

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST. JOSEPH'S ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Todmorden

Calderdale

Unique reference number: 107560

Headteacher: Mrs C Rothwell

Reporting inspector: Ms J Schaffer
23698

Dates of inspection: 19 – 22 May 2003

Inspection number: 246692

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: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Wellington Road
Todmorden

Postcode: OL14 5HP

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs J Howorth

Date of previous inspection: February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23698	J Schaffer	Registered inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage	What sort of school is it? School's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9002	D Ashton	Lay inspector	Educational inclusion	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?
27741	C Weaver	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Music Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
19709	J Fisher	Team inspector	English Geography History Special educational needs English as an additional language	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is smaller than most other schools of its type. It has 140 boys and girls on roll with another 22 children in the nursery. Children start in the nursery and reception classes in September. Admissions declined in the last four years but are now increasing. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic groups and all of these speak English as their first language. Thirty per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is above average. Most of these pupils have difficulties with learning but there are also more pupils with medical problems than is usual in a school of this size. Six pupils have a formal Statement of Need and this is above average. When children start in the nursery their attainment is average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is providing a sound education for its pupils, although in the past records show that pupils' progress in mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6 was not good enough and their progress in English was only just satisfactory. This is being addressed effectively by the present headteacher, whose commitment and drive is beginning to make a difference to the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. Teaching is good in most classes. The governors give good support to the school and take proper steps to ensure all pupils are included equally in the school's provision. However some key managers do not contribute enough to the management of the school. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Good teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 that results in pupils achieving above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 2; and good teaching of mathematical development and the use of computers in the reception year.
- Good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good and this leads to pupils having good relationships with each other, and caring for each other in their work and play.
- The determined leadership of the headteacher and the good support of the governing body.
- The good partnership with parents supports pupils' learning.

What could be improved

- The standard of work by the end of Year 6 in mathematics, science and information and communication technology.
- Methods in the nursery and reception years so that children make better progress in learning to write and, in the reception year, have more opportunities to learn through independent play.
- The presentation of pupils' work, their spelling and use of punctuation in Years 3 to 6.
- The effectiveness of team leaders in communicating with their team and in ensuring agreed policies and practices are carried out in their stage.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Although for three years the school did not tackle many of the issues identified at the last inspection in 1998 fast enough, there has been rapid improvement in the last two terms, so that overall improvement is satisfactory. There is now a whole school approach to behaviour, which has led to pupils having good attitudes to their learning. Good systems are in place to promote the written values of the school, its educational direction and the prioritising of resources. There is good communication with staff and parents, although more needs to be done to improve communications within the school's different teams. Punctuality has improved. Standards in art and design and design and technology are better and classroom assistants contribute well to pupils' learning. Governors contribute much more to the work of the school. However, the use of assessment to plan future work still needs to be addressed. Standards are lower in mathematics and science, but in English they have been maintained.

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			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A	B	A	A
mathematics	C	E	D	D
science	D	B	B	B

Key	
Well above average	A
above average	B
Average	C
below average	D
Well below average	E

From 2000 onwards, the school did well in English and science at the end of Year 6 with pupils attaining well above or above average standards. In 2002, a good proportion of pupils attained the higher level in both English and science. However, in mathematics, results were below the national average and in comparison to similar schools. Currently in Year 6, the standard of pupils' work is average in English and below average in mathematics and science. There is a high proportion of pupils with special education needs in this year group which explains in part the lower results in English and science. In recognition of this, the school set itself lower targets for this year and these should be achieved. In response to good planning and teaching in Year 6, pupils made good progress over the year, but this has not been sufficient to make up the ground lost in previous years when teaching was not so good. Overall, pupils' achievements in mathematics and science are unsatisfactory, although they are satisfactory in English.

National test results in 2002 at the end of Year 2 were average in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers' assessments in science were below average. Standards have improved, and for the current year are above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' achievements in Years 1 and 2 are good. Children in the nursery and reception classes make good progress in mathematics, physical development and using computers and are on track to exceed the level expected for their age. In personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development, and for most elements of communication, language and literacy they are on track to reach the expected levels. In writing, however, they are below the expected level.

Standards in art and design, design and technology, geography and history are average in both Years 2 and 6. They are below average in information and communication technology and music in Year 6. In Year 2, music was not judged because it was not taught during the inspection and standards are average in information and communication technology and physical education. Because of bad weather games lessons in Year 6 were postponed so no judgement was made on physical education. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to the targets set for their learning and their achievement is good in Years 1 and 2. Their achievement is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6 because in the past work was not always set that was well matched to their needs.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are interested in their lessons and are keen to work hard. They appreciate the range of experiences offered to them outside of school hours.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Around the school, pupils generally behave well. In lessons, most pupils follow teachers' instructions well, but in Years 3 to 6 and in the reception class a few continue to chatter or follow their own interests when asked not to.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils work very well together on joint projects. They show initiative and responsibility. In the nursery class, children are very responsible in their play but this is not continued into the reception class when too much adult intervention limits children's initiative.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Pupils enjoy school but some parents take holidays in term time. Punctuality has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teachers throughout the school establish good relationships so that there is a good atmosphere for learning in all classes. Pupils respond by trying their best at their work. Improvements in mental arithmetic sessions have been successful and pupils' skills at calculating develop at a good rate. The best teaching seen was in Years 1, 2 and 6, where teachers provided stimulating tasks based on clear, well-judged objectives for pupils' learning. As a consequence, pupils worked very productively and made good progress. In successful lessons, good use is made of previous assessments, but in some lessons there was not a good match of work to pupils' level of understanding and in these lessons learning slowed. Classroom assistants make a good contribution to the learning of the groups or individual pupils they support.

The overall teaching of English and mathematics is satisfactory. Letter sounds are taught well in the reception and Years 1 and 2, but inconsistent methods of teaching spelling and grammar in Years 3 to 6 results in a slowing in pupils' progress in English. In the reception and nursery classes, teachers do not organise learning through children's play well enough, particularly those activities that provide for children to have a go at writing on their own. In mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6, not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to apply their knowledge to problems and investigations.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. All the subjects of the National Curriculum contribute to pupils' learning and there is a good range of extra-curricular activities to stimulate learning. However, the school's long term planning is not secure enough to help teachers provide work at the right level.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils' individual education plans are detailed and carefully matched to the needs of these pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Spirituality is encouraged through prayer and a focus on valuing thoughtfulness and wonder. Teachers set clear moral standards and organise good social development. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Pupils' health and welfare is embedded in all school procedures and staff take care to follow these. The school has satisfactory practices for addressing racial equality. Assessment of pupils' achievements is satisfactory but not enough use is made of the information gained from assessments to guide teachers' planning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. In just two and a half terms, since her appointment, the headteacher's leadership has made a real difference. She shares her vision with the whole school community, and parents, staff and pupils readily respond. However, the contribution to the management of the school by team leaders is not always effective.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development and ensure all statutory duties are met. They have supported the school well through difficult times.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. A regular check on the progress of developments is now part of the school's process of evaluation but not enough account is taken of the information it has about pupils' achievements.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Governors are aware of the importance of obtaining best value for the money they spend. However, they do not have a system to check on what impact their decisions have on pupils' learning. Classroom assistants are not always well deployed.

The school has a satisfactory number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff. The accommodation is adequate but it has a number of aspects that are unsatisfactory. The school has good plans to address these in the immediate future. Resources are satisfactory but the range of books for children starting to read and the quality and quantity of construction materials and outdoor play equipment for nursery and reception classes are limited.

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 child likes school and makes good progress.• The teaching is good and their child is expected to work hard.• They would feel comfortable raising issues or discussing any problems.• The school is helping their child to become mature.• The school is well led and managed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some parents were not happy with the homework that is set.• Some felt that the school did not provide enough extra-curricular activities.• A few had concerns with regard to behaviour.

Inspectors share many of the positive views that parents have of the school. The provision for extra-curricular activities has been significantly improved in recent times and is now good. Some aspects of homework are good. However, worksheets that are not related to class work are sometimes used and inspectors felt that this could be improved. Pupils' behaviour has improved much in recent times and is still improving.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 The school's results in National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Year 6 have been above average, or well above average, in English since the previous inspection. This was because pupils benefited from the good teaching in English that was seen at the time of the last inspection. However, in mathematics, the National Numeracy Strategy was not introduced effectively and the school's results in mathematics dipped to well below average in 2001 and below average in 2002. The school's results in science were above average in 2002.
- 2 The changes in the leadership of the school and in teaching staff meant that information gained from assessments and test results was not used to determine what action the school should take to raise standards until the appointment of the new headteacher this year. This work has now been started and good steps taken to address the low results in mathematics. These include: a focus on mathematics for the whole school with training from local authority advisors to improve the quality of teaching; the headteacher taking Year 4 for mathematics each day so that Years 4 and 5 can be taught as single year groups, and special classes to boost the attainment of pupils in Year 6 from the low level to the expected level. In September, it was clear that the current Year 6 would not achieve the good results previously seen in English and science and that, in mathematics, results would remain below average. There is a much higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 6 than in previous years and this in part explains the lower standards. However, also responsible for lower standards is the fact that this year group have been through the school when teaching methods have varied and pupils' progress year on year has not been monitored because the school was without a permanent headteacher. The new headteacher sensibly queried the high targets set for this year group and improved the documentation to identify the proper levels of special educational needs for individual pupils. The school's targets were set at a lower level and pupils are on track to achieve them. Current standards are below those of the inspection in 1998 and this reflects the lack of improvement the school made in the intervening years before the arrival of the current headteacher.
- 3 The school's results in tests for reading, writing and mathematics for pupils at the end of Year 2 have gradually improved from well below average results in 1999 and 2000 to average in 2002. The good teaching in Years 1 and 2 has been responsible for this improvement, together with the good teaching in many areas in the Foundation Stage¹. The current standard of work in English, mathematics and science is above average, continuing an upward trend. This means that there has been good improvement since the inspection in 1998, when standards at the end of Year 2 were average and teaching had areas for development.
- 4 The school's results do not indicate a significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. The Year 2 test results taken over a four year period indicate that girls performed slightly better than boys, as they do nationally. However, the picture

¹ Foundation Stage is the nationally recognised stage for children when they reach the age of three and continues to the end of the reception year. It prepares children for their later work on the National Curriculum and is based on six areas of learning. At the end of the reception year children should reach the Early Learning Goals which are the expected levels of their age.

is reversed for the results in Year 6 with boys outperforming girls, particularly in science. The school has not looked at reasons for this and there was no noticeable difference during the inspection. With small year groups there is a big imbalance in the number of boys and girls in some classes and data fluctuates year on year.

- 5 When children start in the nursery, they have a wide range of attainment but overall their knowledge and understanding is similar to that expected for their age. Their achievements in the Foundation Stage are good in mathematics, and children are likely to achieve above the expected level for their age by the end of the reception year. Their achievements are satisfactory in most aspects of personal and social development, in knowledge and understanding of the world and in physical and creative development, and they are on track to achieve the levels set for them in these areas by the end of the reception year. In communication, language and literacy, children make good progress in speaking and listening and in learning about books and stories in the nursery, and in reading in the reception year. They are on track to attain the levels set for them in communication language and literacy, except in writing, where their achievements are unsatisfactory. In the reception year, information and communication technology is taught particularly well and children's use of computers is much beyond that expected for their age.
- 6 In Year 6, standards of work in English are average, although pupils may not achieve this level in the national tests that they take at the end of the year. This is because many take too long over planning and producing pieces of writing and some are over anxious in test situations. All pupils, including those of lower attainment, enjoy reading, and those of higher and average attainment have a good knowledge of literature and a range of books. They explain what they like about their favourite authors and look at texts critically. Good opportunities to discuss in working groups have helped pupils put forward their ideas confidently, use appropriate vocabulary, and to listen to the views of others. However, some are unaware when they are using ungrammatical expressions in their speech and this is sometimes reflected in their writing. Spelling and punctuation are not good enough. All pupils, including those with special education needs, use reading and writing skills as expected for their age when working in other subjects. Their knowledge of how to find information in a library is insufficient but they are competent at using computers for research.
- 7 In mathematics and science, standards are below average. Pupils use the expected range of methods in their mathematical calculations but not all have achieved the speed that they should or confidence in their own decisions when deciding on how to solve problems. Many pupils' work in science is at the level expected for their age. However, not many pupils are at the higher level because they do not draw conclusions from experiments consistent with the evidence, or begin to describe for themselves how to make changes in physical phenomena. Through Year 6, pupils' learning has built well on what they knew before. They have made good progress. Records show, however, that in previous years some pupils made little progress in mathematics and science. Their achievements in English are satisfactory, but in mathematics and science they are unsatisfactory.
- 8 In Year 2, the standard of pupils' work is above average in English, mathematics and science. This improvement on the results of tests and teacher assessments at the end of 2003 has been brought about by the consistently good teaching in this age range. Pupils have produced a good quantity of work throughout the year and been encouraged to improve and try their best. Pupils join in class discussions well, and some incorporate new words without difficulty when their teacher introduces them. Nearly all pupils are competent readers of texts at the level expected for their age while those of higher attainment read at a level beyond this. They enjoy reading and

use expression to add interest when they read aloud. All pupils have benefited from the school's good programme of teaching letter sounds to work out unknown words, although other strategies are not used as well. Pupils' writing is not quite as well developed as their reading. Higher attaining pupils write imaginatively and show a good understanding of writing for an audience. For instance, one pupil commencing her report on 'The Water Cycle' begins with: 'There is no beginning to a water cycle so I will begin here'. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs have good support in learning to put their own ideas on paper but they seldom use full stops and capital letters and some form letters incorrectly. In mathematics, many pupils use numbers up to 100 confidently when working in 10s. For example they can add and subtract multiples of 10 to a 100. When working on money problems all pupils are using coins up to 20 pence and those of higher attainment work with pound coins. In science, pupils could explain the features of a plant and describe differences between living and non-living things well. Their understanding of what makes a fair test is good. Pupils' achievements are good in English, mathematics and science.

- 9 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set for them in their individual education plans. These plans are of good quality based on careful assessments by the teacher and the special needs co-ordinator and the evaluations of support staff. Pupils' work, knowledge and understanding are assessed regularly. Teachers are quick to give these pupils a new challenge once they have successfully achieved a target. In the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, their achievement is good because they have had this good provision for some time. In the reception and Year 1 class, support staff work well with the pupils who have significant needs but on occasions are too watchful and as a result stifle their curiosity and keenness to learn. In Years 3 to 6 the assessment and tracking of pupils with special educational needs was not carried out with enough rigour, and as a result some did not make enough progress. This has now been rectified but their achievement is not so high because of these former weaknesses.
- 10 Teaching and resources in information and communication technology have improved significantly in the last two years. Despite this, standards in Year 6 are below average because pupils have had too much to catch up on to make up for the previous gaps in their knowledge and skills. Pupils in all classes are making good progress in their use of computers. Standards are average in Year 2. In music, standards are below average in Years 6 because the subject has not been taught sufficiently up until this year and no judgement was made on the standards in Year 2 as music was not taught during the inspection. Because of bad weather, work planned in games and athletics could not take place, so no judgement was made on physical education in Year 6. In all other subjects standards are at the level expected for the age of pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 11 The school aims to foster an atmosphere of Catholic values and attitudes. It promotes a disciplined, orderly respectful community and is successful in encouraging pupils to develop personal and social responsibility. There has been good improvement in this aspect since the inspection in 1998.
- 12 Pupils have positive attitudes to their work; they are enthusiastic and eager to learn and to be taught and enjoy working on their tasks. This reflects the standards of teaching and good relationships throughout the school. Pupils respond to their teachers' positive caring attitudes and demand for courtesy and respect for others. Pupils are involved in a wide range of activities and make the most of the

opportunities provided. They work well together in different groupings and individually. Children in the nursery and reception class are happy to come to school and are confident to leave their parent or carer because staff provide a friendly, happy atmosphere.

- 13 Behaviour is satisfactory. There were two fixed term exclusions last year and one exclusion in the current year. Pupils are generally polite to adults and each other but they are sometimes boisterous and unwilling to stop talking when asked. No oppressive behaviour was observed. Pupils show patience, tolerance and maturity in many situations, for example, when acting as school councillors. A new behaviour policy has been introduced since the last inspection and is consistently applied. Pupils with behavioural difficulties benefit from firm behaviour management, well organised class routines and stimulating activities. Pupils take care of school property and help with the setting up and clearance of equipment.
- 14 Children in the nursery and reception classes begin to develop independence in dressing and personal hygiene and sustain interest and concentration for increasing amounts of time. They learn the difference between right and wrong and generally share resources amicably. In the nursery, children show more independence and initiative than is usual for their age, but in the reception class provision for this is not as good and they show less independence.
- 15 Pupils with special educational needs show a willingness to learn; they respond to their activities well and most behave well in lessons. For many, their targets for improvement relate to aspects of personal development, including behaviour. With very effective support from staff they increase their confidence, self-esteem and ability to contribute significantly to lessons. They mix well with other pupils and are fully integrated into the day-to-day life of the school.
- 16 Relationships are good among pupils and teachers and this helps to create an environment for effective learning. Pupils grow in maturity as they progress through the school, carrying out their responsibilities sensibly and thoughtfully. Pupils respond well to the system of awards and certificates for achievements in academic, sporting and social areas. Christian values are emphasised in the way pupils raise money for charities and take part in the Sacramental programme. Their personal development is enhanced by these activities.
- 17 Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils attend regularly for most of the time but there are a number of families who take their annual holiday in term time. Unauthorised absence is minimal. Pupils enjoy coming to school and lessons begin promptly, an improvement on the previous inspection. Awards are presented for good attendance.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 18 The overall quality of teaching in the school is good and in most year groups there is effective learning. However, this year less successful teaching in the Year 3 and 4 class has meant that the rate of the pupils' progress has slowed. Teaching in Years 3 to 5 is less successful than in other year groups. At the time of the inspection in 1998 teaching was judged to be satisfactory overall and the school was asked to improve the teaching in Years 1 and 2. With the current level of good teaching in those years this represents good improvement. However, the school was asked to improve the use of assessment to inform future planning and this has yet to be addressed effectively throughout the school.

- 19 Of the 41 lessons seen, one was excellent and four were very good. In these lessons pupils' interest was high, and the provision of stimulating and challenging work gave a boost to their achievements. Nineteen lessons were good, where the work planned built well on pupils' previous knowledge and understanding and the rate of pupils' learning was good. In the sixteen satisfactory lessons some good learning took place but there were also times when the lesson did not provide the right kind of challenge, sometimes being too easy and on one or two occasions too hard. In these lessons teachers had not taken care to consider pupils' previous levels of knowledge and understanding so as to target their learning more accurately. The one unsatisfactory lesson of the inspection occurred because planning was weak, the content did not provide enough challenge and the organisation of the lesson was slow, consequently pupils lost interest and did not learn enough.

Teaching and learning in the Foundation stage

- 20 The overall quality of teaching is good. This should lead to good achievement in all areas of learning. However, there is little sharing of expertise in this age group and so strengths in one class are not replicated in the other, with the result that children's achievements, although satisfactory, are not as good as might be expected in some areas of learning.
- 21 In the nursery, there has been a recent change of teacher, which is unsettling for children of this age. The effects of this have been minimized because the nursery nurse and the temporary teacher have quickly become a successful working team. They have used their extensive knowledge of the needs of children of this age to establish very good relationships. Daily routines and the organisation of areas of learning provide children with good opportunities to investigate and try things out for themselves, as one child did, by instigating and leading a turn-taking game. Because they work and play within the safe parameters of a warm and caring atmosphere, children are confident and keen to learn and they make very good gains in developing spoken language, independence and initiative. Both adults in the nursery are adept at allowing the children to take the lead in play situations and judging when to intervene to move the learning on. Planning is satisfactory, but too many activities lack a focus or challenge to encourage children to puzzle out a problem or to practice mark-making using the letter shapes they know to write simple words, including their names.
- 22 In the reception class, planning is good for teacher or adult led activities. Care is taken to build on children's previous knowledge and there are good expectations of how much children can learn. This is particularly successful in mathematics, when clear objectives are set for the lesson and the activities provided give good opportunities for children to further their understanding. An overall topic is used well to capture children's interest and to teach them about the world in which they live. Stories are effectively used in this way as well. Although there are numerous adults in the class, sometimes as many as four for 21 children, not enough learning takes place when children engage in independent activities. This is because adults do not have a high enough expectation that learning will take place when children play and they concentrate all their efforts on specific teaching tasks, sometimes working with just one or two children. There are no free adults who can intervene when children use play areas. For example, the sand tray had a notice that encouraged children to build a house or make a tunnel. The two children playing in the sand could not read the notice and no one came to read it to them. There were no suitable resources to hand to prompt them, such as a cardboard tube to help with tunneling, and no adult questioned them to develop their ideas. As a result, they dug for a little while and then became bored. Children are less independent in this class than in the nursery.

They wait for adults to make suggestions, and their skills at discussion and negotiation with each other do not develop at a good rate.

Teaching and learning in Years 1 to 6

- 23 Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good and in Years 3 to 6 it is satisfactory. All teachers make satisfactory use of the methods recommended in the National Literacy Strategy and some teachers use them well. In Years 1 and 2, for example the teacher gave pupils ample opportunity to discuss what they were going to write before they started their writing so that ideas were already thought out and sentence structures and vocabulary suggested. This good practice was also seen in a lesson in the Year 4 and 5 class, where a role-play activity added inspiration to pupils' written work on the poem "The Pied Piper of Hamelin". However, some of the pupils' work shows that a narrow range of activities, such as using a worksheet to practise grammatical conventions and punctuation, limit pupils' interest so that they take less care with their work and their achievements flag. Some of the recommended strategies are not used consistently through the school, for instance, keeping an individual spelling log of mis-spelt words. The teaching of mathematics has been a focus for development for the school and is satisfactory. Methods recommended in the National Numeracy Strategy are used effectively by a good proportion of teachers. Most provide well thought out brisk mental arithmetic sessions at the start of each lesson. Pupils respond well and improve their skills at a good rate during these sessions. However, few teachers make it clear at the start of the lesson what they expect pupils to learn, and the final session to help pupils assess how well they have done is often too brief. The use of teaching aids and resources that pupils are very familiar with, such as a square with 100 numbers on, are displayed in most classes and are available for pupils' use, but in some lessons these were not available and this limits pupils' learning.
- 24 In the best lessons, teachers plan carefully using information of how well pupils learnt in previous lessons, and the work they provide is well matched to the differing levels of pupils' understanding. They also take into consideration the different stages of maturity of the pupils, which is important in classes with two age groups. A good example of this was seen in a science lesson in Years 1 and 2 when all pupils were studying the needs of plants and the function of its root. All pupils carried out exciting investigations in the second part of the lesson but at a level appropriate to their level of understanding. In lessons, or parts of lessons that were less successful, work was not well matched to pupils' previous knowledge. Planning was weak on occasions with regard to identifying what the main objective was for the lesson and what learning would be gained from different tasks. The end part of the lesson was not used well on many occasions to check how well pupils had achieved the objectives for the lesson or to help pupils understand for themselves how well they had done. For example, in an otherwise good lesson, in which pupils had been encouraged to take on the role of a character from a poem they had been reading while others asked questions, the lesson ended without helping those who had participated understand how well they had done or how they could improve in future.
- 25 Teachers ask good questions that give pupils the opportunity to respond with a full answer and to put forward their own views. However, few teachers target questions to pupils in different year groups or at different levels of attainment, and few strategies are used to involve more than one pupil in the process of questioning and answering. Information and communication technology is used well by some teachers to provide for a different level or range of work. Teachers plan well with support staff so that they are well briefed on the purpose of activities. Support staff make a good contribution to the learning when pupils start on tasks, but during

teachers' explanations too many sit and listen without a clear purpose to their presence.

- 26 In recent months the school has reviewed the way in which pupils are managed in lessons. Teachers all use the same systems of sanctions and rewards and have good expectations of pupils' behaviour. In almost all lessons behaviour was satisfactory. Pupils respect their teachers and are keen to work hard. However, on occasions in Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to talk after the teacher has asked for quiet. Sometimes teachers continue with the lesson even when it is clear that not everyone has responded to the request for attention or improved concentration.
- 27 The marking of pupils' work does not contribute enough to the assessment of pupils' knowledge and understanding. In Years 3 to 6 it is not used well enough to guide teachers on what future work pupils need. Work is mainly marked by ticks and crosses. Positive encouraging comments are often included. On occasions, praise is given when work has not merited it, and in only one or two classes are comments sometimes directed at explaining how to improve or give a clear message that improvement is expected. When work has not been satisfactory, pupils are not given the opportunity to improve by a similar task being set. In the reception class and in Years 1 and 2, stickers are used to set targets for pupils' reading. This is a useful way to motivate pupils but, because the targets are commercially produced, they do not always match the needs of the child.
- 28 The quality of teaching of pupils with special education needs is good. This is because support staff are well trained and fully understand the needs of the pupils they support. Good quality individual education plans provide short term targets that pupils can achieve readily. Support staff and teachers work well together to ensure that pupils have activities that match the targets they are working towards. Good relationships are evident. Occasionally, as in the reception and Year 1 class, too much support and attention is given so that the child becomes too dependent.
- 29 The school has not reviewed the provision of homework for some time and decisions with regard to the quantity, frequency and type of work rest with individual teachers. In some classes homework sheets are used that do not relate fully to the work that is done in class. In other classes, homework is used as an opportunity for pupils to carry out research or to involve their families in the learning. Some parents felt that there was either a 'feast or famine'. In the reception class and Years 1 and 2, reading diaries are sent home very regularly and parents make a significant contribution to the progress children and younger pupils make in reading and learning spellings.

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

- 30 The school provides a curriculum that meets statutory requirements. Every subject of the National Curriculum is taught adequately and contributes to pupils' experience, which is an improvement on the last inspection. Schemes of work are in place for most subjects and follow national guidance. However, in some subjects, including music, geography, history, science and design technology, the allocation of sufficient time each term for pupils to develop their knowledge and skills has not always been maintained in every year group. There has been confusion as to whose responsibility it was to check the quality of curriculum planning in the different stages. In the Foundation Stage, the national guidance for this age group is used to plan activities and children are given satisfactory opportunities to learn in all the six area of learning identified in this document. However, planning is much better in some areas than

others. There are inconsistencies in the planning between the nursery and the reception classes because communication between the two classes has not always been good enough. This has mainly affected planning for personal and social development and writing. Overall progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory but there are some important aspects of curriculum planning in need of improvement.

- 31 The school has the added difficulty of planning work in each subject to cover the needs of two age groups in each class. This has been addressed by the sensible provision of a two year topic cycle. However, because schemes of work are not yet specific enough in terms of what pupils should know, understand and be able to do in each year group or stage of their learning, teachers have insufficient guidance on the different levels pupils should reach. Added to this, the topic cycle has very little detail at present. In the main, individual teachers are providing work at appropriate levels of difficulty in each lesson, but it is not happening all the time. Without good whole school guidance it is easy for teachers to slip up. For example, in Years 1 and 2 where very good science work is generally provided, when studying materials in the autumn term, Year 2 pupils mainly covered work at the level of Year 1, thus not reaching the required standard in this aspect.
- 32 Basic literacy and numeracy skills are taught using the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. Overall, the school's use of the strategies is satisfactory but some of the recommended methods are not used consistently. For example, the teaching of spelling is patchy and not all teachers are good at asking pupils to explain their method of working out mathematical calculations. There is not a clear expectation of how these skills should develop from Year 1 onwards. Some teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to practise what they have learned in English and mathematics in other areas of the curriculum. However, links are not identified in the long term planning and opportunities are often missed. There has been good improvement in the use of information and communication technology because all teachers are conscious of the benefits it brings, but this is a relatively recent development and there has not been time to evaluate and review its effectiveness. In science and mathematics there is insufficient planning for investigative work and problem solving. The school has not identified how these skills should develop as pupils move up each year.
- 33 Well written, concise policies are in place for all subjects. They give good straightforward explanations of the guiding principles for each subject. They provide a good starting point for ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities and that all are included in the school's provision. However, neither the subject co-ordinators, nor the key stage co-ordinators, have devised any simple systems to enable them to monitor this aspect. None of the policies make it clear how pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education should be developed in each subject.
- 34 There is good provision for pupils' personal development. All aspects of provision for personal, social and health education have been reviewed. There is a well-planned programme of work, which incorporates sex and relationships education. Citizenship and education about drugs education are also covered adequately. A time when pupils sit together and talk as a class provides an effective means of enabling pupils to talk more confidently about personal issues, such as friendships and mutual respect.
- 35 The provision for extra-curricular activities is good and includes a range of sporting, music, dance and other clubs. There are good opportunities to learn judo, football, netball, craft, chess and information and communication technology outside the

school day. The curriculum is enriched by the involvement of local, professional sporting clubs in areas such as tennis, rugby and football. There is also provision for more able and interested musicians to learn to play piano, violin or guitar. All of these activities help to promote the personal development of individual pupils and engage them in the life of the school. There is good attention to ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities to participate in these clubs.

- 36 There are good links with the wider community and the church. All classes visit a range of places in the local community as part of their curriculum. Good curriculum links have been established, including Halifax Rugby League Football Club and Calderdale's Sports Development Officer. The school plays an active role in Todmorden carnival and a local Brownie Pack meets in the school. There are effective links with other Catholic schools in the area including the two high schools, which help pupils to transfer to the next stage of education as smoothly as possible.
- 37 The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Good spiritual awareness is promoted through the school's Catholic ethos. Pupils are made aware of the needs of others and the power of prayer and worship. There were many examples seen during the inspection which confirmed this view. For example, in a whole school hymn practice, a Year 2 pupil volunteered to sing part of The Lord's Prayer on her own. The beauty of her small voice held pupils' attention in silence and prompted them to join in at the right moment. In science lessons, teachers' enthusiasm for nature and the natural world is communicated well to pupils. Pupils are taught well to appreciate their own good fortune in life and to thank God for it.
- 38 Provision for moral development is good. The school's behaviour policy encourages good behaviour at all times and rules have been agreed with pupils. However, this is a relatively recent development and, although most pupils behave well in classes and around the school, some still need careful support to help them regulate their own conduct. The principles of right and wrong are taught not only in religious education lessons but through teachers' expectations in other lessons. The principles of honesty, fairness and respect are demonstrated by teachers through their own behaviour. Time is taken to explain what has gone wrong if pupils transgress. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on moral issues in the wider world, for example in a literacy lesson where they have considered the pros and cons of zoos in the context of animal welfare.
- 39 Provision for social development is good within lessons and the whole school. During lessons, pupils work well together in pairs and small groups, where they show good levels of concentration and co-operation. In a design and technology project for example, groups of Year 6 pupils worked together very effectively to design and make models of a new football stadium for Wembley. Pupils are encouraged to raise funds for charities such as Dr. Barnardo's, CAFOD, Shelter and Red Cross Day. The meaning of what they are doing is explained well so that they understand the purpose of sharing with others. A lunch was organised in the school for 'Help the Aged' where those pupils taking music lessons played to entertain. The new school council is made up of elected pupils from each class. It meets each half term to discuss issues of concern to pupils. Although this initiative only started in the autumn term, pupils have already contributed to decisions about school grounds, appointment of staff and merit certificates.
- 40 Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. The school was without expertise in music until recently when a new part-time member of staff joined the school. Her very good subject knowledge has meant that music is beginning to contribute

effectively to pupils' cultural development, but there was lost ground to make up. There is satisfactory provision through the use of visitors to the school, such as a ballet group working in dance lessons, and visits to museums and theatres. The local town is a rich resource for developing cultural awareness in history and geography, and in Year 6, a sketching expedition in art raised pupils' understanding of the merits of local architecture. Awareness of other cultures is promoted through religious education, where pupils study other world religions. Planned opportunities for multicultural awareness are less well developed across the curriculum, for example in music and art, where there are few opportunities to explore the music and art from around the world.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 41 The school provides good support and guidance and cares for its pupils well in an atmosphere of Catholic values, attitudes, practice and knowledge. Pupils are made to feel safe and secure within a calm but disciplined atmosphere. Staff know the pupils and their families well and show a good understanding of pupils' emotional needs in school, home and within the community. There has been significant improvement in the quality of care since the last inspection.
- 42 There are satisfactory procedures in place to help children make a successful start in the nursery and reception classes. There are home visits before children start in the nursery and parents have the opportunity to visit the school with their child as an introduction to the reception year. A gradual start in the autumn term ensures that all children settle as quickly as possible. There is, however, no literature for parents or carers to help explain nursery and reception class routines and expectations.
- 43 Child protection procedures are good. The school has an appropriate child protection policy based on the local education authority's guidelines. The headteacher is responsible for its implementation and has received the necessary training. All staff are aware of the arrangements and the school maintains good links with the education welfare services. A comprehensive health and safety policy contributes to the pupils' welfare and good procedures exist for carrying out risk assessments. The school's computers are properly guarded so that it is safe for pupils to use the internet, but as yet the school does not have a policy with regard to internet use and pupils are not made aware of the possible dangers. The co-ordinator for information and communication technology has plans to address this in the immediate future.
- 44 The school has good procedures for promoting discipline and good behaviour. The newly drawn up behaviour policy seeks to promote self-respect by encouraging good behaviour. It makes expectations of good behaviour clear and also provides clear sanctions if behaviour is unacceptable. Staff generally use the policy well, although occasionally inconsistencies, such as allowing chatter to continue when quiet has been asked for, undermines a clear understanding of mutual respect. There are good procedures in place to celebrate pupils' achievements and to promote their personal development through such things as the 'star' awards. These are organised so that they are accessible to as many pupils as possible.
- 45 The school promotes a good understanding of racial equality by helping pupils discuss issues that arise in the news and in their daily lives. Through teaching pupils to respect each others' differences the school contributes to an understanding of equal opportunities. Pupils are beginning to be involved in making decisions about school life through the school council which was started this year, and this promotes their personal development.

- 46 There are good procedures for improving attendance. Parents have recently been informed of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality and there are awards to encourage pupils to attend regularly. Unexplained absences are quickly followed up. The educational welfare officer provides effective support and the school monitors to check for patterns of absence. The efficient mid-day supervisors contribute to an orderly and enjoyable lunch time. First aid procedures are adequate. Transitional arrangements for pupils' secondary education are good and include visits by Year 7 teachers, who help to prepare pupils for secondary school life.
- 47 Because staff know pupils well and there are good systems to record successes or lapses in behaviour, there is satisfactory monitoring of pupils' personal development. There are good systems in place to ensure that all staff are aware of any pupil with a medical condition and to record these. However, pupils do not have achievement files and there is no computer file to help record personal endeavours or difficulties to consider alongside their academic progress.
- 48 Identification of pupils with special educational need is carried out as soon as possible so that a clear structure of support can be put in place. The staff in the Foundation Stage check and keep a careful watch on the needs of individual children and their personal development. Parents of children with special needs feel well supported and are very satisfied with the progress of their children. There are good links with agencies outside of school to help when specialist advice is needed.
- 49 The school's procedures for assessing pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Monitoring pupils' achievements by checking on these assessments is not satisfactory. A series of regular tests and assessments have been well established for some time. They have been used to predict pupils' achievements in the national tests at the end of Year 6. However, when pupils have not made the progress expected there has been no written analysis to explain the reasons for this. Co-ordinators have not analysed the results of tests or assessments to determine any weaknesses in curriculum planning or teaching. This has been done by the new headteacher and in mathematics, by the local authority consultant. The results and predictions have been entered onto computer spreadsheets and they are beginning to be used as part of school evaluation. However, it is still at an early stage, for instance, the downturn in science which can be seen from comparing the pupils' end of Year 2 assessments with the Year 5 prediction was not used to inform the school improvement plan.
- 50 In English, a useful record of pupils' writing is made each term and passed up as the pupil moves through the school. In mathematics and science, pupils' knowledge and understanding is assessed at the end of units of work. There are satisfactory records to assess pupils' progress in reading, learning letter sounds and spelling. Teachers keep careful classroom records and use these well to check on the progress of pupils in their class. Classroom assistants and support workers also make a useful contribution to these records and many keep their own informal notes to add to them. At the end of the year, however, records are not always passed on to the new teacher. There are no systems in place for teachers to confer on the levels of attainment of pupils moving from one class to the next.
- 51 Pupils' progress in subjects other than English, mathematics and science are assessed very broadly against National Curriculum levels. The assessments indicate whether pupils can do the work well, satisfactorily or have not achieved sufficiently. While this is a useful system and one used in most schools, it does not help teachers to focus on how well pupils are developing their skills. For instance, teachers know whether pupils have learnt about plants but not how well they have used

measurements to aid their observations. In all subjects, teachers mark work conscientiously but their marking is not focused on the objectives for the lesson and, as a result, some teachers do not gain a clear picture of what is needed to move pupils on quickly to their next stage of learning.

- 52 Teachers in the nursery and reception classes make sound assessments of children's achievements through daily observations, although their skill is not high enough in observing children's early efforts at writing and understanding how to move them on. In the past, a great many tick sheets were used to record children's progress through the stepping stones (the national guidance for indicating the levels for children). These are marked off at the end of a task. However, as children fluctuate a great deal at this age, this is not a good system and places a heavy burden on the teacher. Because the process of assessing children in this stage has changed nationally, the school is sensibly waiting before altering too many of its systems. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator has transferred records for the reception year children on to the new national system for this age and this will help the school to check on children's level of attainment before they start on work from the National Curriculum.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 53 The partnership with parents is good. This is a very good improvement on the situation at the inspection in 1998 when some aspects of the school's relationship with parents were poor. Parents' mostly positive responses to the inspection questionnaire and their comments at the pre-inspection meeting, showed that they believe that the leadership of the school has improved significantly since the last inspection. They have positive views about their children's progress and the way the school helps their child to become more mature. Parents feel the school is very open and that they would be comfortable raising issues or discussing any problems with any teacher or the headteacher. They feel that the quality of teaching is good and that the school is well led and managed. Some parents were not happy about the number of activities offered out of school time. However, there is a good range of activities and many pupils participate with enjoyment in one or more clubs after school. A few parents had concerns about behaviour. This has improved and is now satisfactory. Some parents were not happy with the homework that is set. Homework levels are satisfactory but on occasions uninteresting worksheets are used and this could be improved. The school has plans to review the organisation of homework, particularly in respect of varying it according to pupils' needs.
- 54 Links with parents are good. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to visit and help in the life and work of the school. Several parents and a grandparent help in the school. There is a good response when parents are asked to help with resources for school projects and parents show interest and support in the topics their children are studying. The school prospectus encourages parents to sign the home-school agreement. A good proportion of parents send back a signed agreement.
- 55 Home-school reading records provide an effective means of exchanging information between home and school. An updated detailed prospectus, governors' reports and the headteacher's attractive newsletters provide a wealth of information and keep parents well informed. School documentation is clearly presented and enhances the reader's image of the school.
- 56 Annual reports on pupils' progress are well written, in-depth and critical where necessary. The reports contain suggestions about how parents might help their child to improve, and include target setting. Opportunities for further consultation are

provided twice yearly and parents are happy with the accessibility and approachability of teachers at all times. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are appropriately involved in their child's review and kept well informed of their progress.

- 57 A small but dedicated Parents' Association supports the school through substantial fund raising and organising social events. Pupils' learning, behaviour and personal development benefit from the good liaison with parents.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 58 The leadership of the school is good and overall management is satisfactory. The school has been through some difficult times, having been without a permanent headteacher for a number of years. The headteacher, who was appointed in September, has a clear vision of how to move the school forward. She has taken good stock of what needs to be done and made well-founded judgements on what should be addressed first. This is a significant improvement from the time of the inspection in 1998 when leadership and management were unsatisfactory. The headteacher is very knowledgeable about the essential principles of education and uses this knowledge to good effect to improve school practice. For example, she immediately tackled the organisation of the provision for pupils with special educational needs because some pupils had not been provided for properly or, in some cases not identified. Governors have played an important part in supporting the school during the instability of the recent years. They took steps to appoint a headteacher as soon as possible and are closely monitoring developments.

- 59 After the resignation of the previous deputy headteacher, there has been no appointment to this post because it would have placed too great a drain on the finances of the school. In a small school, all staff carry responsibilities over and above those of larger schools. There are two permanent members of the senior management team of the school, one responsible for the management of the older age range and one for the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, who have not signed to indicate their acceptance of their job descriptions. Both also have responsibility for leading and managing subjects. They carry out subject management satisfactorily, but they do not make an effective contribution to the management of their two teaching teams, which include the support staff and classroom assistants. For example, they do not organise meetings with an agreed agenda to help draw together the curriculum planning in their stage, or ensure that there is continuity in the way in which school policies are put into practice. This is most noticeable in the Foundation Stage, where children need to benefit from similar routines and practices established in a nursery class and continued in the reception year, in order to make good progress. In Years 3 and 4, gaps in curriculum planning have not been resolved through discussion. Allied to this, the passing on of records at the end of each year has not been checked properly and so incoming teachers have not always had the benefit of previous assessments. The senior management team has had to contend with constant changes, and the differing expectations of temporary headteachers, and this has led to some confusion as to the exact nature of their responsibilities. Their current job description is too wide and all encompassing. It does not provide a useful agenda to ensure that everyone understands what tasks need to be done and what exactly their responsibilities entail. Currently the teaching staff, although all committed to improving the school, are not operating as fully effective working teams.

- 60 The headteacher has set up good systems to communicate with staff, parents, pupils and governors. At the time of the previous inspection, lack of good communication

impeded the smooth running of the school. Parents are happy with the greater amount of information they now receive through newsletters and through being able to approach the staff and headteacher whenever necessary. Governors are well informed by detailed reports, frequent visits and links with individual staff members with subject responsibilities. Pupils are given good information as to what is expected of them with regard to behaviour and other aspects of school life and the school council is beginning to involve them in appropriate decisions. There is a pre-agreed agenda for weekly briefings at which minutes are taken and a written timetable ensures that no one can miss out if absent. Informal talks take place regularly between the headteacher and subject co-ordinators, but there is no formal system for the headteacher to keep a frequent check on how well improvements are proceeding and offer encouragement or guidance if problems occur. Without these frequent formal discussions that could help to iron out areas of confusion, misunderstandings can easily occur. With so many changes taking place it is understandable that proposed improvements are not always remembered. For example: with regard to improving assessment procedures, some subject co-ordinators have started to gather together examples of assessed work in whole-school portfolios as suggested on the school improvement plan, but other co-ordinators are planning an individual file for each pupil of termly assessed work that would make a school portfolio unnecessary.

- 61 The school development plan is a well-structured working document. It was drawn up after consultation with staff and advice from the local education authority team supporting the school. Governors were involved appropriately. Its initial audit was thorough with regard to most subjects. Action plans are organised so that there is a proper understanding of how long tasks should take, how much they will cost and how the school will judge the effect they have on pupils' learning or well-being. However, there is no overview of how much time individual staff members will need to contribute if planned actions are to be carried out successfully. In a small school such as this, this kind of overview ensures that no one staff member is overloaded. Currently, the headteacher carries too many responsibilities. These include monitoring the effectiveness of policies and school improvements, overseeing the quality of teaching and the provision for English, mathematics and science, monitoring and overseeing finances and staff development, together with responsibility for special educational needs, parental involvement and links with the community. This is too great a load. Subject co-ordinators have been delegated tasks but do not have enough responsibilities. For example, they do not have a budget to manage and monitor and are insufficiently involved in checking the progress pupils make through the school.
- 62 In the past, the school has not analysed information from its own assessments or national tests effectively. This is now being done and the information collated on computer. However, information from the tests and assessments of pupils currently in Year 6 was not put to enough use to identify all areas in need of attention. For example, the current year group did not make enough progress in science through Years 3 to 6. As a result they are below average and the co-ordinator has identified good reasons as to why this happened and how to ensure that this can be put right for future years. However, science is not identified on the plan for improvement because this only took into account the above average results in science for 2002. Similarly, areas where pupils performed badly in mathematics in 2002 tests were not noted so that teachers' planning could be checked to put right any shortfall.
- 63 There is very good leadership and management of special educational needs. The headteacher has a very strong commitment to ensuring quality provision for these pupils. Support staff meet regularly with the headteacher and they have found these

meetings useful to improve their practice and to discuss individual pupils' progress towards the targets set for them. Detailed records and good links with supporting agencies help to provide the right kind of activities and understanding of these pupils' needs. Parents are particularly appreciative of the improved provision and communication for their child.

- 64 The governing body is properly organised and fulfils its duties in ensuring all statutory requirements are met. Committees work well, with decisions taken at committee level and shared with the whole governing body. The governors have good avenues for gaining information about the school and are beginning to develop their role in providing objective evaluation of the school's development. A priority in recent years has rightly been to secure the stability of the school by the permanent appointment of a headteacher. The governing body has a good understanding of its duty to ensure that all pupils are included in the school's provision. The required policy is in place to ensure all pupils are treated fairly. Although some parts of the school have not been adapted for access by pupils with wheelchairs, such as the upstairs classrooms, access and provision for pupils with other disabilities and for pupils with serious medical conditions are satisfactory.
- 65 The governors have taken on the appropriate responsibility of overseeing the process of performance management and have set up a committee for this purpose. Proper systems are in place for performance management to contribute to staff development, but understandably, it is at an early stage. Local authority education advisers have monitored teaching but the results of their monitoring has only been given to teachers verbally. Teachers have not had a copy of the written report. Similarly, teachers have had feedback from the headteacher when lessons have been observed but without formal written evaluations the process of performance management is not yet making a significant contribution to the process of management.
- 66 Financial management is satisfactory. The school budget is carefully monitored to ensure that spending levels are within the targets that have been set. Spending, at the time of the last inspection, was not prioritised properly and this was unsatisfactory. This has been addressed and there is clear agenda for tackling the areas where resources are insufficient or where there are aspects of accommodation in need of improvement. Currently, the outdoor play area is not readily accessible for children in the reception class and the nursery area is not clearly defined. The school has been successful in obtaining extra funds to rebuild the whole of the Foundation Stage. One playground becomes flooded when it rains and the overhanging trees cause too much shade in some classes. There are good plans in place to rectify these issues. The school is not easy to locate and signs are not helpful. Resources are generally satisfactory but the nursery and reception classes do not have a good range of equipment for construction activities or outdoor play; there are no tuned musical instruments for use in Years 3 to 6 and the range and quality of books for children in the reception and Years 1 and 2 is unsatisfactory. Many of these needs have been identified for improvement by the school.
- 67 The number of teachers to that of pupils is satisfactory and the number of classroom assistants is good. The governing body has made it a priority to ensure that classroom assistants have been well trained, and this contributes well to the quality of their support to pupils with special educational needs. Overall, teachers are well qualified to meet the demands of the curriculum, although without a greater sharing of expertise the gaps in knowledge of some staff are not provided for by others and this is inefficient. Governors are aware that their decisions with regard to staffing have a major affect on the efficient use of the school's finance. They have good

systems in place to seek good value for money when purchasing but not to judge whether their decisions regarding staffing or the use of staff result in good value for money. This has meant that previous decisions to appoint senior members of staff have restricted the budget so that the school cannot afford to appoint a deputy. As the senior staff are not carrying out the jobs usually done by a deputy, this represents unsatisfactory value for money. There is also some inefficiency in the use of support staff and classroom assistants, particularly in the reception class, where there are sometimes too many support staff and this hinders children's independence.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

68 In order to raise standards and improve the quality of education, the governors, headteacher and all staff should:

- (1) raise standards in mathematics, science and information and communication technology by:
 - improving the way in which teachers use assessments of learning in lessons to plan the next stage of pupils' learning; (paragraph references: 19, 23, 24, 27,101)*
 - improving the use of end of unit and end of year assessments to monitor pupils' progress; (paragraph references: 48, 94)*
 - ensuring that teachers' identify clearly what it is intended for pupils to learn in each lesson and that they share this with pupils and plan activities to match; (paragraph references: 24, 101)
 - improving the teaching of mathematical problem-solving so that pupils identify for themselves what operations to use, and improving the teaching of science investigations so that pupils pose their own questions or hypothesis; (paragraph references: 32, 102, 108)
 - improving the medium term curriculum planning and the monitoring of planning to help teachers gauge the level of work for the different year groups in their class; (paragraph references 30, 31,101,109)
 - ensure that all teachers display the good quality resources needed for pupils' learning in mathematics; (paragraph references: 23,101)
 - continuing to develop the opportunities for pupils to work independently on activities involving information and communication technology. (paragraph references 130,134)*

- (2) In the nursery and reception class improve the progress children make in writing and improve the opportunities in the reception class for children to learn through independent play by:
 - improving the links between the two classes and making sure that there is continuity in planning and teaching methods, particularly in respect of developing children's independence and initiative when learning through play; (paragraph references: 30, 71, 75)
 - ensuring teachers provide good opportunities that motivate children to practice writing as they play and ensuring that planning is at the right level to move children on to the next stage of their learning. (paragraph references: 21, 22, 77, 78)

- (3) Improve the teaching of spelling, punctuation and the presentation of work in Years 3 to 6. (paragraph references 23, 32, 90, 101, 127)

- (4) Ensure that the team leaders for the different stages set up good systems of communication with other staff in their stage and make an effective contribution to the improvement of standards and quality of provision for the children in their stage; making sure that they have a clear agenda for this work from their job descriptions. (paragraph references 30,33, 59)

In addition to the key issues, the governors should consider the following less significant issues:

- a On occasions classroom assistants are not deployed efficiently; (paragraph reference 67, 72, 93,143.)
- b There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to learn about world cultures through the curriculum. (paragraph references 40, 114 and 138) *

** These items had already been identified by the school as areas for development.*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	40
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	1	4	19	15	1	0	0
Percentage	3	10	48	38	3	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)	22	140
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	19

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	49

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	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
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
	2002	14	11	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	12	14
	Girls	9	10	9
	Total	19	22	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (88)	88 (84)	92 (92)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	14	12
	Girls	9	10	10
	Total	19	24	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (92)	96 (92)	88 (92)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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
	2002	9	25	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	28	23	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (83)	68 (61)	88 (94)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	26	21	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (83)	62 (78)	82 (100)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

* The numbers of boys and girls are not given because the total number of boys is less than ten.

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
114	9	
1		
1		
1		
7		

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)	6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.5
Average class size	28.2

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	165

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.5
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	10.75

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	435,015
Total expenditure	432,627
Expenditure per pupil	2,377
Balance brought forward from previous year	17,506
Balance carried forward to next year	19,893

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
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	109
Number of questionnaires returned	69

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	33	1	4	1
My child is making good progress in school.	55	39	4	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	25	62	10	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	38	13	3	7
The teaching is good.	58	30	4	1	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	39	7	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	25	1	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	32	0	1	3
The school works closely with parents.	49	39	7	3	1
The school is well led and managed.	70	25	3	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	32	6	1	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	49	30	12	3	6

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

- 69 Children start full-time in the nursery, if parents wish, in the September after their third birthday. They transfer to the reception class the following September. Currently there are 17 children in the reception year and 22 children in the nursery. Both classes have sufficient places for 25 children. In the reception class there are also four Year 1 pupils, making a total of 23 children in the class. The nursery is staffed by a teacher and nursery nurse. The reception class has a teacher and a permanent learning assistant, with two other staff who support pupils with special educational needs for most of the day.
- 70 When children start in the nursery, their knowledge, skills and understanding vary considerably. Some do not communicate readily, while others talk fluently using a good range of words and sentence structures. The number of children with special educational needs is higher than in most foundation stage classes. In general, their attainment is average for their age.
- 71 Children make good progress in mathematics and in using the computer because of the good teaching in the reception year. By the end of the reception year, they exceed the goals for mathematics, physical development and in the use of computers. In the nursery, children are given very good opportunities to develop their spoken language and to gain confidence, and they make good progress in speaking and listening to each other. This is not maintained as well, however, in the reception year and children's progress slows. Children achieve the levels expected for their age in communication, language and literacy, with the exception of writing, where their attainment is below expectations. They achieve the expected level in personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world and in creative and physical development.
- 72 The quality of teaching is good in both classes. The new guidance for this age has been introduced in both classes and is providing well for children's learning and well being. However, there is very little joint planning, sharing of resources or staff knowledge. As a result classroom routines vary; areas of strength are not replicated; expectations of children's achievements are not similar and planning does not always build on what has gone before. While all classroom assistants work hard to support pupils' learning in the reception year, they are not always directed well to make best use of their time and sometimes the number of adults in the room limits children's creativity. Overall improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.
- Personal, social and emotional development**
- 73 The provision and teaching for children's learning in this area is satisfactory overall. It is good in the nursery and satisfactory in the reception year. Children's progress is satisfactory overall but, because there is little joint planning, the different approaches and expectations in the two classes limits the standards attained by the end of the reception year. Children are on track to reach most of the expected goals but not all.
- 74 In the nursery, the very good relationships between adults and children are established through carefully thought out nursery routines that begin with an open and friendly welcome to parents in the morning. Children come into the classroom confidently and, even though there have been significant recent changes to the adults caring for them, they are happy and settled. Staff have high expectations of their independence, and children get very good opportunities to negotiate and

discuss with each other as they play. For example, one child particularly enjoyed the dominoes and other similar resources set out in the area for mathematical development. After playing with them by herself for a while she decided to set up a turn-taking game with others. In the end at least four children sat round taking turns at a game of their own devising, all perfectly understanding what the game was about, although adults were not as sure. They took turns in a very orderly way. Occasionally opportunities are missed to help children take responsibility for such things as returning resources after using them, and tidy up time was not organised well. This was also a weak point in the provision in the reception class, mainly because with so many adults, staff tended to tidy up rather than children. Snack time does not happen in the reception and this again is a missed opportunity for children to share a social time together.

- 75 A good atmosphere for learning is established in the reception class by the enthusiasm of the teacher and the friendly exchanges between staff and children. However, staff often use loud voices and do not set a good example when they call across the classroom for a child's attention. On occasions, children or Year 1 pupils with special needs are reminded too often to be quiet or to sit still and they become frustrated. The length of time children are expected to sit still is sometimes too long and planning for learning in all the areas does not take enough account of this aspect of children's maturity. There is good planning in the reception class, in respect of teaching right from wrong, respect of different cultures and beliefs and working together as a group. Children show respect for each others' feelings and during a good whole class session learnt to cooperate very well with each other to control a parachute.

Communication language and literacy

- 76 Children make satisfactory progress overall in this area. Teaching is satisfactory, with some good features in both classes but there are areas for development in both. Planning from both classes uses the national guidance for this age but in both classes work is not always well matched to the objectives in the document relating to the children's next stage of development. This particularly affects children's progress in writing and in speaking and listening. Care is taken to identify the children with special educational needs and activities are generally well matched to their needs except on the occasions when they are watched too closely and not given enough opportunities to try for themselves. Overall, they make satisfactory progress. In the reception class they make good progress in learning their letter sounds and in reading.
- 77 In the nursery, a wide range of good activities set out for children to choose provide a good starting point for language development. During the week of the inspection children found great enjoyment in playing in the 'ice cream parlour'. Sometimes this was outside if the weather permitted. They took on the roles of sales people, ice cream makers and customers. One child set up a 'delivery service' on his bike. The nursery nurse was skilful at joining in with the play. Children related to her very well and she was able to draw out conversations and develop the range of their spoken language, particularly for those hesitant to speak in normal circumstances. The week's story about the Little Red Hen was read several times and the teacher used it very well to extend children's spoken language, encouraging them to retell briefly the sequence of events or to join in with the repeating sentences. The teacher invited children to try an early writing activity, making their own marks to represent words in little individual books about the hen. Most were very hesitant. This is because they have not been provided with activities embedded in their play to tempt them to use pencils or to gain confidence in mark making. The teacher modelled writing and children watched with interest, but this has not occurred frequently enough. There

has not been enough planning to introduce letter sounds and to encourage children to learn about letter formation by making the movements that would help them to easily form letters.

- 78 In the reception class, letter sounds and letter formation are introduced systematically and children make good progress in learning to recognise and say their letter sounds. They make satisfactory progress in using them to learn to read but they do not use them as well as they should to try to write their own words. This is because they are not taught well to do this. The interest in books and stories that is developed well in the nursery is continued and children make good progress in their understanding of stories and in retelling the events from them. They make good progress as well in learning to read simple books. By the end of the year most are reading at the expected level and those of higher attainment exceed this. However, only a few children use letter sounds well to write. Children in the reception class are almost as reluctant to write as in the nursery class. In a writing session, the reception teacher and assistants supported children as they tried to write a sentence underneath a picture of an event from the week's story about the three little pigs. The higher attaining children were able to spell some of the words for themselves and they achieved a good sentence. However, many children were still at the stage of writing one letter to represent a word. The teachers and support assistants made progress for these pupils slower because of their insistence on the children thinking about leaving a space between words. This was because the teacher had not identified the next stage of learning for these children or used the national guidance document to help in this respect. The good provision in the nursery for negotiations and discussions between children is not built on sufficiently in the reception class because areas of play are not given enough structure and in some instances insufficient challenge. Children are expected to sit and listen to adults for up to thirty minutes on occasions and many sit quietly but most are not listening with interest and those with special educational needs have generally switched off. Planning does not make enough use of the many adults in this class, although all support assistants follow the directions of the teacher well and have good relationships with the children they support.

Mathematical development

- 79 Teaching and learning are good in both the nursery and reception class for all children, including those with special educational needs. In the nursery, the many practical activities provide good opportunities for children to count and most count to ten competently. Games and resources that promote counting, sorting, recognition and ordering of numbers and shapes are displayed in a comfortable area for children to explore. It is a popular area, as on the occasion when children played with a resource that relied on matching tiles with arrangements of spots as in a die. Nearly all the children that played with this could immediately say which were three and which were four, and higher attaining pupils had no trouble with five. Activities involving measuring and comparing tall or long trains help children to use terms such as "taller than" and "shorter than" accurately. In the reception class, the teacher has high expectations of children's learning and they respond by enjoying mathematics. This was very evident in a good lesson when children counted to 100 and back, in fives to 100, and higher attaining children managed to count in twos to 100. Activities are short but challenging and often allow children to show what they know through an action. For example, in one activity that helped children order numbers, four children took turns to choose a number and they had to stand up if it was more than 12. Children concentrated well on the task and showed as much interest in the numbers others chose as for their own. Work is planned well to match children's level of attainment and staff assess children's achievements well. In both the nursery and the reception class, other play areas, for instance the sand and water areas do not

do enough to encourage the use of mathematical activities or provide children with problems to solve.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 80 In both the nursery and the reception class, this aspect is taught well in some respects but has areas for development as well. Overall, teaching is satisfactory. In the reception class, the teachers' very good subject knowledge with regard to information and communication technology has provided very well for the children in learning to use computers. Very good teaching and encouragement for all children has resulted in their understanding of computers being much greater than expected for their age. Their control of the mouse and other computer functions allows them to create pictures at a standard more usually seen in Year 2. In the nursery, children's interest and curiosity is developed by good activities such as baking bread. This really appealed to children and they readily understood the need for the hygiene precautions of hand washing and wearing aprons. Because many activities are planned for the outdoor area, staff discuss with children the weather and seasonal changes as a matter of course. A construction area is set out, but it is rather dull, with little to focus the attention or develop skills beyond making a quick model. This resulted at one point in three or four children fixing a few cubes together to make guns and playing shooting, which mainly consisted of rolling about. The teacher sensibly interrupted and directed children elsewhere. In the reception class, there was a topic on houses. Children had learnt to name some of the different kinds of houses, materials such as wood and glass, and on one day watched a video that showed how water comes from a reservoir into a house. Because children enjoyed many of the activities in this recent topic, such as making a house from card, their learning was good. However, activities are carried out in very small groups with an adult supporting. The work is often too directed and this leads to children being very dependent on the adults. Children do not pose questions themselves. They wait to be shown how to do things, rather than having a go themselves. For instance, two children made furniture for their house but would not have achieved the good results they did if an adult had not watched and helped them constantly. As a result, they do not make as much progress in observing, investigating and questioning as they should. Stories from other parts of the world help children develop an awareness of other cultures. Visitors are invited to explain their beliefs. For example, the festival of Divali was described to children by a visiting member of the Hindu faith. A visit by the Mayor and Mayoress, wearing their badge of office, introduced the children to an important aspect of their own culture.

Physical development

- 81 Teaching is generally good in both the nursery and reception class and children's attainment at the end of this stage is above expectations. All children participate well in activities and pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Wet weather prevented children in the nursery from using the outdoor play area on several occasions. When they did manage to get outside, they were given good opportunities to move freely with pleasure and confidence. They take equipment outside, learning to carry things together and making choices about where to place things. Although the range of wheeled vehicles is limited, children use them well, stopping and starting quickly and seeking out their own pathways. Good opportunities are provided for children to use tools and malleable materials such as dough when making bread. In the reception class, the outdoor area does not lead straight from the classroom so children cannot go outside at their own choice. However, the teacher is conscious of this and plans good sessions when all the class is outside, and for physical activities in the hall. Children really enjoyed a session on apparatus in the hall when they showed that they could climb safely and confidently to the height of the school climbing frame and jump off apparatus, paying attention to

proper landing softly with knees bent. The teachers' very good subject knowledge ensured that children could meet the challenge of using apparatus safely. All co-operated well in carrying equipment together.

Creative Development

- 82 Teaching and children's achievements are satisfactory. In both the nursery and reception class, songs and rhymes are enjoyed and used well to develop children's appreciation of music. However, neither class has an area where children can experiment with musical instruments or listen to sounds. Stories are used well and children encouraged to act out stories they are familiar with in role play areas, although during the inspection this was not a focus for either the nursery or the reception class. Puppets were provided depicting the characters in the book of the week in both classes. In the older class, a group of children were pleased to have been chosen to use the puppets but did not really get their imaginations working or communicate well with each other. This was partly because adult in-put was not sufficient. When the children started to become indecisive as to what to do, no one gave them a lead by suggesting a base for their puppet play or asking which characters they each had chosen. A simple cardboard puppet theatre that children were familiar with would have helped make the activity more productive. In the nursery, the provision of fully equipped painting easels allows children to choose to paint a picture at any time. They explore the characteristics of paint and colours freely. In the reception class, picture making is often controlled by adults. On this occasion, children were painting in a cut-out shape of one of the characters from the week's story, which limited their creativity. Neither room has a permanent area for children to glue, cut and stick, combining the skills of making with decorating and creating. Dressing up was part of the role play in the tent in the reception, but in a limited way and there is no permanent access to a range of dressing up clothes to stimulate children's imaginations.

ENGLISH

- 83 Pupils in Year 6 are attaining standards in line with the national average. In 2002, standards were well above average. The difference is explained in the main by the large number of pupils with special educational needs in the current year group. Many have difficulties that relate to learning to read and write or to behaviour. However, the constantly changing leadership of the school and changes in teaching staff over the last few years have also played a part in the decline in standards. Pupils' achievements have been satisfactory. Some pupils who attained well below average results in the tests they took in Year 2 have achieved well. At the time of the previous inspection standards were above average at the end of Year 6, and the present situation does represent a decline. In Year 2, there has been a good improvement in standards since the previous inspection when standards were in line with the national average. This is because teaching has improved. It now makes good use of the methods recommended in national guidance documents. In their current work, pupils are attaining standards that are above average and their achievements have been good. Taken overall, there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.
- 84 The school's results in national tests have been above or well above average every year since 1999. In 2002, a well above average percentage of pupils attained the higher level. These good standards reflect the school's good programme of work in English based on the national guidelines that has helped teachers to focus their planning on reading, writing and pupils' use of literacy skills in other subjects. In the current year group few pupils attained the higher level when they took the tests in Year 2.

- 85 In Year 6, standards in speaking and listening are similar to the national average. Pupils use a good range of vocabulary and express themselves confidently, although some are unaware when they use sentence structures that are grammatically incorrect. Pupils of average and higher attainment listen and respond to the opinion of others and to longer explanations. Lower attaining pupils demonstrate immaturity in these skills and become restless during discussion time when they are not required to contribute. This is noticeable in all year groups. Teachers do not always expect high enough standards in pupils' listening, and, as a result, pupils do not improve enough. In some lessons, however, the pupils are challenged well during discussions, such as when Year 6 pupils investigated the features of 'E Mail Etiquette'. In this lesson, highly motivated pupils listened engrossed to the teacher and then engaged in an animated discussion. There are planned opportunities for pupils to engage in drama, debate, and activities such as hot-seating when one pupil is the focus of attention while others ask questions. These extend pupils' technical language and their subsequent writing. Pupils perform publicly in school productions and musical events, which offer valuable opportunities for them to use spoken language in more formal settings.
- 86 When pupils start in Year 1, some lack confidence when speaking in formal situations and have a limited vocabulary. Lower attaining pupils find it difficult to speak in sentences and explain their experiences in detail. By the end of Year 2, they have made satisfactory progress and standards in speaking and listening are similar to those found nationally. Many pupils listen attentively to stories, poems, plays and biographies, and are given sufficient opportunities to engage in extended discussions and to practice their speaking skills. They listen and respond when in conversation with the teacher and are beginning to listen appropriately to each other. This is because teachers use pupils' enthusiasm to develop and extend vocabulary and expressive reading.
- 87 By the end of Year 6, standards in reading are average. Higher and average attaining pupils read fluently, expressively and accurately and are able to skim and deduce information and ideas from the text effectively. Lower attaining pupils use little expression and find it difficult to read unknown words without some prompting. They use letter sounds to work out unknown words when reading, but have a less secure knowledge of the use of other strategies. Most pupils speak enthusiastically about their favourite books. They recall story lines, talk about the characters and explain what they like or dislike. For example, one higher attaining pupil gave a very cogent explanation as to why she thought 'The Hobbit' was a better book than the Harry Potter books, and named the author. Lower attaining pupils recall the names of the books they have read, talk about the story line, but are less secure in discussing their favourite authors. Their understanding of the characters is sound, but comprehension skills and the ability to infer meaning and predict outcomes from the text are less well developed.
- 88 In Year 2, most pupils read fluently and expressively, paying attention to the punctuation. Most pupils have a secure grasp of letter sounds and generally use these, successfully, to help them work out words that are new to them. They identify little words within big words, but are less skilled in using the structure of the sentence to determine the type of word needed to make sentence, or self-correct, read on and re-read to clarify meaning. Lower attaining pupils are more hesitant in selecting the main points of a story and are unsure about the meaning of some words they have read. Higher and average attaining pupils are interested and talk about what they have read and say if they like the story. 'Exciting' and traditional stories are favourites that are enjoyed, but pupils' knowledge of well-known authors is sketchy. Higher

attaining pupils can use the index and contents pages in information books well, but other pupils are less successful. Good home-school links, including the use of homework diaries, encourage pupils and parents to work together to improve standards.

- 89 The recently relocated library has been refurbished and replenished and is being reorganised and classified. Currently, pupils visit it weekly for half an hour. Pupils' research skills are limited because they have not had regular access to a library and few have knowledge of classification systems. Many younger, lower attaining pupils do not know technical terms such as author, illustrator, and title, nor the difference between fact and fiction. Older, lower attaining pupils do not know that fiction is classified alphabetically, nor understand the features of non-fiction text and are unable to explain the purpose of the index and contents accurately. The school is aware of this and this area is targeted for further improvement. The range of fiction and non-fiction books has improved since the previous inspection, but is to be further widened to extend the breadth of reading experiences.
- 90 In Year 6, overall standards in writing are broadly in line with the national average. Pupils make good progress in Year 6, making up some lost ground from previous years. Progress and pupils' achievements have been inconsistent for some pupils in Years 3 to 5. Teachers plan a good range of purposes for writing, such as reports, persuasive writing, play scripts and formal letter writing, and pupils examine and apply relevant characteristics and styles. In Year 6, pupils have a secure understanding of how to plan their written work and organise their ideas. For example, they understand the different requirements for a biography, autobiography, fictional story or playscript. Pupils in Year 4 and 5, wrote balanced arguments on the pros and cons for keeping wild creatures in zoos. Pupils in Year 6 wrote effective e-mails using the appropriate form of writing well because of their knowledge of the relevant vocabulary, such as 'subject lines' and 'subject replies'. However, in some classes undemanding worksheets are used too often and this does not always allow pupils to work to their full capabilities. As a result, pupils do not sustain their interest and progress is limited. Higher attaining pupils have a good knowledge of English grammar, but all pupils' spelling and punctuation skills are generally weak. This is because school has not developed a good systematic approach to teaching spelling. The systematic approach to handwriting, started in the younger classes, continues and allows the pupils to improve. However, by the time pupils reach Year 6, lower attaining pupils still do not write clearly and fluently and with appropriate attention to size, proportion and orientation.
- 91 In Year 2, standards in writing are above average. Higher attaining pupils progress from writing short accounts of their own doings, to more lengthy, descriptive pieces using a good range of vocabulary. They respond imaginatively to stories and put their ideas in a logical sequence, such as in 'The Lost Island' and 'The Train Ride'. Their work is well presented in a joined, fluent style. They mainly use capital letters and full stops accurately, and sometimes speech marks. Average attaining pupils still make many basic mistakes. Lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs are beginning to write one or two sentences independently, but many do not yet use capital letters or full stops appropriately and at times letter shapes are incorrect. These pupils receive support from an adult when writing but their presentation is generally untidy. All pupils in Years 1 and 2 make confident attempts in their writing and spelling. However, spelling is the weaker aspect of their work with some higher attaining pupils spelling some words incorrectly for example 'nou', (now), and 'sum' (some). Teachers make good use of a handwriting scheme to build on earlier skills to raise standards, with joined up writing being introduced in the summer term. Pupils develop their writing skills satisfactorily in other subjects, such

as geography and history as they compile facts about homes and write about Florence Nightingale.

- 92 Pupils with special educational needs have well identified needs and make satisfactory progress towards their targets. There is a wide range of initiatives to improve pupils' skills in reading and writing for those who have the greatest difficulties. Pupils receive good support from the learning assistants within classrooms and withdrawal groups. This ensures that they are given every opportunity to develop and consolidate early reading and writing skills and enhance these skills with the use of computers.
- 93 The quality of teaching is good overall. Lessons were satisfactory to very good in Years 3 to 6 and good in Years 1 and 2. All teachers take good account of the National Literacy Strategy in their planning. Most have a secure knowledge and understanding of the objectives and make clear what pupils need to learn. In a Year 1 and 2 lesson the teacher made very good use of questioning and discussion to prepare pupils thoroughly for their subsequent written work. Good management strategies ensured that the pupils were interested and engaged in their work so that good learning took place. In Years 3 to 6, in the most effective teaching, objectives were listed on the blackboard and pupils were left in no doubt as to what they had to do in the lesson. There were high expectations and challenges for all pupils so that they worked with effort and concentration. Well-prepared resources and their effective use stimulated pupils' interest and enhanced their learning, leading to very good progress. In less effective teaching, the balance between the teacher instructing, discussing and questioning, and pupils' subsequent tasks was inappropriate. Tasks were not always based on what pupils previously knew and could do, and consequently, pupils did not make as much progress. Teachers and learning assistants plan well together for the part of the lesson when pupils work on tasks, but during the first part of the lesson they generally sit and listen without being provided with a productive role. The good relationships between staff and pupils is a contributory factor to the good progress most of these pupils make. Information and communication technology is used effectively to develop pupils' skills in reading and writing. Marking of pupils' work throughout the school is done regularly and conscientiously. It is always encouraging and gives praise, but rarely suggests how work can be improved. Homework is set regularly, mostly reading, writing and spelling, with occasional research tasks, and parents are very supportive.
- 94 The management of English is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has sound knowledge of current practice in the subject. There have been frequent changes in staff and the co-ordinator has not always had the opportunity to check that agreed methods have been maintained. Spelling, in particular, has suffered because of this. Assessment information is collated to track the achievements of pupils as they move through the school. However, the information is not always passed on at the end of the year or used as well as it might be to plan and set work that is well matched to pupils' abilities. The school is conscious of the need to ensure that there is a closer match of pupils' work to their differing needs in Years 3 to 6, and that a continued emphasis is placed on developing pupils' writing and conventions of English grammar, in particular, spelling and punctuation. Currently, the co-ordinator does not evaluate the work of teachers and pupils through the examination of pupils' books, teachers' planning and lesson observations. There is a book club to raise interest and enjoyment in books and pupils are encouraged to take part in literary competitions. There are good computer programs to support pupils' learning in writing and reading and resources are generally satisfactory with the exception of books for younger pupils. The range of texts is limited. Some books are out-dated and uninteresting. The school does not have a scheme that helps pupils when they are at the early

stage of learning letter sounds. The co-ordinator has a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is conscious of the need to further extend, develop and consolidate her leadership and management skills in English.

MATHEMATICS

- 95 The standard of work in Year 6 is below the national average and this represents unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection when standards were above. There is a high incidence of pupils with special education needs in this class, which, in part, explains the lower level of standards for this year. However, teacher assessments and optional national tests show that many of the current pupils in Year 6 have not made the progress they should over the last three or four years. This reflects the fact that the school had not made good use of the methods recommended in the National Numeracy Strategy during that time. In particular, pupils were not given confidence in their own rapid recall of numerical facts. The work pupils have produced during the current year shows that they have made good progress in Year 6. There is careful identification of the particular difficulties of pupils with special educational needs and they make good progress, although this was not always the case in the past. Pupils' work is of a higher standard than assessments would suggest because there are good levels of support given to pupils in this class and many of the pupils do better when not in a test situation.
- 96 In Year 2, standards are above the national average, with good progress in mental mathematical strategies. This represents good progress since the last inspection when standards were average. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Teaching is good but the most able pupils are only making satisfactory progress, because they are not being given enough opportunities to work at a higher level. Teacher assessments indicate that all pupils have attained the expected level in this year's tests, although this has not yet been validated.
- 97 After the new headteacher, had carried out an audit of the standards in each subject in September, she recognised that there was a need to improve the attainment of pupils in mathematics, particularly in Years 3 to 6. The school's results for pupils at the end of Year 6 had declined from 2000 onwards and were below average in 2002. The reasons for the low standards, including weak planning from the National Numeracy Strategy, were identified with the help of the consultant for mathematics from the local education authority. Training to improve the quality of teaching was undertaken. There was a whole school focus on helping pupils quickly recall number patterns, such as multiplication tables, and this has been successful.
- 98 Pupils in Year 6 are gaining confidence in their knowledge and understanding of the number system. In short sessions designed at quickly increasing skills, pupils are developing good methods of calculating mentally. They multiply and divide whole numbers and simple decimals by 10 and 100 at a level expected for their age. They add and subtract whole numbers and decimals and use a variety of methods to multiply whole numbers by a 1 or 2 digit numbers. However, there have been insufficient opportunities for them to learn to multiply or divide decimal numbers. Pupils have a sound understanding of decimals, fractions and percentages. They can convert simple fractions into decimals and percentages, express the remainder in a division sum as a fraction, and find fractions of a whole number. They estimate and measure angles accurately, and have begun to calculate the missing angle in a triangle. There were many examples of work in symmetry throughout the school, but there was a lack of systematic progression to higher levels of understanding, so that pupils could draw a line of symmetry, but were not recording the number of lines or using the correct vocabulary. They are able to record data in a variety of ways,

including tally charts, bar and line graphs and there were good examples of pupils using their data handling skills in other subjects. For example, in a geography study of methods of travel to and from Halifax, Year 4 and 5 pupils had used a computer to generate pie charts. However, pupils do not always know how to present their data, and the graphs produced are not as accurate as they should be. For example, in Year 6 science books, they have drawn graphs on plain paper, which makes accuracy very difficult. In all areas of mathematics, pupils do not have enough opportunities to carry out investigations, or choose the mathematics needed in order to solve problems.

- 99 Pupils in Year 2 are familiar with the number system to 20, many are able to deal confidently with numbers to 100. They are making good progress with number operations and the associated language knowledge. They work out answers in their heads, such as double 12, 2 multiplied by 5, and what must I add to 70 to make 100? They know odd, even, more and less than. All pupils count in 2's, 5's and 10's with the teacher, and higher and average attaining pupils are confident to do so on their own. Pupils know the names of common coins and can work out simple shopping and change up to 20p, with more able pupils working with values up to £1, for example they know that three items costing 10p each will leave 20p change from 50p. They can add and subtract to 20, more able pupils to 100. They measure in centimeters with accuracy and know the days of the week, months of the year and seasons. They tell the time using o'clock and half past. Pupils are able to discuss how they calculate the answers to mental arithmetic questions and are beginning to make good use of taught strategies such as doubling. However, higher attaining pupils are given too few opportunities to work with larger numbers.
- 100 Teaching is satisfactory overall, with consistently good teaching in the infant class. This good teaching was characterised by careful planning, with precise learning objectives and good activities for the wide age and ability range within the class. Computers were used effectively for the more able pupils to provide a challenging activity. In another shorter session where these young pupils were taking a rapid recall number test, they were able to concentrate and work hard independently. They enjoyed marking each other's work and this led to immediate feedback, so that they knew how well they had done. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils made good progress in their learning when asked to generate group questions to challenge other pupils as part of the mental and oral starter. One group asked 'What is 12×7 added to 13×7 ?' Many pupils were able to work out the answer and explain their method, demonstrating the good variety of approaches they have been taught. Pupils' behaviour in mathematics lessons is good. They are able to work well in pairs and groups, sustain interest in the activities set, and persevere when the work is difficult.
- 101 Where teaching was less successful, it was because teachers did not know well enough what their pupils could understand and do. On one occasion lower attaining pupils were given a worksheet which expected them to divide 51 by 2, 4, 5 and 10 showing remainders as fractions and decimals. These pupils did not fully understand that halving is the same as dividing by 2, and so the work set was far too difficult. They did not have ready access to the sort of visual prompts usually found in classrooms to support learning, such as number lines, hundred squares, or counting apparatus, consequently they were unable to work independently. Teachers are not yet consistently identifying in their planning what they expect pupils to learn by the end of a lesson. At the start of lessons, these expectations are not always shared with pupils to help them understand what they are learning and why. An analysis of pupils' work revealed that standards of presentation are too low, especially in Years 3 to 6. Pupils are told to 'be neater', but not how they can achieve this. Whilst work is marked regularly, it rarely helps pupils to know how they can improve. There is not

enough attention to helping pupils spell mathematical words correctly and to help support their work in literacy.

- 102 The subject leader is new and relatively inexperienced. The school has been well supported by the mathematics consultant from the local education authority. The training and improved planning of recent months are starting to have a positive impact on standards of teaching and learning. Mathematics is rightly an area that the school has identified for improvement and this work needs to continue in order to raise standards and improve pupils' achievements.

SCIENCE

- 103 The standard of pupils' work in Year 6 is below average. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were above average and the school's results in 2002 were above average. With small numbers in each year group, fluctuations in standards are to be expected between one year and the next. In the current Year 6, there is a very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. However, school records indicate that not all pupils have made the progress they should through Years 3 to 5. The constant change in leadership of the school and changes in teaching staff have meant that good teaching methods, particularly those needed to ensure that pupils learn science through a practical and *investigative* approach, have not been maintained. Pupils' in Year 6 have made good progress through the year because they have tackled a wide range of work and teaching is good.
- 104 The standard of pupils' work in Year 2 is above average with almost all pupils attaining the expected level and a good proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in understanding the scientific process, and in their knowledge of life processes, living things and physical processes. However, they have not attained a higher level in the strand of the subject covering materials and their properties because they have not covered enough of this work. This is an improvement on teacher assessments in 2002 when pupils attained an average standard. The improvement has been brought about by the good teaching.
- 105 In Year 6, pupils' observations and accuracy of recording the results of their investigations improved through the year from simple drawings and written explanations to the use of graphs and carefully labelled diagrammatical drawings. The range of technical vocabulary at their disposal is at the expected standard for their age because the teacher uses technical terms even when they are beyond the general expectations for this age range. For example, her use of the term 'DNA' fascinated pupils in a lesson on examining the differences in their own finger prints. Pupils went on to use the terms "forensic science" and "classification" with understanding. In an unusual piece of work earlier in the year which provided pupils with a good opportunity to develop their skills in English as well as science, higher and average attaining pupils demonstrated a good understanding of the process of scientific enquiry. The work consisted of a short play script they had written in which a man from the Ministry of Agriculture explained to a farmer how to carry out a test on the effectiveness of different fertilizers. This good task enabled pupils to make their own explanations as to how and why tests needed to be 'fair'. Pupils produced a good quantity of work during the year but clearly needed to revisit aspects of learning from earlier years, either because topics had not been covered adequately or because pupils had forgotten the content. This meant that higher level work was not always covered and, in particular, opportunities for identifying simple patterns and associations from observations and drawing conclusions were limited. For example, pupils observed and recorded the effect of adding sugar to yeast but did not draw

conclusions as to whether or not this was a non-reversible change or to make their own explanations as to what was happening and why.

- 106 Pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils receive good support from classroom assistants and so make good progress. They struggle to use technical terms accurately and to remember the content of some of the topics but their interest is captured by the practical nature of many of the lessons.
- 107 Pupils in Year 2 have achieved well because their science work has been well planned, building on their previous knowledge and increasing in difficulty as the year proceeded. In their current work on the needs of plants and the function of different parts of plants, all pupils, including those of lower attainment, understand that the root is the part of the plant that takes in food from the soil and water. In a question and answer session, a higher attaining pupil explained that the root also held the plant in place in the soil. Good teaching has helped pupils acquire good observational skills; they use a magnifying glass properly and know that a microscope gives access to information not available to the naked eye. When deciding on how to carry out a test to show that water is needed to allow seeds to sprout, all pupils understood that only one factor should be altered in the process.
- 108 The quality of teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. In Years 3 and 4, very little science was taught during the autumn term. The new teacher has tried to catch up lost ground by providing pupils with shorter topics but some of the work pupils do is at a similar level to that done in Year 2. For instance, pupils in the Year 3 and 4 class were learning to label a picture of a plant to show the stalk and the root. This back-tracking on work done previously is because the long term and medium term planning does not identify the level of work sufficiently. In the successful lessons, teachers planned stimulating investigations that gave pupils plenty of opportunities to observe, classify and record their findings. Pupils worked well together in groups or in pairs, because teachers took care to organise the groups so that those of higher attainment supported those who learnt more slowly, but without over-shadowing their efforts. In all year groups, pupils are given good opportunities to find information from research on the Internet or on CD-ROMs. Adults supporting pupils with special educational needs allowed them to try out investigations for themselves before helping them with written recording if necessary. Teachers' explanations are generally good and draw upon the teachers' good subject knowledge. However, in most lessons and in the evidence from pupils' work, it is clear that the school has not focused on prompting and promoting good questioning by the pupils. For instance, at the start of investigations pupils are not asked to guess at what might be the outcome in the younger classes or to pose a hypothesis in the older classes. Although this may be done orally on occasions, without a written record the benefit is lost because when pupils look back on their work, or when the experiment has been finished, it is all too easy to forget the initial prediction. While most teachers take care to use the correct scientific terms, there is no whole school focus on helping pupils improve the spelling of scientific words or to write up accounts of investigations fully so as to help develop skills in literacy. Displaying findings as graphs and comparing measurements provide pupils in most classes with opportunities to make satisfactory use of their mathematical knowledge.
- 109 The subject is well led because the co-ordinator has enthusiasm for the subject and is very keen to improve standards. She has carried out a good audit of what needs to be done. Because of good subject knowledge, her teaching provides a good model for others. However, management is only just satisfactory. The curriculum has not been well organised this year in view of the gaps in provision for the Year 3 and 4 class. In most classes errors occur in planning with regard to the provision of work at

the right level. For instance, in Years 1 and 2, pupils' work on materials did not cover much work at the right level for Year 2 pupils and none for those capable of attaining the higher level. The planning of topics is from the national guidance and the school also uses a commercial scheme to provide resources and examples for investigations. However, there are insufficient checks to ensure that work is set at the appropriate level for the two age groups in each class and that work is sufficiently challenging. Assessments are carried out at the end of each unit but the co-ordinator has not yet had the opportunity to monitor these in order to check on pupils' progress. Similarly the co-ordinator has not had the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning from classroom observations.

ART AND DESIGN

- 110 Standards in Years 2 and 6 are at the expected level and pupils' achievements are satisfactory. This is an improvement to the standards seen at the time of the previous inspection when the school was asked to raise pupils' attainment in investigating and making. Good links with design technology and opportunities to use art and design in other subjects such as history have provided pupils with a good understanding of the links between art and design and craft and in working in a range of different media.
- 111 The quality of work in Year 2 is satisfactory with some examples where it is good. Earlier in the school year pupils looked at the way that fabric is woven and dyed and used techniques from their investigations to create woven patterns. In recent work, pupils made very good progress in learning about the effects of pastels when blending or smudging colours. During a second lesson using this technique to create the background for collage pictures, pupils showed that they have begun to review, and sometimes adapt, their work.
- 112 In Year 6, pupils' work and their knowledge and understanding has improved from a below average standard at the beginning of the year. This can be seen in their sketch books, which they have now begun to use to try out ideas and to practise techniques. Pupils' current work shows a good improvement on their work at the start of the year. Both Year 5 and Year 6 pupils are very interested in their current topic on perspective. They explained that a walk in the vicinity of the school to observe buildings was their starting point. They have a good understanding of the use of a 'viewfinder' a simple device to help focus attention on one small area of a larger scene. They work together well on projects and evaluate their own work and that of others sensitively.
- 113 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall although two good lessons were seen during the inspection. In both lessons, resources were well organised, explanations clear, and lessons planned so that the major part of the lesson involved pupils in practical work. Evidence from teachers' plans and examples of pupils' work suggests that, when art is taught, lessons include a good range of opportunities for pupils to try new techniques and media. However, expectations are not high enough and teachers knowledge of how to develop skills not always evident. For example, teachers do not develop pupils' skills in drawing as well as they could. In Year 2, for instance, pupils cut –out elephant and tree shapes from a photo-copy of illustrations, rather than being challenged to produce these shapes for themselves. Work in pupils' sketch books in Years 3 to 6 involving observational drawings and investigations into tone and texture are not at the level expected for their age. Computers are used in art and design throughout the school and make a good contribution to pupils' understanding of the history of art in our society. However, in some year groups, art is not taught for long periods of time and there is no whole school planning to ensure

that skills develop year on year. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in art and design projects. Teachers and classroom assistants give them good encouragement to develop their skills and self-esteem through completing work to a good standard. The school has not identified any pupils with particular talents in art and the simple assessments done at the end of each project are not used to inform the way in which teachers plan further work.

- 114 The subject has no co-ordinator, which is unsatisfactory. The headteacher acts as caretaker but has done little more than ensure that resources are in place for the units of work in the national scheme the school has adopted. Good plans are in place to develop art through a creative arts week later in the term. Some artwork done when other faiths are studied helps pupils gain a view of art from other cultures but the subject is not contributing enough to this aspect of pupils' development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 115 There has been a good improvement in standards since the previous inspection when standards were below expectations in Year 6 and pupils' achievements were unsatisfactory. Current standards are at the expected level in both Years 2 and 6. Although difficulties with changes in teaching staff earlier in the year resulted in little work being done in Years 3 and 4, pupils' achievements in other year groups are satisfactory.
- 116 In Year 2, pupils have just begun a new topic involving work with fabric. Their previous topic, which is well documented by their own drawings and photographs, was on wheeled vehicles. In this topic pupils went through the full process of designing, using interlocking plastic blocks to create a 'prototype', then making it from card materials with a final evaluation. Pupils have a good understanding of why designs are made first and the purpose of evaluation. Their making skills are satisfactory, as for example when they control a needle and thread to create a simple line of stitching.
- 117 In Year 6, pupils had just completed a project entitled "Wembley Stadium". This creative project gave pupils many opportunities to understand the difficulties of design in the real world. They initially drew up a flow-chart to record the stages of the project from start to finish. Working together, they planned out the size of the stadium, where the seating should be, roof, safety features, car parking and floodlights. They recorded the materials they would use. Their initial plans were ambitious and as they evaluated their project, they kept a good record of how they had to change their earlier designs and plans. The model stadiums were finished to a satisfactory standard and involved joining materials such as card, wood and plastic. From their explanations of how work was carried out they clearly worked together extremely well.
- 118 Although only two lessons were seen, one of which was satisfactory and one good, evidence from pupils' work and what they know and can do indicates that teaching is generally good. Stimulating projects develop pupils' understanding of making things that have a purpose while exploring creative design possibilities. In Years 4 and 5, for instance, pupils responded in many different ways to making a money container out of junk materials. All incorporated original and creative ideas, including a model of a safe complete with dialing code and anti-theft devices. From the enthusiasm with which pupils described their work it was clear that they are well motivated and proud of their finished work. Pupils with special educational needs participate fully in design and making projects. Teachers make good use of opportunities to develop their self-esteem in this subject. From Year 1 upwards, pupils are taught to evaluate their

designs and finished products. However, gaps in provision in recent years have meant that pupils' skills in making are not as high as they could be. For example, some pupils in Year 6 did not use scissors as well as expected for their age when cutting out shapes in an art and design lesson. Occasionally, teachers' expectations are not high enough, for instance when they give pupils templates to mark out simple shapes instead of encouraging them to draw the shape for themselves. The subject is used well to provide pupils with opportunities to practice their skills in literacy and numeracy and good use is made of computers.

- 119 The subject is well led. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge and a good plan of action to develop the subject and its contribution to pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy. Because teachers often plan for pupils to work collaboratively, the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social development. As yet the co-ordinator has not had the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning but she keeps a good check on how well the curriculum is covered.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

- 120 Standards of attainment in history and geography are similar to those expected of pupils of this age by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The majority of pupils gain satisfactory understanding of the historical and geographical concepts and knowledge that are taught in blocks of time, through topics and units of work. No teaching of history or geography was seen in Years 1 and 2. However, analysis of teachers' planning and documentation, talking to the co-ordinators, the recorded evidence of pupils' work and displays, show that the level of provision found in the previous inspection has been maintained throughout the school in both subjects. Most pupils gain the required knowledge, and acquire, use and extend their historical and geographical skills and vocabulary, appropriate to their age. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are fully included in all aspects of work in history and geography, and make satisfactory progress in gaining the key knowledge and skills of the subject.
- 121 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a developing understanding of the passage of time, because they investigate pictures and objects from the past. Their skills in historical enquiry are appropriately developed as they glimpse into the past by researching into homes, and extend their developing knowledge by comparing the domestic life of the past, such as furniture, clothing, education and holidays, with that of the present. The local environment and the Todmorden trail are used well to link history and geography.
- 122 By the end of Year 2, most pupils understand the differences between the past, present and future and they compare and contrast modern and older toys, houses and schools. They are aware of changes over time of their own town of Todmorden. They research into the life and work of famous people, such as Florence Nightingale and the reasons for her actions and also significant events in the Victorian era. Planning, displays and pupils' work show that historical vocabulary is introduced appropriately within the topics undertaken.
- 123 By the end of Year 6, pupils remember some events of the periods they have studied in British history and also in ancient civilisations, well. The majority have a sufficiently wide knowledge and a satisfactory understanding of the periods they have studied. Most pupils are sufficiently skilled in using a range of historical information and have a developing awareness that there are sometimes differing versions of historical events. For example, they recalled with enjoyment researching into Ancient Greece

and the life style of differing social classes and were intrigued by the differences between everyday life in Athens and Sparta. They recalled from videos shown, relevant facts about the ancient Greek alphabet and remembered the types of artefacts on display at the British museum and the characteristics of Greek plates and vases. They recalled vividly, the work undertaken on the theatre masks they made of Greek gods such as Zeus, Apollo and Athene and recalled enthusiastically Tudor times as their favourite period in history. Whilst pupils could recall some facts about, and features of, Hadrian's Wall, some pupils expressed difficulty in recalling the work undertaken on the Romans. They were less secure in recalling significant dates and a few were unsure of the chronological order of events. There are colourful and informative displays in the school that clearly illustrate pupils' understanding of the differences in the way the past is represented.

- 124 By the end of Year 2, most pupils have a satisfactory geographical understanding of the physical features of the school and the immediate locality in Todmorden. This links successfully with their history work on houses and buildings when they plan routes from home to school and plot the significant buildings such as the church. Pupils in Year 1 know that human features can be represented on a map on land, sea and islands. They conduct, successfully, local traffic surveys to determine the rate of traffic flow and construct graphs, accurately, using the number and variety of vehicles counted. From the local area, they progress to studying the British Isles and the continents of the world. Pupils make satisfactory gains in their learning because the teacher provides sound opportunities for them to extend their geographical knowledge and develop their mapping skills, for example, by plotting Florence Nightingale's journey to Scutari in Turkey. Pupils in Year 1 successfully identified the physical and human features of a Scottish Island in relation to its locality, and plotted its route from Burnley to Struay.
- 125 The pupils in Years 3 to 6 build on their geographical knowledge and early mapping skills satisfactorily. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 use an appropriate range of maps and plans and make explanations of birds-eye views. They have investigated the effect of changing weather patterns and its effect on the climate, such as in Algeria. Good use is made of a structured programme of geographical units that ensures that the specified curriculum areas are covered. Pupils develop mapping skills satisfactorily to identify locations and research into significant features such as size, population, landscape and food using grid references where appropriate. Pupils in Year 6 compare and contrast maps and plans at various scales with photographs, identifying similar information in different ways. They speak knowledgeably about the features of contour lines, successfully distinguish between hills, flat land and steep land and work out the direction of a slope. Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their geographical skills throughout the school, because teachers provide interesting and relevant work to motivate them.
- 126 In Years 3 to 6, teaching in geography was good overall and never less than satisfactory. In history it was satisfactory overall, with one unsatisfactory lesson seen. In geography, good teaching was conducted at a lively pace and the teacher had a good knowledge of the subject. Her good management skills and the use of relevant resources motivated the pupils. Pupils engaged fully in an interesting discussion on the effects of different environments on plants, wild life and weather. They worked with effort and all pupils made good gains in their learning. In one satisfactory lesson in history, a good questioning and answering session gave good opportunities for pupils to explore, through reference to the book, 'Goodnight Mr Tom', some of the feelings of the evacuees in World War Two. This led to a sensitive understanding of the feelings experienced. In an unsatisfactory lesson, the planning was too brief, the lesson's objectives were not communicated to the pupils, and management of pupils

throughout the lesson was weak. This resulted in a lack of sustained effort and concentration by the pupils, with little progress made. Good work is undertaken on environmental issues. Pupils enjoy their geographical studies, particularly the work on watercourses and contour mapping skills. In one lesson seen, pupils in Years 4 and 5 used a computer satisfactorily to find information regarding alternative energy sources. Good work is undertaken on environmental issues.

- 127 Pupils have sound opportunities to develop their literacy and research skills. One pupil in Year 6 spoke with sensitivity about her visit to Stoodley Pike, describing the surrounding environment as 'It's very peaceful up there, looking at the landscape and valley, and hearing the sheep'. In history and geography throughout the school, display work is well presented. While some work in pupils' books is neat, reflecting a pride in the presentation, some pupils' work is untidy and many use print to record their work. Pupils are not given enough encouragement to improve their spelling and correct use of punctuation and as a result this is often weak. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily, for example, when pupils present their constructed graphs on traffic surveys and research. Teachers' marking is regular and praises effort. However, few teachers mark so that pupils understand what they have achieved and what they need to do next to improve.
- 128 The coordinator responsible for history and geography provides a satisfactory level of informal support in the subjects, but does not monitor the quality of classroom provision. Consequently she does not have a clear enough overview of provision. There have been some improvements since the previous inspection. There are now updated policies in place and resources are now adequate and ensure the delivery of the schemes of work. Teachers are beginning to identify areas where pupils are experiencing difficulties and base future lessons on the skills that pupils need to develop, but some teachers rely on the work-sheet based activities, and pupils of different abilities, particularly the lower attaining pupils, rely on classroom assistants' help to support their learning. The time allocation for the subjects is adequate, but teachers choose how and when they will teach the termly topics. The variability of the 'block timetabling' does not allow some pupils to have frequent and regular opportunities to build up, use and retain their acquired skills. The school recognises that the monitoring of teaching and learning needs to be implemented to enable standards to be raised further. Resources in both subjects are adequate overall and have improved since the previous inspection. They ensure the delivery of the schemes of work, but the school is conscious of the need to further enrich the provision, particularly of globes and historical replica artefacts.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 129 Standards at the end of Year 2 are in line with those expected nationally, whilst those at the end of Year 6 are below. Standards at the time of the last inspection were satisfactory, but these have not been sustained in the light of new developments and expectations in the subject. Progress is unsatisfactory for the older pupils in the school, including those with special educational needs, because they have not had enough opportunity to practise their skills. The school has rightly identified this as an area for development and has made good recent progress in the provision of new computers and software, which is starting to have a positive impact on the attainment of pupils.
- 130 Pupils in Year 6 were able to discuss the use of computers in and out of school, and had a good knowledge of the advantages and drawbacks of their use. They have a good understanding of basic spreadsheets and could explain how to use a formula, making good links to their work in mathematics. They can communicate using word

processing and adding pictures from a file, but they have not had enough experience of using a word processor for writing in order to use it as effectively as one might expect at this age. They do not usually compose their writing on the computer, and are unsure as to how they might use tools to change and edit their work. Pupils have experienced a wide variety of applications, but have not made enough progress in each application over time and are not working independently enough. For example, pupils in Year 6 discussed how they had produced articles for a school newspaper, and how they had added text to their own photograph taken with a digital camera, but the teacher had produced the newspaper and used the digital camera.

- 131 Pupils in Year 2 are making good progress in their ability to design using an art program. They are able to control the mouse and use the tools in the program to draw, paint and fill a design onto a template of 'Joseph's multi-coloured coat'. They are able to edit and save their designs and retrieve them from the file. In a mathematics lesson, computers were used effectively to challenge pairs of more able pupils in a strategy game involving subtraction of money. Pupils are able to co-operate and learn from each other.
- 132 There were insufficient opportunities to observe lessons directly and so no judgement of the teaching of information and communication technology could be made. However, growing staff and pupil confidence in the use of computers throughout the school is evident, and there were many instances of groups of pupils, sometimes supported by teaching assistants, working well on a variety of applications.. One group of Year 4 and 5 pupils were learning how to use internet search engines to find out about alternative energy sources. The work had been planned well so that the teaching assistant was clear about the focus of the work. Pupils were well supported in their use of the internet and consequently were able to find relevant sites. However, they had not been told why they were carrying out the research, and this meant that they did not try to read or understand the information they had found. Pupils enjoy working on computers and are able to work in pairs effectively. In an introductory session where a teacher demonstrates a modelling program to simulate throwing a ball at a target by selecting the power and the angle needed, pupils are confident in their ability to estimate, make ready links to their mathematics and are keen to try out the program. Pupils with special educational needs are given good opportunities to work on computers to help them produce work that is of a higher standard in terms of presentation. They participate in all projects and learn to use the different functions of computers at the same rate as others. However, the school has not yet built up a good bank of programs that help with specific difficulties. For example, in the younger classes there are no programs that help those pupils having difficulty learning the correct way to form letters to improve quickly.
- 133 Work on display shows good use of the skills of information and communication technology to support learning in other subjects. For example, in Year 5 and 6 science, pupils were able to make very good use of a computer spreadsheet in order to store information about the change in pulse rates during exercise. They were then able to use the database they had created to generate line graphs in order to make comparisons and draw conclusions.
- 134 Leadership and management of information and communication technology are satisfactory. The subject leader has a clear view of the needs of the subject, which is set out in a development plan. She has identified the need to improve access to and assessment of the subject in order to improve standards. The school has adequate resources in terms of three computers per class and these computers are often used effectively in other subjects of the curriculum. However, in some classes, too few

opportunities are made and this means that pupils do not have enough time to improve their skills.

MUSIC

- 135 Standards in music by the end of Year 6 are below those expected of pupils of this age. This represents unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection when standards were in line. These lower standards are the result of changes of staff and the fact that too little music has been taught. Very recently the school has employed a specialist music teacher for Years 3 to 6, and this is having a very positive impact on standards in those classes. She also teaches singing to the whole school in one joint lesson per week. Too little music was seen in Years 1 and 2 to reach an accurate judgement on standards.
- 136 Pupils in Year 6 remember and play a musical part in a whole class music story using un-tuned instruments. They know the names of these instruments and how to play them, discussing how each instrument might be used. They can follow simple signals to change the volume of sound they produce, as well as knowing when to start and stop playing. They have begun to explore the ways sound can be combined and layered to create effective musical expression. Pupils have not had the opportunity to work with notation in order to play tunes and do not use musical vocabulary such as pitch, tempo or texture.
- 137 The teaching seen during the week of the inspection was good overall and ranged from excellent to satisfactory. During a very effective whole school singing practice, pupils made significant progress both in their skills and in their enjoyment of singing. This is because the teacher has very good subject knowledge, starts the lesson with breathing exercises that all pupils really enjoy, and has planned a variety of approaches, which engage their interest.
- 138 There is currently no co-ordinator for music in the school and provision, prior to the recent appointment of the specialist music teacher, was not good enough to adequately meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. Although provision is now satisfactory, the school is considering ways to extend this to improve the contribution of music to pupils' personal development. Currently music is not contributing enough to pupils' understanding of their own and others cultures. Resources are satisfactory for the younger pupils with a range of un-tuned percussion instruments, including some from other cultures. However, these resources are inadequate for the older pupils, who need access to instruments with which they can learn to play tunes as well as the opportunity to use information and communication technology in music.
- 139 There is good provision for pupils who wish to learn to play a musical instrument with opportunities for piano, violin and guitar tuition.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 140 During the inspection, gymnastics, dance and games were seen. However, there were insufficient lessons seen to make a sound judgement about physical education standards by the end of Year 6. This was due to the poor weather during the week of the inspection, which led to outdoor lessons being abandoned. Standards in Year 2 are as expected for pupils of this age.
- 141 In a Year 1 and 2 games lesson, pupils warmed up effectively and knew about the impact of exercise on their heart rate. They could bounce a ball and catch it and

were learning to hit a ball with a bat, showing good hand to eye co-ordination. They work with a partner and control their use of space when running at a level expected for their age. In a Year 3 and 4 football skills lesson, pupils were able to pass and control a ball with accuracy, and are beginning to understand the need to dribble and tackle in a competitive situation. In a Year 4 and 5 lesson, pupils make good progress in their ability to form symmetrical shapes and use different levels to choreograph a dance. In a Year 5 and 6 gymnastics lesson too many pupils were unable to perform a supported balance within a sequence of movements at a level commensurate with their age. Most Year 6 pupils can swim, with approximately three-quarters swimming at the nationally expected level of 25 metres.

- 142 Teaching is always at least satisfactory, with some good teaching. In good lessons teachers used demonstration to make expectations clear and to help pupils to make progress in their learning. These lessons maintained a good pace and had challenge built in, so that pupils were interested and engaged in their learning. For example, in a Year 3 and 4 games lesson, the teacher planned a range of competitive games allowing pupils to practise the skills taught whilst introducing an element of competition, which the pupils enjoyed. Pupils had a positive attitude to games and applied themselves energetically. They had a competitive spirit, which was well managed by the teacher. Pupils with special educational needs participate well in all lessons because teachers take care to encourage them. The lessons make a good contribution to developing the self-control of those pupils with special needs relating to behaviour. In a less successful gymnastics lesson, pupil demonstration was praised and encouraged, but movements were not improved because the teacher did not evaluate the quality of work well enough. In this lesson, pupils worked too noisily.
- 143 Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject leader has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. She has identified the need for further training in gymnastics where teachers feel less confident. There is an up-to-date policy in place with schemes of work for gymnastics, dance and games. The issue of swimming provision, which was unsatisfactory at the last inspection, has been rectified and swimming is provided in a suitable pool for all pupils from 7 to 11. Teaching assistants are often present in physical education lessons, but this is not a good use of their time, as they are not actively engaged in the lesson. There is good provision for additional physical education for those pupils who are interested. There are after school clubs for judo, football and netball, as well as opportunities for pupils to engage with professional coaching bodies in rugby, tennis and football. Pupils also take part in local leagues and tournaments.