able pupils underachieve, especially in writing; that the school is falling short of the targets it sets for itself, and that, in relation to their capabilities, pupils with SEN often make better progress than other pupils because of the effective systems that support their learning. Across the school, lack of fluency in the spoken and the written word hinders pupils' ability to learn and make progress in most subjects.
- 91 By the ages of 7 and 11, standards in speaking and listening are well below average because pupils do not have enough opportunity to build and practise the required skills and confidence. Although pupils in Year 1 listen carefully to the teacher, a significant proportion found that when they started the task they had not understood the instructions. Their pronunciations of words are often immature and this inhibits their early reading skills. A few higher attainers explain their work well and present it clearly to the class, but many are lost for words. Most pupils in Year 2 carry out instructions efficiently but do not discuss their work confidently, nor articulate their response to a story clearly. They have too few opportunities to use role-play to develop their sense of character and situation. Many pupils between the ages of 7 and 11 talk confidently when working together in informal situations. In more formal situations, for example when presenting their work to the class at the end of a literacy lesson, they are less successful and teachers seldom use these situations effectively to develop these skills. Pupils are eager to answer questions but are rarely able to elaborate their answers. Some lack the verbal skills to negotiate solutions to problems with their peers. Even at the age of 11 the listening skills of many pupils remain poor. Their often-irrelevant answers reflect weak comprehension of the questions asked. Their tendency to call-out an idea that randomly springs to mind reveals an inability to listen to others in order to build a coherent discussion. As a result, teachers find it difficult to keep a discussion on track so as to promote ordered and effective learning.
- 92 In reading, standards are below expectation at the age of both seven and eleven. At both key stages pupils achieve better in reading than in writing because a graded scheme, a consistent use of homework and a broad and balanced programme of

textual study support their steady, step-by-step progress in the daily literacy hour. However, the quality of provision for the large groups of pupils who have SEN is better than that for other pupils. Consequently not enough pupils reach the higher than expected levels. Middle and higher attaining 7-year-olds show a sound and confident knowledge of books. They point-out features that distinguish fiction books from information books and explain ways of finding information by using contents or index pages. They read unfamiliar material accurately and with understanding. When they meet a difficult word they use good strategies to sound it out and to work out its meaning from clues in the text. Their attitudes are positive but they do not read aloud with expression nor show a developing knowledge of authors and personal preferences. By the age of 11 the highest attaining pupils read efficiently and accurately but without clear pleasure or expression. They pick-out the elements in a story, which reveal a particular point of view, although their explanations of the effect of this point of view are confused. Pupils of average attainment read hesitantly with incomplete comprehension and misread common words. The lower attaining pupils find many familiar words difficult and have inadequate strategies for reading unfamiliar words. Taking account of their starting points and targets, pupils with SEN make good progress, particularly when given close support. The absence of a school library seriously restricts opportunities for pupils to learn and practise library and research skills. The school partly resolves the problem by making good use of the local public library and of topic-loans from the resource centre. It has also made good strides to improve the quality, range and use of its own book-stock, particularly by extending the range of cultures represented. Older pupils are beginning to scan web sites to support their learning in subjects such as geography.

- 93 Writing is an area of considerable concern. Efforts to tackle the problem have been inadequate so far, although the school has developed good systems for assessing pupils' writing and for marking their work. Standards of writing are weak throughout the school and this weakness is more serious, particularly in terms of underachievement, at the age of eleven than at seven. The main areas of concern for the school to explore and change are as follows:
- Although the school's use of the literacy framework ensures that pupils study a good range of quality texts and that they imitate these models to practise writing for a range of different purposes, pupils' work does not show an increasing ability to control and extend these forms. Pupils have too few opportunities to write at length in a variety of situations and their independent understanding and control of the writing process are not supported by a systematic development of the skills of planning, drafting and editing.
 - Improving such standards cannot be left solely to literacy lessons. However, the school has yet to take a wider view and plan varied writing opportunities into the full curriculum. For example, older pupils are not asked to record their learning in note-form although they sometimes see their teachers noting key points on the board during discussion.
 - Worksheets are used too often in too many subjects. Many of them are well designed to match the lesson's objectives to the differing ages and attainments in the class. Often, however, they restrict written response to a word or phrase and teachers do not ask the critical question of whether a better writing opportunity would more strongly support the learning.
 - The use of homework is effective in improving pupils' reading but there is little evidence of its effective use to improve their writing.
 - Standards of presentation are not good enough. Pupils with SEN sometimes set the best standards of care and attention to finish. Across the school, too little is expected of pupils in terms of quantity, quality and completion of work. Mediocre

- standards of presentation are often accepted without comment even when teachers comment directly on other aspects of writing.
- Whilst teachers now consistently follow agreed policy by marking pupils' work in English accurately and in some depth, they do not apply the same rigour to writing in other subjects. Nor do they follow up their constructive comments. For example, punctuation is often poor, but pupils who do not punctuate their work do not show improvement in this respect after teachers' written comments point the weakness out to them.
 - Too little use is made of information and communication technology to support the development of higher-order writing skills such as self-editing.
- 94 Pupils behave well overall, and relationships are friendly. They are well-disposed towards their teachers and each other and work cooperatively in pairs or groups. However, attitudes to learning are unsatisfactory. Too many pupils are inattentive and do not settle well to their tasks, or push themselves to maintain good effort and complete work to their best standard. Higher attaining pupils are no exception. Their slow-work rate often results in underachievement because they do not move on to the more demanding elements of their tasks. Nevertheless, when good teaching captures interest and imagination, as in the shared writing of a nonsense poem, they work together with lively pace, enjoyment and ideas and take pride and pleasure in completing something well.
- 95 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Of the six lessons observed, two were good and the rest satisfactory. The balance is the same at both key stages. The more successful lessons are those in which good planning, based on an evaluation of earlier work, enables the teacher to provide clear objectives and enough pace, direction and challenge to dispel any inertia in pupils and engage them practically in interesting activity. In a good poetry lesson, for example, teacher and pupils talked and wrote together with clear purpose and mounting creative energy. As a result, pupils learned how to work with a verse form and what they could achieve by thinking critically about language. In lessons of this quality pupils are provided with well-matched tasks which they recognise as relevant and additional adults are used to good advantage to support learning. In all lessons there is a consistent and constructive approach to the management of pupils, based on high expectations of behaviour and relationships. Pupils respond positively to this approach and generally meet these expectations, even when they make little independent effort to work productively and learn. Most lessons are somewhat less successful because they are too slow and lack-lustre, or because they lose clear focus on the learning objectives. Teachers have adopted the three-part lesson format of the literacy strategy, but they do not always use it well. Sometimes teachers allow the initial phase of the lesson to run on too long, losing some attention in the process and leaving too little time for pupils to complete their planned tasks. At other times, the final stage of the lesson is not well used to provide opportunities for speaking and listening, nor help pupils to review what they have learned and set the agenda for following lessons. In such contexts the quality of learning diminishes. Nevertheless, it is the systems in place in the school that fail to support the development of writing skills and not the quality of lesson-by-lesson teaching.
- 96 Although standards have not improved since the last inspection, the school has made some significant progress. In the absence of a co-ordinator, the head teacher has begun to lead the development of better systems to establish a basis for raising attainment. Assessment has greatly improved and is now well organised to indicate

areas for improving action and to support pupils. Assessment books are now in use to monitor individual progress. The teacher assessments in these books show accurately detailed use of National Curriculum criteria. This, in turn, has enabled teachers to apply a more rigorous marking policy which gives pupils good feedback on the gains they have made and can go on to make. The monitoring of lessons is now helping to improve teaching and the quality and range of book resources have been enhanced to support all areas of literacy development.

MATHEMATICS

- 97 Standards in mathematics are well below what is typical for 7 and 11-year-olds and too few pupils attain higher than expected levels. When pupils enter Year 1, their basic skills in numeracy are well below those expected for their age. Pupils are handicapped by their poor comprehension skills, especially when it comes to reading mathematical problems presented in a written form. However, there is an improving picture.
- 98 The national test results for the past two years show that standards have been well below the national average, or very low. In 2000, 70 per cent of 7-year-olds did not reach the expected level for their age. No-one attained the higher levels. This is mainly due to pupils' skills in mental and oral mathematics being poor. At this age it is partly due to children's inability to explain how they arrived at different answers to questions posed verbally to them. However, the picture is better for the current Year 2 group with 3 out of 17 pupils likely to attain the higher grades. There is little variation between the attainment of girls and boys at this age.
- 99 By the time they are 11 pupils have made satisfactory progress but their overall attainment still remains below the levels expected for their age. One of the more problematical aspects at this stage is that more able mathematicians are not sufficiently challenged. No-one attained the higher levels in 2000. However, only 5 pupils took the national test in that year but only 1 of the 5 pupils attained the expected level for their age. There are improvements in the present Year 6 group with 6 out of the 10 likely to attain the expected level for their age. When looking at the results for the past three years, however, it is clear that girls are performing much better than boys at the age of 11.
- 100 As children leave the reception class and move into Year 1, many have not yet reached the learning goals anticipated for their age. This is hindering the speed that they can work at. The pupils' response to whole-class sessions is not as strong as is their response to tasks that they are asked to work at in ability groups. There is good effort made at this age to ensure that pupils of different abilities are suitably challenged. The pupils are introduced to appropriate mathematical language and most can tell the difference between the mathematical operation required when dealing with terms like 'sum' and 'difference'. The pupils' responses to mathematical problems is hindered by their inability to comprehend what is written. They also respond too slowly to mental and oral tasks because they have limited knowledge of times tables.
- 101 As they get older more able pupils tend not to be challenged as well. This is not as a result of their needs not being recognised but because introductions to lessons that are presented to the whole class do not make them think. In some cases the introductions are so long that they have very little time left to carry out the work that

is set for them. In one lesson, the work set had little challenge and the pupils were commenting that the work was, 'too easy'. This results in these more able pupils not making the progress that they could achieve and therefore not reaching their full potential. The needs of less able pupils, including those with special educational needs, are far more appropriately met. They are well supported by additional adults and much of the whole class part of the lesson deals with their specific problems. In dealing so well with the needs of the less able pupils teachers sometimes are not giving the attention to more able pupils. This is a problem for teachers who lack experience of dealing with mixed-aged group.

- 102 One of the main problems preventing older pupils making the necessary progress is that they do not possess the mental and oral agility to respond at speed to questions they are asked. For example, when asked 5×4 , most cannot respond quickly enough. They are able to 'chant' their tables when beginning with 1×4 is 4, 2×4 is 8 .. but, when taken out of order, they struggle. This is partly due to a lack of practise in earlier years but also to the pupils' inability in some cases to listen appropriately.
- 103 Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally satisfactory in Class 1 and 2 but unsatisfactory in Class 3. This is due to too many pupils having switched-off and not responding to questions asked. This is particularly the case amongst some of the more able pupils. A few pupils state that they do not enjoy mathematics and that lessons are boring. This is in contrast to younger pupils who clearly enjoy the challenge posed by mental and oral work.
- 104 The teaching is satisfactory for younger pupils but unsatisfactory for older ones. In one of the lessons for Class 2 pupils (Years 2, 3 and 4) the good teaching was responsible for moving on pupils' learning. In this lesson the teacher's attention to correct use of mathematical vocabulary was most helpful in enabling pupils to deal with problems that were set for them. One of the strengths of the lesson was the way in which the teacher was able to take account of the needs of pupils of different abilities. This is contrast to the unsatisfactory lesson for Class 3 where the teacher was not able to meet the needs of the more able because questions were not directed at them swiftly enough to make them think. In some cases there was also a lack of clarity in the questioning. In the work that followed the pupils were more than capable of handling the problems and this led to a lack of motivation amongst some of the pupils. One of the basic issues for the class is that, during the initial part of the lesson, two pupils share one whiteboard. This gives the ideal opportunity for the few who are likely to distract others, to do so.
- 105 The quality of learning is also unsatisfactory amongst the oldest pupils. The pupils are not sufficiently motivated and there is therefore a culture of there being no urgency and finished work being presented in an unacceptable fashion. This is in contrast to the learning that is happening amongst the youngest pupils. Here pupils have a sense of needing to give of their best and having to work hard. There is an improving trend within the school and this is already having its impact on these younger pupils.
- 106 The subject is appropriately led. The problems related to the oldest pupils are well known and documented. A temporary teacher, who is very hard working and is provided with appropriate support, teaches the class involved. Resources are adequate and these are used effectively in all classes.

- 107 Although standards have not improved since the last inspection, there is evidence of much improvement recently. The progress made is rapidly improving and most of the difficulties relate to Class 3 which is taught by a temporary teacher. Despite his good efforts the teacher does not know the pupils well enough to help them make the improvements required. This is a situation that the school is aware of and are confident that the permanent appointment they have made for next year will solve many of the difficulties encountered this year. This prediction is made with some certainty because the school has put in place the structures that ought to see rapid improvement.

SCIENCE

- 108 Standards in science have been low for the past two years and are likely to remain low because pupils do not possess the necessary literacy and numeracy skills to help them record work appropriately.
- 109 The national test results for the past two years show that the attainment of 11-year-olds is well below average. The present Year 6 group is slightly stronger but many are still not attaining at the levels expected for their age. Teacher assessments for 7-year-olds reveal that not enough pupils are attaining at the higher levels and this is resulting in standards being below the national averages. The present Year 2 is again slightly better but still attaining at levels that are below those expected for their age.
- 110 When pupils leave the reception class their scientific knowledge is not good. There is good work happening in Year 1 with the teacher working hard on improving their knowledge of physical processes, as is seen with the work related to forces. Good use of pupils' own toys helps them to understand more about the way they move and about 'pulls' and 'pushes'. They do not build on this position successfully in Class 2, which includes the Year 2 pupils, with the workbooks showing poor presentation and too much colouring in happening. There has been appropriate coverage of scientific enquiry with pupils beginning to set-up fair tests and finding-out things by direct experience. The move to split Class 2 into teaching groups has been beneficial and already the present Year 2 are working at a more demanding pace.
- 111 Year 3 and 4 pupils do not have enough sense of pride in the presentation of their work. However, when working on practical tasks, such as setting up an electrical circuit they show much interest and enjoy the practical nature of the tasks. They know how to represent what they have done in diagrammatical form. The more practical the tasks the more the pupils are learning. It is in the area of recording their work that pupils are falling down.
- 112 Year 5 and 6 pupils do not make the necessary progress because they are not provided with a range of appropriate resources to help them understand more about the areas being studied. For example, a lack of suitable resources hinders pupils' understanding about the relationship between the Sun, Earth and the Moon. In addition, the pupils are provided with inaccurate information, which confuses many. More able pupils, in particular, do not make the necessary progress and are hindered by the lack of challenge that is presented to them. A large percentage of Year 6 work is associated with revision exercises and tends to be in the form of one-word answer.

- 113 The pupils use the computer to find-out information about their scientific work but their lack of literacy and numeracy skills is hampering their progress in science. Many are not able to set out their work appropriately and they do not use diagrams to help illustrate points they are making.
- 114 The majority of pupils in Classes 1 and 2 enjoy science. They are particularly keen on the practical nature of the tasks they undertake. They work together well and share equipment appropriately. The pupils in Class 3 do not have the same sense of excitement about their scientific tasks. However, most work quite hard and do not attempt to disrupt others.
- 115 The teaching is satisfactory for children 5 to 7 but unsatisfactory for 7 to 11 year-olds. The work with younger pupils is often of a good standard. There is appropriate use of resources to stimulate interest and the explanations are well founded and interesting. Teachers know their pupils well and therefore able to provide appropriate tasks for them. This is in contrast to the unsatisfactory teaching for older pupils which does not ensure work is presented neatly. The marking tends to remark only to the amount completed rather than the quality. There was also confusion caused to Year 5 and 6 pupils by the teacher's inappropriate explanation about the relationship between the Sun, the Earth and the Moon.
- 116 The subject is appropriately managed but there is a lack of quality control over much of the work being produced. This has led to poor presentation and to work of a poor quality being accepted. There is a need to review the way the school oversees the work being produced and to consider ways of improving this. There is an adequate amount of resources available and, on the whole, this is used well. There is, however, a shortage of some key resources, which might have aided the explanation about the Earth's orbit around the Sun, and the positioning of the Moon at different times of the month.

ART AND DESIGN

- 117 Standards are typical of those expected from 7 and 11-year-olds and similar to those reported by the previous inspection. From a below average starting point, pupils achieve well and develop secure techniques in a range of two-dimensional media and textiles.
- 118 Pupils in Year 1, for example, have produced patterns in contrasting colours by weaving and plaiting with threads and ribbons and also by printing with items with different shapes, such as dice and beakers. They have worked with a range of materials such as wool, lace, seeds, wood shavings, pasta and bottle tops to create striking studies of large flowers and of houses. Pupils choose and use materials well to create the right textures for thatched roofs and glazed windows. By the end of Year 2, pupils show good skills with chinks, crayons and water-colours to create effectively impressionistic studies of flowers, trees and portrait heads. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 begin to adapt their use of paint to imitate the style of a famous artist such as Renoir. They also practise the more rigorous skills of observational drawing in pencil. Their recent studies of a pheasant establish accurate outline shapes, whilst a few who are more talented use the pencil skilfully to represent plumage and the features of head and feet. By the end of Year 6 pupils control brushwork and colour effectively to produce a range of accomplished flower studies based on Van

Gogh's, 'Irises'. The combination of dark colours and bright highlights is striking. These pupils also create very good still-life compositions in a range of media and styles. Some flat designs based on different fruit shapes show a good sense of form, tone and composition.

- 119 The increasing use of sketch-books is improving pupils' understanding of the concepts and skills required to represent light, shade, form and movement. Some pupils are beginning to annotate their sketches and this habit of recording their self-evaluations and learning should be widely promoted. Links with other subjects are strongly evident. Art has, for example, effectively supported the study of light in science, symmetry in mathematics and historical work on the armour and weapons of the Roman soldier.
- 120 No art lessons were taught during the period of inspection and no three-dimensional work was available for scrutiny. However, it is clear that teaching effectively informs and enthuses pupils, enables them to develop secure techniques across a range of media and subjects, and to use them with both discipline and imagination.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 121 Only one lesson was timetabled during the period of inspection and very few examples of previously completed work were available. As a result, no secure overall judgements on standards and teaching can be made.
- 122 Recent work has involved Year 1 pupils in making pop-up pictures in which cut-out characters from a story can be moved through a setting by means of slits and push rods. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have made decorated photo-frames from card and other sheet materials. In relation to age, both products show sound skills in designing, planning, measuring, cutting, joining and finishing. Pupils express enthusiasm for the subject and talk proudly about their work.
- 123 These positive attitudes were very evident in a food technology lesson in which pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 investigated a variety of pre-packed sandwiches in terms of the criteria related to personal preferences and healthy diets. The lesson was very well prepared and organised, with clear structure, interesting activities, strong learning support and very good resources. Pupils enjoyed the lesson, worked well and made sound progress. However, the attainment of the oldest pupils was below that expected for their age. They needed very firm support and guidance to adopt and maintain an appropriately systematic procedure for analysing the components of sandwiches. They also lacked ideas about a suitable format for recording their responses, although they understood the need for a structured process. Limited vocabulary inhibited their learning. For example, pupils found great difficulty in moving from vague adjectives such as 'amazing' or 'horrible' (horbull!) towards more precisely descriptive sensory adjectives such as 'doughy', 'moist', 'crunchy' or 'spicy'. Weak language development is a general constraint in learning activities in the school.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

- 124 No history was taught during the three days of the inspection and only two lessons of geography, both at Key Stage 2. Judgements are based on these and on the evidence of pupils' work and discussion. By the time pupils are 11 their attainment in both subjects is below what is expected at this age and below that reported by the last inspection. Pupils are making good progress overall from a low starting point. The subjects are being successfully re-established in the light of national guidance and revised curricular requirements, following a period of staffing difficulties and preoccupation with developments in literacy and numeracy.
- 125 By the age of 7, pupils have developed their understanding of the passage of time by considering changes in their own lives, by studying how houses have changed and by working-out how toys can be placed on a time line. Their knowledge and understanding of place develops through studies of their own locality. They make simple route plans of their own everyday journeys, noting landmarks and comparing where they live with different locations that they visit, such as the seaside.
- 126 In Years 3 and 4, pupils learn how to use secondary sources such as maps, books, CD Rom and television programmes to extend their knowledge and understanding of important periods in British and World history and of different environments, climates and ways of life in Britain and across the World. By age 11 pupils have a range of skills for investigation and comparing different times and places. As well as secondary sources, they use visits to places of interest. For example, they use books and the Internet to support their work on mountain ranges but also use first-hand experience to study the course of a stream during their residential visit to Hazelhead. Many pupils show a weak understanding of a World map. Their learning is restricted by weak reading skills, although some more able pupils browse web sites skilfully and take useful notes to record their learning. The progress of some pupils is also impeded by their reluctance to maintain commitment and a sense of urgent interest in their approach to tasks.
- 127 Of the two lessons observed, the quality of teaching and learning was good in one and satisfactory in the other. In the good lesson, the teacher's strong subject expertise and communicative skill enabled him to skilfully use simple examples and demonstrations to make difficult concepts about movements in the earth's crust accessible and interesting to his pupils. In both lessons teachers used stimulating resources as a basis for discussion so that visual aids and talk supported each other well to make learning coherent and secure. At the same time, teachers do not always manage the mixed-age situation well enough to enable all pupils, particularly the older and more able ones, to progress at their best pace and to benefit from opportunities to work independently.
- 128 The school makes full use of the local authority's loan service and of visits to nearby places such as Gainsborough Old Hall, to support pupils' learning and to extend the contribution made by these subjects to pupils' social and cultural development. All the staff jointly coordinate both subjects. In practice, however, this means that teachers plan independently of each other. The curriculum benefits significantly from the adoption of nationally recommended schemes of work. However, there is not enough awareness of gaps in pupils' learning caused by staff turnover in the past and a changed programme of work, because there are no useful records of previous learning. Nor is there yet a clear joint initiative to raise standards. Important opportunities are missed for history and geography to contribute to and

benefit from the development of pupils skills in literacy. Writing is not used enough to support learning. There are few examples of pupils writing freely about their learning in either subject. Too much recorded work is teacher directed and makes heavy use of worksheets. As a result the emphasis typically falls, even in the recent work of Year 6 pupils on Ancient Greece, on the brief recording of basic factual information rather than on learning to investigate and interpret evidence and on expressing their learning at length in writing.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 129 The school has benefited from the support provided by the local secondary school and, as a result, standards have improved significantly since the previous inspection. Pupils at the age of 7 are now attaining at the levels expected for their age. Eleven-year-old pupils are still not attaining at the levels expected for their age but they are making rapid improvement. This is due to the good progress that has been made since the school has had access to the computer suite situated in the local secondary school.
- 130 Pupils aged between 5 and 7 are making good progress. They can change the size and font of text and highlight or bold letters or words. They can also use the keyboard pencil to draw pictures and use an art program to illustrate shape pictures. They are able to combine the use of the word processor with the art program to make greeting cards.
- 131 Pupils aged between 7 and 11 also make good progress although their standards are not yet high enough. They are able to make-up lists and change colour. They are confident when using word processing skills and use these to write letters. Many pupils have used a digital camera and have been able to set up a database. During a lesson when pupils were transferring information from their database to graphical form, most demonstrated that they could make choices about the type of graph they wanted to use and were able to experiment with different types before making up their mind.
- 132 Pupils display very positive attitudes when working in the computer suite. They show that they are able to concentrate for an extended period and pay attention to the demonstrations being provided for them. There is little distraction happening and most are good listeners in this situation.
- 133 The teaching in the computer suite is mostly carried out by the secondary school's technician. The class teacher and at least one other adult support him. The instructions given to the pupils are clear and well understood. The fact that all have a computer each to work at makes a great deal of difference to the levels of interest and concentration. The combination of the technician and the adults leads to good teaching which is making a positive impact on pupils' learning and in turn helping to raise standards.
- 134 The school is beginning to make more use of its own computers in other subjects with better use now being made of computers to support pupils' research as was seen during a science lesson in Class 3. However, there is still some way to go to ensure that computers are used effectively in this respect. The resources are adequate because of the facilities provided by the secondary school. However,

within the school there are not enough computers available to help pupils make greater use of their newly acquired skills in other subjects.

MUSIC

- 135 Standards are below average at the ages of 7 and 11. The effort to develop music throughout the school and to raise its status and standards is supported by an improved scheme of work, a lunchtime guitar club and the instrumental tuition offered after school by the education authority's music service. However, the emerging scheme has not yet been pursued for long enough to make a significant impact on pupils' understandings, skills and attitudes. Overall, the potential of music to enrich the cultural life of the school is not being realised.
- 136 Lessons were observed in all three classes. In Years 1 and 2, most pupils followed a pulse and reproduced it by clapping. They responded to a strong rhythm by moving their heads, arms or legs in approximate time to it. They knew some instruments are struck and some shaken to make a musical sound, but when they played the instruments they did not co-ordinate their playing with others well. In response to an African chant, many could not follow the pulse and rhythm. In Years 3 and 4, groups of pupils varied the singing of, 'I Hear Thunder' effectively to evoke contrasting moods such as stormy and calm. They could not, however, interpret the moods of different excerpts from 'Carnival of the Animals', nor do they have the words and concepts to explain how the moods are created musically. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 showed an equally weak understanding and use of the musical elements of dynamics and timbre and their discussion of the music of 'Space Oddity' showed poor listening and appraising skills. Music has a secure role in the school's liturgical life but the singing in assembly is rather lack-lustre and unpractised and pupils depend heavily on the accompaniment and the good lead provided by staff.
- 137 Pupils' attitudes to music are unsatisfactory. Whilst they control their behaviour well enough, they do not conceal their reluctance to listen, involve themselves and learn.
- 138 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are carefully prepared and systematically developed in relation to clear expectations and well-focused objectives and activities. In all three lessons, however, impact was weakened by lack of pace and confidence in delivery and by a tendency to move from a theoretical introduction into practical activity. This required pupils to sit and listen and conceptualise for too long, when it would have been more effective to engage them in vigorous practical work on which the background knowledge could have been built.
- 139 The position reported by the last inspection has not been maintained, although the school is pursuing a policy designed to restore the situation.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 140 Standards in physical education are broadly satisfactory. The majority of 11-year-olds are able to show physical skills that match those expected for their age. All pupils are provided with opportunities to swim leading to most being able to swim at least 25 meters by the time they leave the school. The school again benefits from the use of the secondary school's sports hall by all classes.

- 141 When they start Year 1 many pupils have already reached the learning goal anticipated for their age. They make satisfactory progress thereafter. Year 1 pupils are able to throw and catch a ball with some confidence. More able pupils are able to roll a ball and catch up with it before it stops. Others are able to throw a ball 2 to 3 meters in the air and catch it. They know about the importance of warming-up and can explain the reasons for doing so. By the time they are in Year 2 their games skills are extended to involve more small-sided team games. These games help to develop pupils' ability to play to specific rules and are successful in getting pupils to work together and co-operate. Good coaching helps to improve their catching and throwing skills.
- 142 During Class 3's gymnastics lesson the pupils show appropriate movements both on the floor and on apparatus. They are able to put these movements together to create sequences, which on the whole are well controlled and require the degree of physical skill anticipated for their age. The pupils in this class, however, take too long in setting out the apparatus. However, the apparatus is difficult to manage because it is quite big (the drawbacks of using a secondary school gymnastic hall). The positive aspects of using the hall far outweigh the negative features however.
- 143 The teaching is satisfactory in each class. The teachers are clear about the structure of the lesson ensuring that there is adequate time for warming-up and warming-down. In the gymnastics lesson there is a good link between the floor work and apparatus work. In the games lessons in Classes 1 and 2 there is evidence of good progress having been made allowing Class 2's lesson to be that much more demanding. Each teacher uses pupils' demonstrations appropriately to help improve the performance of others in their class.
- 144 When taking account of the use that the school has of the secondary school's hall then resources are adequate but, without this, the school would not be able to provide an appropriate curriculum for physical education. There has been satisfactory progress made since the previous inspection when only swimming was observed.