

INSPECTION REPORT

CLIFFE HILL COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Lightcliffe, Halifax

LEA area: Calderdale

Unique reference number: 107525

Acting Headteacher: Mr Andy Taylor
Consultant headteacher: Mrs Jean Heslop

Reporting inspector: Dr R Perkin
14591

Dates of inspection: 16 - 19 September 2002

Inspection number: 246682

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

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Stoney Lane
Lightcliffe
Halifax

Postcode: HX3 8TW

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr R Marlor

Date of previous inspection: December 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
14591	Dr R Perkin Registered inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music Physical education Educational inclusion English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
1234	Mrs T Bradley Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
25431	Mrs L Clark Team inspector	English Art Design and technology History	The school's results and achievements How well are the pupils taught?
19916	Mrs D Kerr Team inspector	Mathematics Geography Religious education Provision for children in the foundation stage Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Cliffe Hill is a smaller than average community primary school with 171 pupils between the ages of four and 11. It is set in an area of considerable social deprivation within affluent surroundings. Most pupils are of white British heritage; of the few pupils from other ethnic backgrounds, none is learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils qualifying for free school meals at 41 per cent is well above average. A well above average proportion of pupils (28 per cent) either leave the school or join it in Years 2 to 6 and in most years this has a negative effect on standards. An above average proportion of pupils have identified special educational needs. At this early stage of the year, the number of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need is below the national average. The range of special educational needs includes speech and communication difficulties; behaviour and emotional difficulties; physical disability; learning impairment; and moderate learning difficulties. Eighteen pupils are in the Breakthrough Unit, which has been established to improve their academic achievement, behaviour and their personal development. Children's attainment on entry to the school is well below average and is particularly weak in communication, language, literacy and personal and social development. The school is involved in a national scheme for teacher training and recently has been successfully reviewed for the Investors in People Award. The consultant headteacher was the first to be given a School Leadership Award in 1999. At the time of the inspection, the retired headteacher worked as a consultant alongside the acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher. Two of the teachers, including one who is newly qualified, had been in the school for only two weeks.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school. Pupils make good progress from a very low base to reach standards that are only slightly below national standards. There is excellent provision for pupils' personal development and teaching and learning are very good. The leadership and management of the school are excellent. The school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well because of the very good teaching they receive
- Standards in art are above the national average
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because of the excellent provision made for them
- Exciting and very effective nursery and reception classes provide an excellent start for the children
- Excellent relationships and very positive attitudes to learning result from the school's excellent provision for pupils' personal development
- Excellent support and guidance for the pupils is based on meticulous monitoring of pupils' progress and personal development
- Excellent leadership and management are supported by an excellently led and very effective governing body

What could be improved

- Standards in writing*
- Standards in mathematics*
- Standards in geography and history*
- Pupils' attendance and its monitoring

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. The areas marked with an asterisk are already identified in the school's current improvement plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been very good improvement since the last inspection in December 1997. National test results have improved considerably, as have standards in science, information and communication technology (ICT), art and, substantially, religious education. All the key issues identified at the last inspection have been resolved. The quality of teaching and learning has significantly improved and the systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' work are now excellent. There have been very good improvements in the curriculum offered to pupils and new initiatives and projects have been successfully adopted. The quality of leadership and management, which was already very good, is now excellent.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	E*	E*	E*	E	well above average A
mathematics	E	E*	E	B	above average B
science	E	E*	E	D	average C
					below average D
					well below average E

The national test results for 11-year-olds in 2001 were well below the national average and, in English, were in the bottom five per cent nationally. Results improved dramatically in the 2002 tests, surpassing the school's ambitious targets and moving much closer to the standards expected nationally, particularly in science and English, which are now at expected levels. The number of pupils achieving the level above that expected also increased in 2002. The trend is upwards in all three subjects and the school's challenging future targets reflect this. The school's excellent systems for tracking pupils' progress show considerable progress being made for almost all pupils, particularly for those who join the school in nursery or reception. Test results for seven-year-olds in 2001 were well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics but in mathematics compared well with schools with a similar proportion of free school meals; results were similar to those schools in reading and below in writing. By the time children leave the reception class, while their standards in communication, language and literacy are still well below average, they have made substantial progress in all other areas of learning to be just below average.

For 11-year-olds, standards in art and design are above those expected. Standards in reading and speaking and listening, science, ICT, music, physical education and religious education are at expected levels. In writing, mathematics, design and technology, geography and history, while progress has been made, standards are still below average. For seven-year-olds, standards in speaking and listening, writing, mathematics, science and ICT are below average. In reading, design and technology, history, music, physical education and religious education standards are at expected levels and in art and design they are above the levels expected.

Pupils achieve well and those who have special educational needs achieve very well. While girls perform better than boys in the tests for seven-year-olds, by the age of 11, the boys have very largely caught up, noticeably in English. Pupils who join the school during Years 2 to 6 achieve well but in most years their attainment is below that of most pupils who have been at the school since reception.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils' attitudes to learning and to the school are very positive. They participate enthusiastically in lessons, clubs and other activities such as residential visits.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. While not all pupils find it easy to behave well, the school's very good provision ensures that behaviour is good both in classrooms and around the school and that bullying is dealt with quickly and successfully.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Excellent relationships between pupils and the adults in the school mean that pupils have very good levels of respect and understanding.
Attendance	Well below average, in spite of the school's efforts to improve it.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	Very good

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

The quality of teaching is very good overall and was very good or better in half of the lessons seen. Teaching is never less than satisfactory. The best teaching takes place in the nursery and reception classes and in Years 1, 2 and 5. The school recognises that pupils are not easy to manage and teachers new to the school or with less experience receive excellent support from senior managers. This team teaching is a strength of the school, as is the use of the expert teaching assistants. Pupils learn particularly well in the nursery and reception classes and in Years 1, 2 and 5. Pupils' rate of learning slows in Years 3 and 4 where the teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching in the Breakthrough Unit is very good and enables pupils with special educational needs or emotional and behavioural difficulties to make very good progress. The quality of teaching of children in the nursery and reception classes is consistently high and gives the children a very good start to schooling. Teaching is very good in English, mathematics and art throughout the school. Literacy and numeracy are well taught. The teaching of reading is better than that of writing. There are missed opportunities to use writing and information and communication technology extensively in other subjects and this affects progress in these areas.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum is broad and interesting and meets statutory requirements. All pupils benefit from the rich variety of clubs and visits.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Excellent. Pupils with special educational needs are extremely well catered for through expert and caring support, excellent planning for their needs and, for some, the very successful Breakthrough Unit
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent. The school encourages very high aspirations, promotes reflection and celebrates pupils' personal and academic achievements generously. The behaviour policy is consistently applied. Very stimulating assemblies, residential and other visits and the school council are part of the excellent provision for pupils' social development. Pupils are very well prepared for growing up in a diverse

	society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. Procedures for assessing pupils' work and monitoring their progress and personal development are excellent and pupils receive excellent personal and educational help and guidance. The school makes good efforts to promote and celebrate pupils' attendance but it does not sufficiently monitor absences.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Very well. Parents have very positive views of the school and the school's links with them are very constructive. The school provides good quality information.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The school has an extremely clear educational direction. Its life and work reflect its aims and values through high aspirations and innovative methods. There is an excellent shared commitment by the whole school team. Extremely well developed management systems are applied consistently so that pupils make good academic progress and excellent personal development.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. Under excellent leadership, the very committed governing body knows the school very well and plays an important part in guiding and supporting the quality of its education.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. Very highly developed systems for assessing and checking pupils' development and progress and stringent monitoring and evaluation of teaching enable the school to identify strengths and areas for development and to take effective action.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Appropriate priorities are identified and spending directed towards meeting them. Spending is used particularly well to benefit pupils with special educational and other needs.
The extent to which the school applies the principles of best value	Very good. The school consults parents, pupils, governors and staff regularly, compares its performance with other schools, sets itself increasingly challenging targets and ensures that financial decisions provide the best value possible in relation to its educational priorities.
The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	Good. There is a very good match of teachers and support staff to the needs of the pupils and to the curriculum. The accommodation, both outside and in, is good. While learning resources are generally satisfactory, there are not enough fiction books.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school, make good progress and are helped to become mature and responsible • Teaching is good and there are high expectations • The school is well led and managed and parents feel comfortable in approaching the school with questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount and consistency of homework • The range of activities outside lessons

The inspection judgement strongly agrees with parents' positive views. Arrangements for homework are satisfactory. There is a very good range of very good quality activities outside

lessons through the clubs, residential and other visits and visitors to the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The marked improvement in standards in English, mathematics and science for 11-year-olds over the past three years and since the last inspection has been brought about by a number of factors. Thorough analysis of national test results has enabled the school to identify areas of weakness and take action to put them right. Recently developed excellent systems for assessing pupils' work and tracking their progress have meant that individual learning difficulties are being dealt with quickly and successfully. Consequently, pupils who have special educational needs, who make up a significant proportion of most classes, make very good progress. These systems also help to identify the needs of pupils who join the school during Years 2 to 6 so that they too can make progress in spite of being in the school for a shorter time than other pupils. Inevitably, however, overall levels of attainment are depressed by the above average proportions of both of these groups of pupils and the often very good achievement of the majority of the pupils is to some extent masked. Similarly very high quality procedures for monitoring pupils' behaviour and personal development have had strong positive effects on pupils' behaviour in class, on their attitudes to learning and consequently on their progress. The school has invested heavily in provision to improve pupils' attitudes, behaviour and academic progress by maintaining and staffing single age classes, employing additional teaching assistants and setting up the Breakthrough Unit. In addition to these factors, higher standards are resulting from the improvement in teaching seen since the last inspection; teaching in all parts of the school is now very good and often excellent. The effects of these initiatives can be seen in the national test results for 2002, which reflect the recent upward trend in which pupils' performance at a national level has improved by as much as 25 per cent year on year in English and science and by about ten per cent each year in mathematics. Standards this year for the present Year 6 are higher still: in English and mathematics, standards are only slightly below average and they are average in science. Standards by the end of Year 2 in national tests in 2001 were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in the present Year 2 are higher than this but remain below average overall.

2. Pupils achieve well for they start school with well below average attainment in all areas of learning with particular weaknesses evident in communication, language, literacy and mathematical development; many pupils achieve very well. Most notably, attainment in reading has improved considerably in the past two years and is now close to average standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. By the end of Year 6, standards in speaking and listening are also about average. Standards in writing are below average largely because pupils do not have enough opportunities to write in other subjects and there are too few regular opportunities to use writing tools in the nursery and reception classes; the school is well aware of this and has a suitable action plan designed to raise attainment in this area. Standards are below average in mathematics because pupils have too few opportunities as yet to learn through solving problems or investigating. The similar weakness in science has been addressed and the element of practical work is stronger – hence the improved results, particularly in the number of higher attainers reaching level 5 by the end of Year 6.

3. In part, the school's overall results are depressed by the above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs in any one year group. The school has an extremely efficient system designed to help these pupils to catch up. Partway through Year 1 and throughout Year 2, pupils who have special educational needs or other learning difficulties are taught English and mathematics in small groups in the Breakthrough Unit. Throughout the school, pupils who need additional help benefit from the very good teaching in the unit which enables them to make very good progress at their level. This is also very useful as an additional support for pupils who join the school at times other than the usual: the school has an above average proportion of pupils who enter or leave the school at different points in the school year. Issues such as underachievement by particular groups of pupils are monitored closely and rectified. So, for example, boys now

achieve as well as girls and attain the higher levels in all three subjects and pupils who joined the school during Years 2 to 6 are provided with help that is carefully designed to ensure that they make progress.

4. Standards overall show improvement compared to those in the last inspection, particularly in English, mathematics and science. For example, over three-quarters of pupils now attain nationally expected standards or better in English by the age of 11 compared to a third five years ago. Standards in literacy and numeracy have improved, particularly in the last two years when the school has had the confidence to adapt the national strategies to suit the needs of its pupils.

5. Children in the nursery and reception classes make good progress in a very short time. This good progress continues throughout the school in response to very good teaching, enabling pupils of different levels of attainment and with different educational needs to achieve very well.

6. Standards are in line with those expected nationally by the end of Year 6 in information and communication technology (ICT), music, physical education and religious education. This is very good achievement compared to the level at which pupils begin school. Standards are below average in history, geography and design and technology, reflecting the small amount of time devoted to these subjects particularly in Year 6. Standards are broadly in line by the end of Year 2 in all subjects apart from ICT where standards are below the level expected of seven-year-olds. Throughout the school, standards are above average in art and reflect the creative approach to this subject and the value the school places on visual and performing arts. Additional time given to clubs within school on Wednesday afternoons allows pupils with special talents or interests to pursue these further. This has a beneficial impact on standards of speaking and listening through drama and story clubs and on art and physical development through sporting and artistic activities. These also allow pupils with special educational needs to receive as broad an education as others.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Pupils have very good attitudes to school and behave well. Their personal development and relationships are very good. These factors make a very strong contribution to pupils' progress and attainment. There have been improvements since the last inspection in pupils' attitudes to school and in the amount of boisterous behaviour seen. Pupils' attendance, however, is poor.

8. Because pupils' attitudes are very good they are willing to be taught and guided by their teachers. They can get caught up in their teacher's enthusiasm and find fun in their learning. These very positive attitudes are very effectively developed in the nursery and reception classes where, although many children start school with poor levels of social skills, they are quickly taught to listen to the teacher and to play and work harmoniously with other children. Pupils who have special educational needs respond very well to the extra help they receive in school and even the youngest, often shy, pupils are eager and willing to share their new reading skills with visitors. The older pupils respond very well to lessons which encourage them to think deeply. For example, Year 6 pupils were challenged to reflect on the importance of their own personal traits. They illustrated their sentiments with drawings of hearts or sketches of themselves telling jokes - both good examples of how love and laughter are important in their lives. This was a successful lesson which worked well and contributed to the spiritual development of the pupils as well as to their religious education.

9. Pupils know right from wrong and accept the school's methods to eliminate unacceptable behaviour. They confirm that bullying, racism and sexism are fairly dealt with by their teachers and openly discussed during personal, social and health education lessons. Pupils who are immature or have difficulty in managing their own behaviour are very well supported in school and most pupils are developing good moral and social values. The school has not found it necessary to exclude any pupils during the past academic year.

10. Pupils of all ages flourish through the school's methods to support them as they develop personally. Children in the nursery and reception classes receive an excellent start to their life in

school, building up confidence and learning the routines of school life very well indeed. Pupils' personal development is strengthened as they accept responsibilities as school councillors or as class monitors and carry out their duties conscientiously. School councillors are keen to discuss new changes in school with their head teacher and parent council members, while other pupils take opportunities to use their own initiative, during lessons, to work independently or with their friends. The self esteem of pupils is raised in special assemblies which celebrate 'stars of the week'. The stars are pupils who have tried very hard to produce their best work or behave with outstanding consideration for others. These assemblies boost morale and help to equip pupils with values that are morally and socially correct.

11. Relationships in school are extremely strong and positive. Adults build excellent relationships with the pupils in their care and as a result pupils treat each other with respect and kindness. The school's 'buddy bench' is put to good use and pupils confirm that it does help anyone who might be feeling unhappy. At break times, any child who sits alone on the buddy bench makes the statement that they need someone to play with. Very soon they are surrounded by many friends willing to join them and chat with them. Children settle very well into the daily routines of the nursery where they make new friends and begin their school lives. Strong friendships are formed between pupils of all ages and encouraged to develop through the school's various clubs. Clubs allow older and younger pupils to spend time together, in the classroom as well as on the sports field. For example, two boys from Year 6 were particularly helpful to the younger children in their information communications technology club. They explained the use of the word processing package and helped with drawings and colour changes.

12. The only weakness in pupils' attitudes to school is their poor attendance. Attendance figures are well below the national average and the importance of attendance is undermined by those pupils who are absent from school without providing good reason. The school's analysis of last year's attendance figures show that the impact of attendance on pupils' learning and achievement is greatest within those year groups that attend school regularly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

13. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now good or better in most lessons and very good overall. Half of the teaching was very good or excellent. Teaching was never less than satisfactory. Consistently outstanding teaching took place in the nursery and reception classes and in Years 1, 2 and 5. Senior managers provide excellent support for recently arrived teachers. Pupils learn particularly well in the nursery and reception classes and in Years 1, 2, 5 and 6. Pupils' rate of learning slows in Years 3 and 4 where much of the teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good. The school has excellent systems to help pupils to learn in the Breakthrough Unit where pupils with special educational needs or emotional and behavioural difficulties receive the additional guidance they need. The quality of teaching they receive is very good and enables them to make very good progress.

14. Teaching is very good in English, mathematics and art throughout the school; it is very good in history in infant classes and very good in science, religious education and music in junior classes. Teaching is good in science and music in infant classes and it is good in ICT and physical education throughout the school. Teaching is satisfactory in design and technology in junior classes; not enough is taught in the upper juniors. No teaching was seen in design and technology or in religious education in infant classes or in history in the juniors.

15. The strategies for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy work well and these subjects are well taught. The national strategies have been sensibly adapted to suit the needs and attainment levels of the pupils and consequently pupils are learning better and standards are rising. Opportunities are missed, however, to promote the skills of writing through other subjects and there is a tendency to rely on commercially produced worksheets as a means of recording mathematical, scientific or other knowledge rather than encouraging pupils to record using their own words.

Homework is used sensibly to develop pupils' skills in reading, spelling and number. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to work independently and in small groups and pupils behave responsibly and learn well. Teaching and other assistants are extremely good and they have a real impact on pupils' learning, contributing particularly well to assessing pupils' contributions in lessons as well as sensitively clarifying the understanding of those who find learning more difficult. The high level of teamwork evident throughout the school between teachers and support staff is a notable strength.

16. Children in the nursery and reception classes are very well taught. Lesson planning is excellent and the very high quality of assessment ensures that children follow a curriculum which is most suitable for their age and stage of development. Teachers and nursery nurses work extremely well together and the effectiveness of their teaching methods is seen both in the rapid progress children make and in their developing confidence. Teaching at this stage shows imaginative flair as well as being mindful of the need to challenge potentially higher attainers. While furry bear suits provide an immediate focus for playing Goldilocks and the three bears, little finger puppets representing the characters encourage higher attainers to 'read books' and put on special voices in imitation of their teacher as they declare in big, little or medium voices which bear they are.

17. There are considerable strengths in the quality of teaching throughout the school. All teachers are very interested in trying out different teaching methods and much of the teaching is innovative. Planning is excellent and provides sufficient detail for lessons to be well taught as well as space for invaluable notes to record how well individual and groups of pupils have learnt. These notes are then used to help plan other lessons. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is constructive and usually indicates ways in which pupils can improve their work, sometimes referring to the pupils' individual targets. Where the quality of teaching is satisfactory, teachers are less skilled at giving pupils convincing reasons for undertaking certain tasks. Sometimes introductions are a little too long and lessons can lose pace as teachers have to stop to ensure that everyone is listening. Opportunities can be missed to involve pupils sufficiently in closing sessions. Much of this is due to inexperience, recognised by the senior managers who provide excellent support and advice, showing the rare art of contributing to teaching without dominating, so everyone learns. Where the quality of teaching is good, teachers promote pupils' independent learning well by allowing choices. Activities are relevant and clear instructions coupled with good class management ensure that pupils learn well.

18. Where the quality of teaching is very good, the learning of pupils of different levels of attainment is noticeably extended. Pupils are made well aware of time limits and so they work with a sense of urgency to complete their tasks. Teachers give explicit instructions to help pupils to work productively together; directions such as 'look at each other – talk – work together in a group – take notes' help pupils to make best use of their time. In these lessons, teachers' subject knowledge is very good and so they have the confidence to involve pupils fully in their own learning. Where the quality of teaching is excellent, the management of behaviour is very subtly contrived so as to always be positive. Teachers' questions and prompts to stimulate discussion are constructive and lessons are very clear and purposeful without being over-didactic. In these lessons, resources are used exceptionally well to give pupils a measure of independence in their learning or to end the lesson with an activity that is thought provoking as well as reinforcing what has been learnt. Above all, excellent lessons promote a high level of response in the pupils who aspire to meet the challenges their teachers set them while still having the confidence to question if they do not understand. This results in excellent levels of interest and much enthusiasm.

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

19. Teachers have worked very hard since the previous inspection to put into place a broad and relevant curriculum that very successfully meets the needs of its pupils and fulfils what is required

by statute. This has resulted in several improvements. A notable one is that teachers now use national guidelines as a basis for planning each subject and these ensure that as pupils move through the school their learning builds systematically on the previous year's work.

20. There are other significant strengths in the provision that enable pupils of all backgrounds and abilities to make progress. The national programmes for teaching literacy and numeracy have been successfully introduced and are contributing to rising standards in English and mathematics. The school's strategies for teaching reading, speaking and listening skills are having a marked impact on standards in these areas. Writing is improving at a slower rate and this aspect of English remains a school development priority.

21. The teachers in the nursery and reception class provide a rich and practical curriculum that covers all the areas of learning required by the national guidelines. Teaching in these areas links together wherever possible and children experience exciting indoor and outdoor activities that enable them to learn through carefully planned work and play.

22. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent and ensures they are given full access to the curriculum. In some cases, they work on specially adapted programmes, for example in literacy lessons and in the Breakthrough Unit, where they receive specialist teaching. In almost all lessons skilled classroom assistants work closely with them to provide extra help or to modify the classwork for their needs.

23. Teachers provide a very wide range of additional activities and experiences such as clubs, visits out of school and visitors into school to enrich the curriculum. These include visits to museums, theatres and places of interest. Visitors from the local faith communities, performing artists and musicians come into lessons and assemblies. Their contributions enrich pupils' learning and broaden their understanding of the world around them and their place in the local community. The school's arrangement for extra-curricular clubs is innovative and successful, enabling all pupils to experience a wide selection of activities, which include sports, crafts and performing arts. This provision ensures that all pupils, whatever their different needs and backgrounds are able to take full part in the life of the school. There is an excellent programme of work for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education and this includes preparation for a smooth transfer to the local secondary schools when they are 11 years old.

24. There are some minor weaknesses in the school's curricular provision that restrict what pupils can achieve. Some aspects of the history and geography programmes are not taught as well as others and this contributes to the lower standards in these subjects. In particular, not enough time is spent on the subjects in Year 6, so these pupils do not cover the work planned in enough depth to reach the standards expected. Similarly, not enough time is given across the school for writing in subjects other than English and progress in writing is limited as a result.

25. The school has made further improvements to its provision for pupils' personal development since the previous inspection and this is now excellent. Spiritual development is very well planned within religious education, school assemblies and acts of worship. For example, in an assembly for Years 1 and 2, the teacher used a series of stunning photographs of sunsets to illustrate a moment in her own life when the beauty of the natural world had overwhelmed her. Teachers contributed their own examples of 'special moments' and pupils were encouraged to reflect quietly on similar experiences in their lives. Religious education and discussion sessions are particularly well used to encourage pupils to consider their place in the world and respond to what they learn about the values and beliefs of others.

26. Teachers take very many opportunities to promote pupils' understanding of right and wrong. Pupils are taught from the start that their actions have consequences. The positive behaviour management systems in place are used consistently by all adults so that pupils are very clear about the kind of behaviour expected and the sanctions that poor behaviour will incur. Pupils with significant behavioural difficulties receive extra help. These pupils are monitored daily and even the smallest steps in progress are rewarded. Moral issues are explored within assemblies and

personal, social and health education and other class lessons and the school's values are constantly promoted through the ethos of respect, care and consideration which pervades the school.

27. The school's excellent provision for developing pupils' social skills ensures that they quickly learn to become useful members of society. Older pupils in particular contribute to the smooth running of the school by helping out in assemblies, in the dining room at lunchtimes and by carrying out tasks around the school. Representatives from each class contribute to the school council which works to improve the school's environment, and pupils' ideas are valued. In lessons, teachers plan paired and group activities to encourage collaboration. A strong sense of community is promoted through pupils' activities locally; for example, the choir regularly sings at local old peoples' homes and at the Salvation Army Christmas lunch, and pupils provide the entertainment each year for the Calderdale Community Foundation's Annual General Meeting.

28. Provision for cultural development is very good. Teachers feel strongly that pupils should learn a lot about their local heritage and culture and plan a wide variety of visits each term to local museums, buildings and heritage sites. The photographic records and 'Class Achievement' books for last year record visits to places as diverse as MacDonald's, safari parks, the seaside and the local mosque. Artists from different cultures visit to share their expertise and pupils celebrate a variety of religious festivals at school. Colourful photographs in the nursery and reception Achievement Books record the fun the children had at Chinese New Year when demonstrating the Chinese Dragon Dance. The school has a strong link with an African school in the Masai Mara which teachers already use to good effect and are planning to develop further. The school's commitment to pupils performing also promotes their cultural development well.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

29. The school's arrangements for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are good. Some elements of support have improved to exceptional levels since the last inspection whilst the general quality of care provided for pupils has been maintained.

30. The acting head teacher has recently taken part in formal training to develop his role as child protection co-ordinator. He has explained changes in legal procedures and guidelines to the teaching and non-teaching staff and keeps a close check on the progress of the most vulnerable children in their care. Health and safety risk assessments and fire drills are established routines in school. Issues identified by the inspection are being reviewed by the school and its governing body. The individual medical conditions of pupils are well known to all members of staff but the systems for recording this information are informal and underdeveloped.

31. Procedures for checking pupils' behaviour and helping it to improve are excellent. Pupils receive special awards for good behaviour at the school's Star of the Week assemblies. Pupils who have difficulty with their behaviour are helped through the expertise of the school's Breakthrough Unit. There they are encouraged to concentrate and to overcome their behavioural difficulties. Daily checks are carried out by class teachers to ensure that these pupils progress and achieve well. Teachers expect high levels of good behaviour from their pupils for which they are fine role models. The school's policies are designed to safeguard against bullying, sexist or racist behaviour and pupils confirm that they work well in practice.

32. The school works hard to improve attendance and to stress its importance through the use of awards and certificates and works closely with its educational welfare officer who visits school regularly. However, its methods for the day-to-day monitoring of attendance are out of date and do not check absences rigorously enough.

33. The strategies used to promote the personal development of pupils are a strength in the school's pastoral care. Pupils receive encouragement and recognition to develop the personal

qualities needed to become responsible citizens. Achievement books for each year group contain photographic and written accounts of special events held during the year which confirm the wide range of experiences offered by the school.

34. The use of assessment to inform planning and support academic progress is outstanding. Teachers in the nursery begin to build a profile of what their pupils can do and where extra support is needed in their learning. This information quickly accumulates at the Foundation Stage and is refined throughout the school. Teachers identify areas of the curriculum that pupils do not fully understand and plan their lessons to improve progress. Exceptional progress has been made in developing assessment systems for English, mathematics and science and the system is now being used to support other subjects of the national curriculum. Pupils are beginning to achieve higher standards because of the school's rigorous use of assessment with lessons planned to suit and support the individual.

35. The school meets the statutory requirements of provision for pupils with statements of special educational need. Pupils with special learning needs are very much part of the assessment system. They are encouraged to work in an environment which stimulates their senses, builds their confidence and keeps a close check on their attainment and progress. Pupils who have special educational needs are identified early on and their progress is monitored carefully. Individual education plans identify the next steps of learning for each pupil and teachers review these termly with the special educational needs co-ordinator and with parents. Pupils who begin school in Years 1 to 6 are assessed shortly after they arrive and extra assistance is provided for any who have learning difficulties or behaviour problems. The school works very closely with outside specialists such as the speech therapist and behavioural support teacher and acts on their advice to ensure that these pupils receive the best possible help whilst they are at the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

36. Parents have a very good opinion of the school. Senior management and staff are all very skilled at communicating with parents both informally and during consultation meetings and this strengthens the school's partnership with parents. The school also maintains its friendship with former parents and is repaid by their loyalty and continuing interest in the work of the school. The school works very well with parents and through consultation seeks to improve this aspect of its work.

37. Parents have positive views about their children being happy in school, about being expected to do their best and make good progress, and about the quality of teaching. A minority of parents would like to see more activities outside lessons and be better informed about progress; they also have concerns about the amount of homework their children are expected to do. The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views but judges that the amount of homework set is satisfactory. It also judges that the school provides a very good range of activities outside lessons which provide pupils with outstanding opportunities to enjoy and develop their interests. These activities take place during the school day without depriving pupils of their entitlement to the National Curriculum.

38. The school has a clear homework policy. A good example of the homework expected from pupils in Year 3 was shown in a clear notice alongside the classroom door. However, not all teachers follow the homework policy to the letter and this leads to an inconsistency in routines and some confusion for pupils and parents.

39. End of term reports to parents meet statutory requirements but they too are inconsistent in quality. For example, most reports state quite clearly what the pupil has achieved in English, mathematics and science; only some comment on whether that achievement is that expected for the pupil's age and few offer specific targets for progress to the next level of the National Curriculum. Reports make worthwhile references to pupils' attitudes and behaviour and

demonstrated the strength of relationships between teachers and their pupils. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs are fully involved in their children's learning programmes and are well informed about their progress.

40. A notice board system tells parents about the work their children will be doing in school. The school prospectus provides all the information parents need to know about the school but the governing body's annual report has a few minor gaps in the information it should provide for parents. Parents have regular consultation evenings, questionnaires and daily opportunities to meet with teachers. Parents' views are sought by the school and their presence on the school council has a positive impact on the work of the school. Literacy and numeracy workshops were run for the benefit of parents and the school is currently reviewing its provision of classes for parents and other adults to strengthen the contribution parents make to their children's learning at school and at home.

41. Most parents feel welcome in school and this was borne out by those visiting the school during the inspection. Two mothers provided reception children with an insight into how they care for and feed their new born babies soon to be followed by bath-time. The contribution of parents and grandparents to learning is good. Boys and girls in the reception class were thrilled when they were taught by a visiting volunteer to master the rudiments of bricklaying, using sand as cement and wielding trowels to build a convincing wall of light weight bricks. Parents are eager to raise funds to benefit the school and the school is happy to work in partnership with them.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

42. The excellent leadership and management show an improvement on the very good standards seen at the time of the last inspection. The excellent leadership of the two headteachers is characterised by the school's extremely clear direction and the consistency with which it is applied to the life and work of the school. Neither is afraid of innovation. Decisions such as that to establish the Breakthrough Unit have been of great benefit not only to the progress, attainment and personal development of the individual pupils concerned but also to the school as a whole (and, indeed, to other schools in the authority). The curriculum has been considerably enhanced by the decision to use the last part of Wednesday afternoons for a variety of clubs in which all pupils participate; again, there has been a positive impact on both standards and personal development. The consultant headteacher's leadership skills have, partly through working for the Investors in People Award, forged an extremely strong team who are empowered to make worthwhile contributions to the development of the school. There is an excellent shared commitment to the improvement of standards in the school and a dedication to pupils' personal development as well as to their academic progress; consequently, standards, particularly in English, mathematics and science are improving noticeably and pupils' personal development is excellent. There has been external validation of the high quality of leadership of the consultant headteacher through a national award for leadership and through the success of her secondment to a school in difficulties. The marked improvement in standards that has occurred recently also indicates the exceptional qualities of the acting headteacher.

43. The quality of management is also excellent. The development of the school's assessment and recording systems to their present excellent level was a key management decision that has had a dramatic positive effect on pupils' standards of work and the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. Excellent management systems ensure that the school's vision is put into practice very consistently. The management structure works extremely well to develop the skills of teachers and other staff through excellent arrangements for performance management; those arrangements are not limited to the formal – for example, the school caretaker was made 'star of the week' in the achievement assembly because he had received all his certificates of competence (a very popular choice among the pupils). Similarly, there are excellent systems for inducting new and newly qualified staff and providing for students; the school is very highly regarded as a teacher training provider. There are excellent procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and helping it

to develop; the proportion of very good and excellent teaching seen during the inspection was a tribute to the success of these procedures.

44. Extremely well developed procedures for analysing and evaluating the pupils' performance in national and other tests ensure that the school is very clear about its priorities and areas for development. Evaluation also includes work in other subjects and in personal development. The co-ordinators' annual action plans, based on thorough audits of their subjects or areas of responsibility, are put into action through their incorporation into the school's very effective improvement plan. Subject and other leaders work to a clear remit and great care is taken that new co-ordinators are sufficiently well briefed to continue the good work.

45. The leadership and management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs are very successful; the decisions made, for example, to increase the number of support staff and to use the Breakthrough Unit flexibly have been very productive in ensuring that pupils who have special educational needs make very good progress. The recommendations of the new Code of Practice have already been fully implemented and all the necessary paperwork is in place. The school has very good liaison with specialist teachers, support assistants and outside agencies. Funds targeted for special educational needs are spent appropriately and the school contributes additional funding to maintain its very high quality provision for these pupils.

46. The members of the governing body are seen, rightly, as a central part of the school team. Under excellent leadership from a very experienced chairperson, the governors know the school very well. They receive regular reports from subject and other co-ordinators and consequently have a perceptive insight into its strengths and areas for development. The governors play an important part in helping to guide the quality of the school's education as well as participating in its life in a variety of ways.

47. The quality of financial planning is very good. Sensible decisions have ensured a beneficial ratio of adults to pupils so that those who need extra support receive it. The day-to-day operation of the school is very efficient. The school takes careful account of the views of parents and pupils, both through regular audits and through the school council. It challenges its own performance against that of other similar schools, maintaining its high expectations of pupils and staff and setting realistically ambitious targets for itself. The accommodation is used to good effect as are the learning resources available. However, the amount and quality of learning resources in some subjects are only just adequate and there is a shortage of fiction books for older pupils and higher attainers.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

48. In order to improve standards and quality of education further, senior management, staff and governors should:

- Improve standards in writing through providing regular opportunities for purposeful writing throughout the school by:
 - ensuring that children in the reception class have opportunities for writing every day;
 - planning more opportunities for different kinds of writing in other subjects;
 - making more use of information and communication technology in relation to composing, drafting, editing and presenting written work;
 - taking a more systematic approach to the presentation of written work carefully matched to pupils' age and stage of development; and,
 - providing as many opportunities as possible for pupils to record using their own words.
(Paragraphs 2, 15, 24, 54, 67, 68, 81)
- Improve standards in mathematics by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to record their work independently and
 - extending pupils' mathematical thinking through more frequent and regular practical and problem-solving activities.
(Paragraphs 2, 74, 75)
- Raise standards in geography and history by:
 - giving more time to the subjects in Year 6;
 - improving teachers' knowledge and understanding of how to teach them;
 - improving the recording and presentation of pupils' work so that it reflects their learning in appropriate depth and detail; and,
 - improving resources for the subjects.
(Paragraphs 6, 24, 88-93, 94, 96)
- Improve levels of attendance by more rigorous monitoring of absences and by ensuring that parents understand its importance more fully.
(Paragraphs 12, 32)

The school should also take account of the following minor issue:

- Improve the stock of fiction books, particularly for older and higher attaining pupils.
(Paragraph 47)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	42
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	8	13	15	6	0	0	0
Percentage	19	31	36	14	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.

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)	11	160
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	74

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	39

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	20
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	33

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.3
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	10	11	21

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	6	9
	Girls	9	10	10
	Total	16	16	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (64)	76 (68)	90 (84)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	9	9
	Girls	9	10	8
	Total	16	19	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (72)	90 (84)	81 (76)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	14	8	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	9	10
	Girls	5	5	6
	Total	11	14	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	50 (26)	64 (58)	73 (53)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	4	9	9
	Girls	5	5	6
	Total	9	14	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	41 (37)	64 (53)	68 (68)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
163	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
5	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, 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)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18
Average class size	23

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	238.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5

Financial information

Financial year	2001 - 2002
	£
Total income	477,369
Total expenditure	450,878
Expenditure per pupil	2,518
Balance brought forward from previous year	10,704
Balance carried forward to next year	37,195

Number of pupils per FTE adult	11
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	171
Number of questionnaires returned	27

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	79	21	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	69	31	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	45	7	3	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	34	21	7	0
The teaching is good.	76	18	3	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	34	14	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	25	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	28	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	52	24	17	0	7
The school is well led and managed.	66	24	3	0	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	66	31	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	17	21	7	10

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

49. In Cliffe Hill School, the foundation stage is the time that children spend in the nursery and reception classes. Children start in the nursery part-time in the Autumn term of the year in which they become four and most transfer to the reception class the following year. The school's assessments show that, when children start in the nursery, their experiences and knowledge vary widely. On the whole, their development is well below what is typical for their age, and some children show very delayed development in aspects of speech and language.

50. The quality of teaching in the nursery and reception has improved since the previous inspection and is now consistently very good with excellent features. The teachers, classroom assistants and voluntary helpers work together as a highly effective team. They are careful to match the work and imaginative practical activities to the different ages and abilities of the children. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs is very good and they are given all the help they need to do well in their learning. In this way, the school ensures that, right from the start, all children are included and have equal access to the curriculum and equal opportunities to make progress.

51. During their time in the nursery and reception classes, children make good progress in everything they do. However, because they have such a lot of ground to make up compared with most other children of their age nationally, the majority still do not reach the standards expected in all areas of learning by the time they leave the reception class.

Personal, social and emotional development

52. Very good teaching ensures that, during their time in the nursery and reception classes, children develop confidence and independence and make very good progress in this area of learning although a significant number are still below the standards expected for their age when they leave. From the nursery onwards, they are taught to get what they need for a task and put equipment and toys away at the end of the session. As a result, children quickly get into the class routines. Children in the nursery, for example, know that they have to wash their hands carefully before they have their snack. All the adults make clear how important this is and with the youngest children they take time to demonstrate how this should be done properly. Children soon learn how to do this for themselves and the routine quickly becomes well established. Children in the reception class cleared up after their snack of the 'Three Bears' porridge' with a minimum of fuss. A few children show high levels of initiative in organising themselves in the playground, as for example when children playing with the milk crates turned it into a scrap yard and took turns to ride their 'trains' to it for repairs. One of the strengths of the teaching in this area is that the staff work hard to promote children's personal development in everything they do. They provide excellent role models for children. They are calm, well organised and approachable and treat children with respect and courtesy. This leads to warm and trusting relationships and helps the children to behave in a friendly manner to one another. The adults expect children to be considerate of one another at all times and are very clear about the rules of sharing and waiting their turn. Teachers help children to understand the difference between right and wrong through stories and discussions and constantly reinforce positive attitudes and behaviour. As a result, the children respect one another and feel secure in the stimulating classroom that the staff have created.

Communication, language and literacy

53. When they start school in the nursery, few children have the language and literacy skills that

are expected for their age. Most find it very hard to express themselves in words and very few string words together, often communicating through gestures or single words and short phrases. They have a very limited vocabulary. Many find it difficult to listen to instructions from adults or to a story. Some have significant speech and language difficulties that make it very difficult for adults and other children to understand them. Very good teaching ensures that, by the end of the reception year, children have had many opportunities to talk together and listen to one another and to the teacher, to understand that written words mean something and to begin to make marks on paper that signify meaning so that they develop the early skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Although the extra help they receive enables children to build their confidence in using language and they make good progress in this area, for many there is still a lot of ground to be made up and standards overall remain well below the levels expected for their age. This is particularly true for the significant number of children who have special educational needs both in the nursery and in reception.

54. Staff take every opportunity to develop children's language skills in everything children do. Teachers and classroom assistants never miss an opportunity to engage children in conversation about their work or themselves and to widen children's vocabulary when reading stories, for example. Wherever possible they link vocabulary to work in other areas of learning. For example, the nursery teacher helping the children to 'paint' the play house with water and paint brushes encouraged them to make 'triangle' and 'circle' shapes to reinforce the language they were learning in mathematics. Each day, children are given opportunities to read books, listen to stories and write. Children enjoy reading and looking at books. The youngest children are learning to select books independently and some read quietly to themselves, using the clues in the pictures to talk about parts of the story they have remembered. Teachers develop children's love of books by reading stories in lively and interesting ways, sometimes using puppets, dramatic voices and actions to bring the book alive. Children talk about their favourite stories and know the names of characters in the books. Children are taught their letter sounds systematically and the teacher makes very good use of clues, mnemonics and games to help children learn them. Teachers help children develop their writing skills by giving them confidence to experiment with writing in a variety of play situations. For example, they make marks in sand, make labels for teddy bears and make lists for taking turns on the play activities. This helps them when they come to write their letters and, by the end of reception, most can write their names legibly and a few higher attaining children can write simple sentences. However, children do not have sufficiently frequent planned opportunities to write and there is a need to engage in a writing activity of some sort at least daily in order to enable some children to make even greater progress. Children are not sufficiently practiced in using pencils as tools for writing.

Mathematical development

55. Very good teaching in this area ensures that, by the end of the reception year, children are close to, although still below, the standards expected.

56. Teachers take every opportunity to use mathematics in everyday activities. This means that children practise their counting, adding and taking away many times each day and the reception children have no difficulty in singing simple number songs like 'Ten in a Bed'. Teachers ensure that children learn about number, pattern, shape and size through practical activities such as sorting objects into sets, counting and playing games. This helps children make very good progress in understanding numbers and concepts such as 'bigger than' and 'smaller than'. In the reception class, the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears was used very imaginatively to encourage children to count out three chairs, bowls and spoons and compare their sizes. In one very successful session, children removed different sized objects such as biscuits and sandwiches from a picnic box and decided which of the three bears they were for. Some could tell straight away that the large bun was for Daddy Bear but others had to think very hard and could only work it out with help from the teacher. All adults constantly reinforce children's understanding of mathematical language by asking questions such as '*is that full now?*' Children respond by using the same language in their descriptions and begin to use the right terms of measurement and position.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

57. Teaching in this area is very good in both nursery and reception and enables children to develop many of the basic skills that help them make sense of the world. By the time they leave the reception class, children's knowledge and understanding of the world is close to but still below the levels expected for their age.

58. Teachers make excellent use of familiar themes such as 'houses' to help children learn about their environment. For example, children in the reception class who were playing outside with large construction equipment learnt how bricks overlap each other when they are stacked to ensure that the building is strong. They understood through their experiments with different materials that some materials soak up a lot of water and others do not hold much water at all and can be used to keep you dry in the rain. Teachers use visitors and visits extremely well to give children first-hand experiences of the outside world. They also ensure that children learn about the existence of other countries and lifestyles by celebrating other cultures and make very good use of 'people who help us', such as the local firemen, to promote children's learning about keeping safe.

Physical development

59. Very good teaching helps children gain a sense of co-ordination and balance in their play and movement and to master the skills of handling small tools such as paintbrushes, pencils and scissors in their work. By the end of the reception year, children have achieved many of the early learning goals, although for some their fine movements such as those needed for pencil control are still below the levels expected.

60. Teachers ensure that children have daily opportunities to engage in physical activities, both indoors and when playing outside. As a result, children are robust and lively. Children in the nursery and reception enjoy climbing, jumping and playing on wheeled toys as they let off steam at playtime. Both classes have plenty of suitable equipment for outdoor play and children learn to move safely around each other and play imaginatively on the large climbing apparatus

61. Children are given good opportunities to practise skills such as cutting, gluing and holding paintbrushes, pens and pencils. Consequently, by the time they leave the reception class, they are learning to use scissors confidently and cut around difficult shapes.

Creative development

62. Teaching is very good and by the time they leave the reception class, children attain many of the skills expected for their age. They have many opportunities to undertake a wide range of art and design activities, such as painting, collage and pattern making, and to engage in imaginative play in the well-resourced role-play corners. They enjoy experimenting with materials and different media. For instance, children in the nursery class used straw, paint and cardboard boxes to construct one of the Three Little Pigs' houses and reception children made fur fabric collages of the Three Bears. Children's work is valued. There are attractive displays of children's paintings and models in both classes and photographic records are kept of children's work throughout the year. This both celebrates the children's achievements and enables the teachers to assess what has been achieved. Teachers encourage children to experiment with musical instruments independently and help them maintain simple rhythms when accompanying songs. Reception children sing along with pupils in Years 1 and 2 and enjoy the challenge of singing more difficult songs. The rich and imaginative curriculum offered to the children in both classes makes a significant contribution to their creative development.

ENGLISH

63. Standards are slightly below average by the end of Year 6. Although standards are below

average in writing, they are broadly average in reading and in speaking and listening. This is good achievement because most pupils start school with standards in communication, language and literacy that are well below the levels expected of their age. By the end of Year 2, standards are below average; they are close to the average expected of seven-year-olds in reading but below average in writing and in speaking and listening. Again, however, this is good achievement. Standards have improved considerably since the last inspection when only a third of pupils attained nationally expected standards by the end of Year 6 whereas in 2002 three quarters of pupils attained those standards with over a fifth attaining the level above that expected. Improvement has been most marked in the last two years, particularly in reading, because of very good teaching, the successful adapting of the national strategy for literacy to suit the needs of the pupils, and excellent procedures to assess pupils' attainment to determine what they need to learn next. The school is well aware that standards in writing could be higher.

64. By the end of Year 2, standards are below expected levels in speaking and listening. This is due in part to the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs but also reflects the low base from which most pupils start and the proportion of pupils who join the school in Years 1 or 2. These make good progress in the short time they have in the school but many do not have time to catch up with the other pupils, many of whom make very good progress. The teaching is extremely well organised. Pupils are taught in very small groups to maximise opportunities to develop their skills in listening and to encourage speaking in sentences. Teachers and teaching assistants are at pains to clarify pupils' understanding. Adults consistently reinforce correct patterns of speech but in such a natural way that pupils' understanding and confidence grow apace. Excellent relationships, a keen sense of fun and scrupulous attention to detail characterise the teaching in Years 1 and 2 and so pupils want to listen and to communicate because their interest and attention are captivated. Pupils have opportunities to read out their work to others and in other subjects speaking and listening are essential components. Well-organised discussion times, involving stories, and a 'magic microphone' prompt even the shyest pupils to contribute. Levels of listening are good throughout the school because of the very good management by teachers and teaching assistants who work together very much as a team to excellent effect. Consequently, by the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average. Pupils listen well and confidently ask questions to clarify their understanding. They expect to be able to contribute verbally. The teaching of literacy is very well organised to give pupils time to speak and clubs such as the drama club further develop pupils' confidence. Older pupils have a 'response partner' with whom they share ideas. The quality of teaching is very good and consciously strives to broaden pupils' vocabulary. Older pupils are given responsibilities such as showing visitors around their school so they practise what they learn in a realistic context.

65. Standards in reading are broadly average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. This is because of a very well planned programme, in which pupils of similar levels of attainment read together as a group several times a week, usually with adult assistance. This gives younger pupils plenty of practice in reading out loud as well as learning to read with understanding on their own for they are expected to talk about what they have read. Exercises such as scanning pages to compile a list of words ending in '-ed' or '-ing', undertaken by higher attaining pupils in Year 2, further develop their skills. This system works very well for older pupils too as they learn to read with greater understanding as they begin to see where information is implicit rather than explicit. The teaching of reading is very good throughout the school and pupils are well aware of how much it is valued. Books are carefully chosen to challenge pupils of different abilities. Although many new sets of books have been purchased for pupils to read together, the stock of fiction books is very low particularly for older juniors and the range is more appealing to girls than to boys. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6, for example, have read most of the books available for them to borrow from the selection of books available at their level. Consequently they do not extend their reading skills as far as they might.

66. Pupils are enthusiastic about reading and talk with interest about books. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2, for example, explain how they try to read the newspaper at home though they 'can't read teeny weeny words'; they 'like school books because they are big'. One reason why pupils develop a taste for reading early on is the extra help they receive, particularly those who have

special educational or other needs, from the Breakthrough Unit. This year, for example, the provision has been extended so that half the pupils in Year 2 are taught literacy in the unit from the start of the year rather than for one term; this means that all teaching groups are very small and so pupils receive much individual attention. Additional reading groups for older pupils continue this intensive support and the benefit is seen in rising standards. Pupils in Year 6 now read with confidence; they look up information and use thesauruses competently to extend their vocabulary.

67. Standards are below average in writing at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils nonetheless have made very good progress throughout the school because they are very well taught. The literacy lesson has been thoughtfully adapted to enable teaching to focus on aspects of writing; this is successful. In Year 1, for example, in an excellent lesson, the teaching focused on different words and parts of words carefully selected to challenge the different levels of ability in the class in order to help them to read and to write captions. The teaching assistant kept notes of progress made by individuals which helped to assess their attainment. Similarly, in an excellent lesson in Year 6, pupils were able to grasp the difference between simple, compound and complex sentences because of the way that learning developed within the lesson. The activities which followed were very well chosen to reinforce learning and there was a strong element of fun as well as challenge and boys as well as girls relished piecing together the details of Scott's Antarctic expedition. Much of the work on writing throughout the school concentrates on vocabulary, syntax, expanding sentences and pooling ideas so that pupils have something to write about. This is undoubtedly helping pupils to write more accurately and in a more interesting way though the majority do not find writing at length easy.

68. In part, standards are below average in writing because of the above average proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and the large number of pupils who enter or leave the school at times other than the usual. However, it also reflects the lack of a whole school approach to writing in previous years. Although future planning is detailed for Years 1 and 2 and for Years 3 to 6, it does not look at the development of writing from Year 1 through to Year 6 with a shared set of aims. Consequently, details such as when to use pen or when to move from blank, to wide-lined and narrow ruled pages have not been sufficiently thought through from the pupils' point of view or as a means to improving presentation. Pupils do not become adept early enough at using pens and pencils as tools for writing; in Year 1, for example, lower attaining pupils have problems forming their letters. Pupils tend to view writing as a bit of a chore. This is because they do not use it extensively in other subjects. Often, for example, they fill in blank words on pre-written worksheets rather than using their own words and methods of recording in science or mathematics, for example. Opportunities are missed in both history and geography to encourage pupils of different ages to write from the point of view of other people; in the few instances when this is done, the standard of writing is usually higher. In Year 5, pupils work with a partner regularly to consult with editing and punctuating their work; this successful method, however, is not used in other classes to the same extent. Opportunities for pupils to write for each other or to write books and collections of poems for other classes are also missed. Displays within classrooms show different levels of work pupils should aspire to; some set higher standards of accuracy and neatness, however, than others. The marking of pupils' work is of good quality throughout the school and stars which say 'achieved' contribute to pupils' feelings of success when they reach their targets and encourages them further.

69. The subject is extremely well led by a knowledgeable co-ordinator who has had a significant impact on standards during the short time she has had responsibility for the subject. The school is extremely well placed to continue to improve.

MATHEMATICS

70. There has been very good improvement in the standards achieved in this subject since the previous inspection. The school has worked hard to put in place the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers study the outcomes of assessments made each year to find out which areas of the subject pupils need to practise and standards across the school are improving steadily as a result. The quality of teaching is now very good and all pupils, including those the school has identified with

particular needs, achieve well in lessons. Nevertheless, the overall standards for present Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are unlikely to reach those expected for their age because of the high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs, the proportion of pupils who started at the school in Years 2 to 6 and the comparatively low proportion of higher attaining pupils.

71. The quality of teaching and learning is very good, particularly in Years 1, 2, 5 and 6. In Years 1 and 2, teachers find many interesting and practical ways of helping pupils learn about numbers, shape and measure. In the Year 1 class, where many pupils are still learning how to write and count numbers to ten accurately, the teacher takes frequent opportunities to remind them of which way round the numbers should be written. Pupils copy her chants and actions, and use numbers displayed on a line of teddy bears as prompts. Consequently they are very familiar with the numbers and understand how important it is to write them correctly. By playing games such as money bingo, they are able to relate the value of the numbers to the coins and the higher attaining pupils can add up coins to 20p quickly in their heads. In Year 2, pupils learning about two-dimensional shapes are taught systematically about their properties. Very clear teaching of the rule that the name of the shape depends on the number of sides, regardless of whether it is regular or not, ensures that pupils of all abilities can sort rectangles and triangles into sets and higher attaining pupils can do the same with pentagons and octagons.

72. A significant strength of the teaching in all classes is the quality of teachers' planning. Teachers plan in detail for work at three different levels and take account of individual needs as well. This means that pupils are given tasks at the correct level of difficulty and work hard throughout the lesson. In a very good lesson in Year 6, pupils were working on different tasks to practise and improve their strategies for multiplying and dividing with two digit and three digit numbers. Lower attaining pupils worked on two digit numbers and some used counters to help them. They received excellent help from a classroom assistant and made great strides in progress as they learnt to work out difficult calculations in their heads. By the end of the lesson, they could join in with the rest of the class in solving three digit number questions. Higher attaining pupils worked out their own problems and demonstrated very good levels of concentration as they worked quietly together. They can work confidently with larger numbers and decimal fractions and use a good range of strategies for tackling multiplication and division.

73. Teachers develop pupils' mathematical understanding very well by giving clear explanations of a mathematical process and by regularly asking pupils to explain how they have arrived at an answer. The very good relationships that exist in the school ensure that pupils are confident to speak up without fear of ridicule if they are wrong. In Year 5, for example, pupils working on the difficult concept of equivalent fractions were happy to explain to the teacher how they had used the fraction strips to find their answers. Their explanations demonstrated a developing confidence with mathematical language such as 'numerator' and 'denominator' and a growing understanding of how they can solve number problems by recognising patterns emerging. Teachers make very good use of resources and equipment to help pupils learn. White boards are used very well to enable pupils to record and show answers in the mental and oral starter sessions and to jot down their calculations during the lesson. This benefits the clarity with which the pupils work and also quickly shows the teacher where learning has gone wrong.

74. Pupils have very positive attitudes to mathematics. They benefit from the security of working in small groups at tasks that are well matched to their capabilities, and from the excellent help provided by the classroom assistants. Older pupils work well together in groups and younger pupils take turns sensibly when playing games. In a small minority of lessons, where pupils' attitudes were less positive, it was because they spent too long listening to the teacher and not enough time on practical activity. In some instances in lessons, pupils do not use the correct mathematical vocabulary because the teacher does not model it well for them.

75. Work in pupils' books last year indicates some areas where further improvements in the subject can be made in order to challenge the higher attainers more and to show the relevance of mathematics to real life. Some teachers make too much use of published or duplicated work

sheets to practise what pupils have already learnt, rather than encourage pupils to record their learning independently. Some older pupils do not have enough opportunities to carry out practical work and mathematical investigations and there is scope for greater use of information technology in, for example, using spreadsheets to work out money problems.

76. The subject is very well managed and this is a significant reason for the continuing improvement. The systems for assessment in mathematics are detailed; they work well and help teachers identify the next steps in learning for groups and individuals. There is a clear subject action plan in place which aims to address the weaknesses and lift standards further in the future.

SCIENCE

77. Standards for 11 year olds are broadly average, reflecting an improvement since the last inspection and a marked improvement on national test results in 2001, particularly for higher attainers; the national test results of 2002 confirm the inspection judgement. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher than average level has also increased. In comparison with similar schools in 2001, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level was well below average but for those attaining the higher level, it was better than the average. Boys and girls achieve similar standards. Standards for seven-year-olds are below average, partly because of the pupils' limited experiences when they enter school. In the teacher assessments for seven-year-olds in 2001, results were well below the national average largely because no pupils achieved the level above that expected. Overall, pupils make very good progress through the school. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve very well because of the very good quality support they receive and the way in which work is adapted for their needs.

78. Standards are improving for two major reasons. As a result of excellent assessment, teachers are able to track the progress of individuals accurately and identify their strengths and the areas that need improvement. The teachers' careful evaluation of every lesson means that, in the next lesson, they are able to deal with misunderstandings, reinforce insecure learning and ensure that progress is made. In addition, the careful analysis of national test papers has enabled the school to identify areas of the curriculum that need more attention so that, for example, there is now a greater emphasis on investigations and practical science work. The effective leadership and management of the previous subject co-ordinator, which is being continued by the newly appointed co-ordinator, have ensured that these practices are applied consistently and that suitable action is taken through the school improvement plan.

79. The other major factor in the improvement in standards is the quality of teaching and learning which is consistently good; in some lessons, teaching is excellent. The teachers use artefacts and other resources imaginatively so that pupils are able to extend their knowledge through experience. For example, several pupils in a Year 2 lesson about sorting different kinds of food into healthy eating categories were initially unable to name some common fruits and vegetables; after discussion with other pupils and opportunities to experience the touch and smell of the objects, the pupils were confident enough to place them in the right categories. Because of the emphasis on investigation and hands-on experience, levels of interest are very high and behaviour is good, reflecting the teachers' skills in class management and the excellent relationships that exist.

80. An excellent lesson about how the pitch of sounds can be altered showed many of the strengths of the teaching. A clear and stimulating introduction and very well directed questioning ensured that pupils understood the key idea of the lesson. The teacher allowed pupils to experiment with making sounds from empty and water-filled bottles before setting the task before encouraging them to find their own method of recording their findings and was firm in insisting that they explained things clearly. Their learning was reinforced and made memorable when the teacher produced (and played) a beautifully painted didgeridoo that utterly captured their attention and demonstrated clearly what they had learned. Teachers ensure that investigations are well

organised and involve tests that are fair and valid through the use of very helpful planning boards. There is always an emphasis on scientific language and on the need for clear explanations of why things happen – for example, one pupil explained why something appeared to be lighter in the water: ‘the upthrust is pushing the object up and the gravity is pushing it down’. The teachers’ interest and enthusiasm rub off on the pupils, who are generous in sharing their expertise with other pupils, as when, for example, a higher attaining pupil worked very hard to ensure that a pupil who had special educational needs understood the idea that underlay the investigation that they were doing together.

81. The broad and balanced science curriculum is enhanced by many activities that take place during the residential visits that pupils in Year 3 and Year 6 undertake. While older pupils in particular are sometimes encouraged to find their own ways of recording their findings, there is very little evidence of pupils writing at any length in recording their investigations in their own words. The school is very well placed to further develop science in the school.

ART AND DESIGN

82. Standards are above average by the end of Year 6 and also by the end of Year 2. Pupils achieve very well in response to very good teaching and an innovative approach to art which concentrates on teaching key skills. Standards have improved since the last inspection. The curriculum covers learning to use the full range of materials and so pupils have opportunities to work in three as well as two dimensions. The resulting art work is better than average and pupils who have special educational needs make equally good progress because they are learning a process rather than trying to produce set pieces. Consequently, much of the art displayed in school is unusual and children as well as adults can often be found examining it closely.

83. On entering school, the visitor’s attention is caught by a remarkably lifelike figure made from chicken wire and covered with thin tissue paper sitting in a stone trough. Behind, a large, abstract mosaic invites careful scrutiny. Pupils explained that the school ran a competition for the best design and, one having been chosen, they had to scale up the image, learning to use pencils in a different way to achieve the larger size. Pupils are encouraged to develop their own ideas at a level appropriate to them and much of the work in junior classes is concerned to show pupils that art is not necessarily an exact recording of what they see. This means that pupils of all abilities can achieve success, for lower attaining pupils and those who have special educational needs find observational drawing very difficult.

84. The quality of teaching is very good and makes complex processes accessible to pupils of different levels of attainment. In Year 2, for example, pupils learn to record from imagination and to build up a picture from a focussed image. Using small cut out pieces from magazines as well as drawing, pupils succeed in putting a small picture into a larger context such as creating a motorway for a car or a bed for a cat to sleep on. The teaching strives to develop pupils’ visual memory and perception through artistic expression. In Year 4, the art co-ordinator taught the first part of the lesson, to demonstrate the different effects that could be achieved using pastels to depict the shading of stones in dry stone walls as part of a longer term project. Pupils found this fascinating and asked pertinent questions such as ‘How do we do the lumps on the stones?’ They concentrated very well and discussed as they worked the relative merits of using pastels as opposed to charcoal – they concluded that ‘you can smudge pastel more easily’. Older juniors’ work as part of an extended study of Henry Moore includes some outstanding sketches. Pupils made shapes with their bodies and, using a mixture of charcoal and chalk, experimented with line and tone as they sketched each other. A very good lesson in Year 6 revealed how well pupils work together as they fashioned a large scale stick-like figure out of cardboard tubing and tape. The teaching demonstrated clearly how to make a socket and a joint – pupils responded with great enthusiasm as well as showing a surprising degree of skill in creating a well-proportioned three-dimensional model as they worked together.

85. The subject is led by an inspirational leader who works discreetly alongside teachers, developing their expertise. Using ICT in art and design is at an early stage of development: Year 5

pupils' art based on Matisse in which they rotated, resized and moved pictures to create a snail, effectively graduating patterns and colour, indicates that this has potential. Pupils say that they really like the displays in their school because there are so many pictures. Not enough opportunities are given for pupils to include some of their own writing so that they explain in their own words what they have done and how successful they feel it is.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

86. Standards are below average by the end of Year 6 though in line with expected standards at the end of Year 2. This is because very little design and technology is taught in Year 6 because of the way the timetable is organised. The strengths, evident in infant classes and in the lower juniors, are insufficiently developed as pupils get older. Standards are similar to those in the last inspection. The new co-ordinator has good ideas for developing the subject and in particular the audit of resources has been helpful in highlighting areas of need. The programme of monitoring of lessons has begun and the portfolio of work from each class has made clear the need to develop systematic procedures for designing and evaluating products to ensure that pupils build on what they know. There are inconsistencies in approach between different year groups and so there is no clear development of skills from one year to the next.

87. Standards are broadly average in Years 1 and 2 and activities are interesting and challenging. No teaching was seen and so no judgement on its quality can be made. However, it is clear that teachers set and expect high standards. Designs for winding mechanisms are well drawn and, when making a fruit salad, higher attainers named and used a wide variety of fruits. Completed vehicles, designed largely through labelled pictures, are colourful though all pupils use the same type of wheels and axles. An opportunity is missed to develop pupils' skills in writing for they do not at this stage evaluate their work. Pupils' work in Year 3 shows a much more formal system of designing and making though the order in which pupils write up what they are going to do or have done is not very logical. Evaluations of finished products are evident in Year 5 and these indicate pupils' awareness of what they have learnt. For example, a higher attainer wrote that her design for a moving toy was successful 'because it was made for a small child and moved up and down', and she 'enjoyed making it because it was a challenge'. An average attainer 'had problems cutting the wooden dowel' and a lower attainer realised through evaluation that the design for a small child would 'be improved by taking off the cigar'. The quality of teaching at this stage is satisfactory overall for although individual lessons are at least good there are inconsistencies from year to year.

GEOGRAPHY

88. Only one geography lesson was seen during the inspection and it was not possible to make overall judgements about standards in the subject and the quality of teaching and learning. However, work in pupils' books shows that the school has worked hard to teach geography systematically during a period when school development generally has focused on the core subjects. Nevertheless, there are some aspects of the subjects that have not been taught in enough depth and detail to enable pupils to reach the standards required.

89. In the lesson seen, the quality of teaching and learning was good. The teacher was very well prepared with the resources needed, enabling pupils to make a prompt start on building up a card model of the valley created by the local beck, based on the shape of the contour lines each side of the valley. Pupils' understanding of maps and contours was limited and the teacher made very good use of the practical activity to extend their knowledge and understanding further, taking a large scale map around to each group as they worked to point out how the spacing of the contour lines demonstrated the steepness of the valley. Pupils who have special educational needs received very good support from the classroom assistant who helped them tackle the task. Pupils showed interest in their work and took care with the construction of their models.

90. There is a scheme of work that enables teachers to teach a broad and balanced curriculum and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. In most classes, sufficient time is

allowed to cover it. This is not the case in Year 6 where more time is given to English, mathematics and science at the expense of subjects like geography and pupils do not study as much as they should. This means that they cannot reach the levels expected by the end of the year.

91. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory when teachers make good use of local visits to teach geography and give pupils opportunities to learn from first hand experience. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 study the area around the school and draw simple maps to show some familiar buildings. They consider features about the area that they like or dislike and suggest ways to improve their environment. Older pupils go further afield and Year 3 and Year 6 undertook geographical field studies on residential trips last year. In spite of this practical activity, too little time has been given in the past to teaching geographical skills such as mapping in a systematic way, so older pupils have some lost ground to make up.

92. Work in pupils' books last year in Years 3 to 6 shows that some teachers make good use of a range of sources of information such as photographs, fieldwork and ICT, but others do not, and few teach pupils enough about lifestyles in other places and countries. Much of the pupils' recorded work is of a standard that is below the levels expected for their age. Writing is often brief and superficial and reflects tasks that pose little challenge. Year 6 pupils, for example, had coloured and sequenced simple charts to demonstrate the water cycle but had made no attempt to explain it in any detail. In Year 5, the only recorded work on the unit of study on a contrasting locality was a list of features that are found in Brighouse and Blackpool. The way pupils' work is presented in a book mixed up with work in history and religious education prevents them from seeing their learning build up in a systematic way and they do not develop the sense of place they should when studying a unit of work.

93. The school recognises that work in geography is due for review. There are already good plans in place to develop the subject further and to provide more resources to support geographical enquiry.

HISTORY

94. Standards are below average by the end of Year 6 but in line with expected standards in Year 2. In part this reflects the small amount of time allocated to the subject in Year 6. Although standards are similar to those reported in the last inspection, there has been improvement and there is clear evidence that pupils have a better understanding of key elements of history than reported previously. Throughout the school, there is evidence of good work; the impetus, though, is lost because not enough time is spent on the subject in the upper juniors. The subject is well led; it has not been a priority recently and there are areas therefore for development.

95. Standards are about average by the end of Year 2 and this reflects the very good teaching pupils receive in order for them to achieve so very well. Teachers take pains to introduce young pupils to the difficult concept of time past. Pupils in Year 1 recognise that 'this is a very very very old bear', that old toys can look 'scruffy, tatty and dull' and that new ones are often 'shiny and bright'. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 talk confidently about the past. One said, 'I like history. In the olden days my grandpa was alive. They didn't have TV or carpets or colourful clothes like us'. Teachers use artefacts and film very well to broaden pupils' perceptions. They are fascinated by the Great Fire of London and want to know how it started, speculating that the bread might have caught fire in the baker's shop on Pudding Lane. Teachers are very good at capturing pupils' imaginations and helping them to visualise the past.

96. Standards are below average in the junior classes. It is quite difficult for pupils to gain a sense of period as their work is presented in a book mixed up with other subjects. For example, one pupil had a double page showing Henry VIII with four of his wives, followed by a piece of science work and then a page with two more wives. Displays in classrooms are used as a means of bringing pupils' work in history together but the overall effect is to limit the opportunities for higher

attainers in particular to research aspects of the subject on their own. Pupils like history and talk enthusiastically about what they have learnt. They enjoyed looking at census data, for example, in relation to the Victorian period and writing as if they were an evacuee during the Second World War. Pupils enjoy the educational visits linked with history and clearly gain a lot from these. Opportunities are missed to develop links with literacy, mathematics and ICT and so this limits the potential to use history as a means of stimulating other skills.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

97. Standards for 11 year olds are broadly average, an improvement on the last inspection. For seven-year-olds, standards are below those expected, reflecting their start from a well below average base and the fact that few pupils have computers at home. Pupils, including those who have special educational needs, achieve very well during their time in the school. Boys and girls make similar rates of progress.

98. Older pupils have satisfactory skills across the information and communication technology curriculum though younger pupils have difficulty in such activities as controlling the mouse. Most pupils are quick to pick up new skills, as, for example, when Year 4 pupils used the copy and paste commands for the first time to produce a pattern of repeating images. Teachers use the computer suite well to facilitate such learning. For pupils who are less adept, the teachers are patient and good at providing clear instructions and, on occasion, more confident pupils provide generous and useful help to their partners. Teachers are well prepared and are very effectively helped by confident and knowledgeable support staff; consequently, pupils who have special educational needs and other slower learners are helped to learn new techniques and reinforce existing skills. Pupils are made well aware of the progress they are making and how well they have met the learning objectives for the lesson. Assessment processes are very well developed and pupils' progress is tracked very carefully. While some teachers have higher levels of confident knowledge and skill than others, all teachers plan thoroughly and ensure that the basic skills of the subject are taught efficiently. Teachers are good at motivating pupils by the interesting activities they present; for example, pupils in Year 5 used an art program to produce very pleasing pictures in the style of Matisse. Pupils are able to work independently because they have learned basic skills and are encouraged to use them for their own purposes as when, for example, Year 6 pupils produced a presentation using Power Point to show a project they had been involved in. A strength of the good teaching of the subject is strong class management, based on excellent relationships, that leads to the pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour.

99. A broad and balanced curriculum is enhanced by the ICT club. E-mail and the Internet are beginning to feature in lessons but are as yet insufficiently used to extend pupils' learning consistently. Information and communication technology is not yet used enough in other subjects, particularly in the development of writing, where the subject's value in composing, drafting, editing and presenting a final good quality copy has not been exploited. The subject is well led and the planned training is expected to develop teachers' skills further. The subject is well placed to develop further.

MUSIC

100. Standards for 11 year olds and for seven-year-olds are broadly in line with those expected for their age, similar to standards in the last inspection. Pupils, including those who have special educational needs, who receive very good quality help, achieve very well. The music in the school is characterised by the enthusiasm of the singing and performing as shown by the tuneful and committed singing in assemblies and the picture of the whole of Year 6 marching around the field singing 'John Brown's body lies a-mould'ring in the grave' with great gusto. Similar good quality singing and playing, high levels of enjoyment and teacher enthusiasm were evident in the lesson for reception and Years 1 and 2 that was taught by a group of teachers. Although there are too few opportunities for pupils to hear and analyse pieces of music, the training provided by teachers in

listening is of a very high quality and benefits pupils' speaking and listening very well. For example, Year 2 pupils had to concentrate extremely hard to listen for the slightest sound being made by the pupil moving a tambourine across the room before identifying the three different ways in which the instrument was played. Year 5 pupils showed similar high levels of concentration in an excellent lesson about pulse and rhythm. Pupils compose percussion pieces and put their own lyrics to well known tunes or to their own pulse patterns.

101. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and, at best, it is excellent. Very good class management ensures that lessons move at a brisk pace and a sense of fun and enjoyment motivates even the self-conscious to participate wholeheartedly. When pupils work together on a task, they show high levels of co-operation and concentration and overall attitudes are very positive and behaviour very good.

102. The subject is very well led by a capable co-ordinator with a clear educational direction based on good knowledge. The music curriculum is enhanced by assemblies, the music club and regular opportunities to perform. The subject is very well placed to develop further.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

103. Standards for 11-year-olds and for seven-year-olds are in line with those expected, as they were at the last inspection. Because of the priority the school gives to teaching pupils to swim, standards in swimming for 11-year-olds are above those expected for their age. Pupils who have special educational needs are very well supported and achieve very well, as do girls and boys of all abilities. Pupils in Year 2 show balance and movement skills and spatial awareness at levels expected for their age and the ball and stick control skills shown in a Year 3 hockey lesson and in the hockey club are also at expected levels. Older pupils showed good tactical awareness in the netball club. The broad physical education curriculum is enhanced by the outdoor and adventurous activities that take place during the residential visits for pupils in Years 3 and 6. The weekly climbing club also adds considerably to the curriculum. Further opportunities for pupils to develop their games skills and to take part in competitive sport are provided by visits to the high school and by visitors from local Rugby League and football clubs.

104. The quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils' have positive attitudes to the subject. Because the teachers manage the classes well, lessons progress at a good rate and pupils behave well and work hard. Teachers provide good models for the pupils, pay good attention to issues of safety and are good at using pupils to demonstrate good practice. The new subject co-ordinator has a very good level of knowledge and a clear view of where she wants the subject to go. The school is well placed to develop the subject further.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

105. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers now carefully follow the guidelines for study laid down by the locally Agreed Syllabus. At Year 2 and Year 6, standards of work are now in line with the targets set by the locally Agreed Syllabus. The quality of learning is very good overall and pupils, including those who have special educational needs, achieve very well.

106. Although it is not possible to make a judgement on teaching, some clear strengths are evident. The quality of teachers' planning is very good. Teachers plan their lessons thoughtfully to ensure that they achieve a balance between factual teaching about religion and opportunities for pupils to make a personal response to what they have learnt. In a very good lesson in Year 5 on the attributes of Allah, pupils built on the work done in the previous lesson in which they had looked at some of the words that Moslems use to describe Allah. The teacher was well prepared with lists of the characteristics so that pupils could look them up in dictionaries to make sure they knew exactly what each description meant. They then worked in pairs to identify and record examples of these

positive characteristics in each other. The lesson very successfully enabled pupils to work from personal experience, so they all had something to contribute, and made a very positive contribution to pupils' personal development as they focused on the good in each other.

107. In an equally successful lesson in Year 6, the teacher used similar strategies to help pupils gain an insight into the Christian concept of the Trinity. Through discussion, collaboration and role-play, pupils were encouraged to reflect on the different facets of their own personalities and in doing so gained a deeper insight into them. The very good relationships within classes enable pupils to share their thoughts and ideas confidently as well as develop to speaking and listening well. Pupils who have special educational needs are able to take full part in the lesson because teachers and classroom assistants ensure they receive the help they require.

108. Teachers make good use of the guidance provided by the locally Agreed Syllabus for the subject and this ensures that major world faiths are taught systematically. Pupils know that there are different beliefs but that many have common features. Work from Years 1 and 2 shows that pupils learn about special books like the Bible and the Qur'an and important festivals like Eid and Divali. Pupils in Year 6 can recall with prompting some facts about each of the major world faiths they have studied and know some of the important stories and characters. They know that each major faith has its important buildings that are a focus for worship and have an understanding of some common elements of worship such as prayer. Pupils respond well to their learning. They are willing to offer answers and personal opinions because they know that their views are valued. They are interested to learn, particularly when they have the opportunity to contribute to the lesson.

109. All teachers use the subject very well to promote pupils' personal development. They use the work on other faiths to encourage pupils to understand the variety of opinions and beliefs, and to respect and value different ideas. Teachers take opportunities in assemblies and in discussion times to develop aspects of religious education and these experiences enrich pupils' learning. The way the subject is taught, with its opportunities for reflection and response, and its emphasis on respect for other views, makes a positive contribution to the caring ethos that the school promotes.

110. The subject is very well managed and this has contributed significantly to the rising standards. Teachers make good use of visits to local churches and one class has visited the local mosque to develop pupils' understanding of similarities and differences in worship. The school is improving the resources for the subject to include artefacts. Some have already been purchased but there are not enough for the study of Sikhism and Hinduism.