

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MARTIN FROBISHER INFANT SCHOOL**

Altofts

LEA area: Wakefield

Unique reference number: 108148

Headteacher: Mrs E Slowther

Lead inspector: Mr John Brennan

Dates of inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2004

Inspection number: 260071

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	107 full-time and 63 part-time nursery pupils
School address:	Church Road Altofts Normanton West Yorkshire
Postcode:	WF6 2NU
Telephone number:	(01924) 302 520
Fax number:	(01924) 302 521
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs C A Hill
Date of previous inspection:	September 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This popular infant school is smaller than most schools. There are 107 full-time pupils on roll and 63 part-time nursery pupils. The school serves an area of mainly private housing in the village of Altofts, which acts as a commuter base for nearby larger urban areas. The overwhelming majority of pupils are of white British ethnic origin, with four per cent of pupils coming from other ethnic groups. There is one pupil who is at the early stages of learning English. Children who attend the nursery go on to join the main school. Most of them start school with a level of attainment that is above average. Currently four per cent of pupils have special educational needs. This is below average.

The school received an Achievement Award in 2002 for results in National Tests; it has Investors in People status and has achieved a Basic Skills Quality Mark.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21094	John Brennan	Lead inspector	Art and design Design and technology English English as an additional language Information and communication technology Music Personal social and health education Physical education
9511	Ann Longfield	Lay inspector	
321133	Joan Elton	Team inspector	Foundation stage Geography History Mathematics Religious education Science Special educational needs

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a good school.** Effective leadership and teaching ensure that pupils of all capabilities make good progress in literacy, numeracy, art and design and religious education (RE). This takes place within a very good curriculum and an atmosphere of care and strong partnership with parents. The school gives good value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in reading, writing, mathematics, art and design and RE are high.
- Although satisfactory, progress in information and communication technology (ICT) is not as strong as other subjects.
- Leadership has moulded staff into a mutually supportive and well motivated team.
- Teaching assistants make a telling difference to teaching and learning throughout the school.
- The school takes very good care of pupils and relationships are very good, resulting in a calm atmosphere for learning and a harmonious community feeling.
- Assessment is used very well to track progress and to target actions.
- Parents are very satisfied with the school and the school works closely with them and the wider community.
- Questioning techniques used when talking to the whole class lack sophistication.

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection. Standards have risen in important subjects, most notably in writing and mathematics, and the needs of higher-attaining pupils are now better met. Assessment has improved, as has the way the school sets about curriculum planning and planning for future development. Partnership with parents and the care the school takes of pupils have been further strengthened.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
reading	A*	A	B	C
writing	A*	A	A	A
mathematics	A	A	B	C

*Key: A\*; very high; A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average. Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals.*

**Pupils of all capabilities are achieving well.** The children in the Foundation Stage make a good start to school and make especially good progress in their personal and social development, the majority exceed the goals sets for children of this age in all areas of the curriculum. In most years, results in National Tests in reading, writing and mathematics have been well above average and compare favourably with results in similar schools. Following a blip last year in reading and mathematics results, standards appear to be back on course. Where an A\* is indicated this means that performance was in the top five per cent of schools nationally. In science, standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and pupils achieve well. Pupils learn much about RE and much from it and standards are high. The emphasis the school places on creativity serves art and design well and standards here are well above average. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are not building sufficiently on the good progress children in the Foundation Stage make in ICT.

The provision the school makes **for pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.** The pupils behave very well and have a very positive attitude towards school. Attendance and punctuality are good.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good because the quality of teaching is good.** Throughout the school, conscientious assessment leads learning well and enables teachers to pinpoint areas where pupils need to improve and to match work to the full ability range. In both the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, very good teamwork makes the best use of nursery nurses and teaching assistants, who work effectively with pupils of all capabilities. Relationships are easy and pupils trust adults. This helps to make classrooms calm places. Teachers do not always question the whole class well enough so that some children, usually the most timid or the disinterested, do not join in enough. Teaching and learning are helped by a very well thought out curriculum, which links learning across several subjects and by many trips and visitors. The school looks after pupils very well and works hand in hand with parents for the benefit of all. Accommodation is very good, especially the new outdoor play area for the Foundation Stage. The exception is the ICT suite, which is cramped and not well enough equipped.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good.** The headteacher has drawn all staff together in moving the school forward. Plans for the future of the school are well developed and, on the whole, the school uses data very well to assess success and identify improvements. It has however missed shortcomings in ICT because too little has been done to check the quality of teaching and learning. Governors balance the need to be supportive and challenging of the school and have a good knowledge of its successes and future needs. They fulfil their statutory duties.

### **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents and pupils hold the school in high regard and express considerable satisfaction with the school. Parents feel that their children are well taught, that the school fosters the right attitudes in their children and they are involved in the life of the school and the education of their children. Some would however, like to see more opportunities for their children to take part in activities outside of lessons. Pupils feel listened to, they trust staff and feel that they have someone to turn to when they need. Inspectors would endorse all of these views.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

**The most important things the school should do to improve are:**

- Provision in information and communication technology.
- The way teachers question pupils.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects**

Standards are **high** and pupils of differing capabilities achieve well.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are high.
- Although satisfactory, pupils do not progress as quickly through Years 1 and 2 in ICT as they do in other subjects.
- Pupils achieve very well in art and design to reach standards that are well above average.
- Pupils achieve standards in RE that are well above those expected.
- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well in their personal and social development.

#### **Commentary**

1. Children start school having first of all attended the school's nursery and reception classes. Attainment on entry is generally above that expected of pupils of their age and because of the good progress through the Foundation Stage, many are already working at the early levels of the National Curriculum when they begin Year 1. Effective induction arrangements and a sharp focus upon developing pupils' confidence and independence result in a smooth start to school. Because of the close attention paid to pupils' personal development, the quality of relationships established in the nursery and reception classes and because of the high expectations of the teachers and nursery nurses, children start school as well adjusted, independent and social learners.
2. Since the last inspection, standards at the end of Year 2 have risen in mathematics and especially in writing. The high standards of reading have been maintained. Although results in last year's National Tests did dip somewhat in reading and mathematics, records show that pupils nevertheless made good progress in relation to their capabilities. Because of the strong focus given to writing, results here were higher than in reading and mathematics and pupils achieved very well. Over the past few years, results have generally been well above average and apart from last year have been above or well above those of similar schools in reading, writing and mathematics. The improved use the school makes of assessment, backed by good quality teaching, means that the school invariably meets the targets it has set for itself in test results.
3. Inspection findings are that results are back on track and in reading, writing and mathematics pupils are currently working at levels that are well above those expected. A high proportion of pupils are working at a level beyond that normally expected because the school now plans a good range of tasks and tracks progress more closely. This addresses a weakness noted in the last inspection. As a result, higher-attaining pupils achieve well. Pupils who have special educational needs also benefit from close tracking and from good provision overall. Because of this, by the end of Year 2 many reach standards in English and mathematics that are in line with those normally expected. There are no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls.

### **Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003**

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.9 (17.7)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	17.2 (16.4)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.2 (17.8)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 40 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. Pupils are achieving well in reading, writing and mathematics because of good quality teaching and a well-ordered curriculum. The balance struck between writing for imagination and learning basic skills is well thought out. The recent introduction of a new scheme of work for handwriting means that pupils are achieving particularly well in this area and many produce a highly legible, cursive script by the end of Year 2. In reading pupils are able to express opinion of text and know what to do when they come across unfamiliar words. They read fluently and with expression but because of a lack of familiarity with the library, research skills are not as well developed. In mathematics, pupils are expected to apply their well-developed number skills to a range of problems and once again tasks are challenging and well matched to pupils' abilities. In science, pupils achieve well because many have a good knowledge of science and of how to experiment. Standards are above average.
5. The good rate at which pupils acquire literary and numeracy skills stands them in good stead. Pupils are eager to write about what they have found out in other subjects. Similarly, mathematics skills are used well in science to help pupils work in an investigative and problem solving manner. Because of this, pupils achieve well in science and are able to work logically. This application of skills is aided by a carefully constructed curriculum, which purposefully plans for this. Pupils are acquiring very good knowledge in RE and respond very well to RE on a more personal level. The emphasis the school places on creativity, including additional time given to this at the end of week, means that pupils are achieving very well in art and design and reach standards that are well above average.
6. Teachers in the Foundation Stage are good at using ICT to aid children's learning and as a result, pupils start Year 1 having already explored some of the basic functions of computers. This progress is not, as yet, being built on through Years 1 and 2. This is largely because of shortcomings in the ICT suite and a lack of ambition in teaching. Because of this, progress is not as strong in this subject as in others. Pupils achieve at a satisfactory rate through Years 1 and 2 to reach standards that are in line with national expectations.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes are **very good** and pupils behave very well. This is the cumulative result of the attitudes and values they bring from their home background, allied to the good provision the school makes for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance is good, as is punctuality.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good attitudes to work and very good behaviour show that pupils value their educational opportunities.
- There are particular strengths in the way the school promotes very good relationships, self-confidence and self-esteem, leading to a feeling of respect, which permeates the school.
- Good attendance and punctuality have a strong impact on standards attained and on pupils' achievements.
- In comparison to the wide range of ways the school sets about developing pupils spiritual, social, moral and cultural development, education for living in multi cultural Britain is not emphasised to the same extent.

## Commentary

7. Attendance is above the figure for similar schools nationally and has risen since the last inspection. It is a reflection on parents' determination that their child gets the most out of their educational opportunities, but it also reflects on pupils' eagerness and willingness to come to school. It is rare that pupils come to school late. Regular attendance and good punctuality are hallmarks of Martin Frobisher Infant School and are significant factors in pupils' achievements.

### *Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)*

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.0	School data	0.4
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

8. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to schoolwork also contribute a great deal to their achievements. Both behaviour and attitudes are strongly positive. Pupils' very good behaviour is reflected in the fact that it has not been necessary to exclude any pupil from school. This has been the case for many years. Because pupils relate well to each other, the skills of co-operative working enhance achievement across the school, making it a harmonious community for pupils and staff to work in. Parents are right to identify very good behaviour and positive attitudes as strengths of their child's learning. Similarly, pupils believe that they learn effectively and are sensibly behaved; the strengths identified in this area during the inspection confirm this view. There are no signs of bullying, harassment or racist attitudes in the school.
9. Pupils bring to school a good range of well-established personal and social skills acquired through their home life. The school has good arrangements to capitalise on these and makes good provision to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school council plays an important role in the life of the school, with the school adopting their suggestions, for example about the care of the playground equipment. Pupils get good opportunities for reflection and for the appreciation of poetry and music. There is a very well established code of conduct that gives them insight into what is right and wrong and how to be good members of the school community. This is added to by the wide range of jobs and responsibilities pupils are given for making sure the school operates smoothly. The curriculum provides them with good opportunities to work together in pairs and teams, enhancing their insight into social interaction. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to listen to visitors and appreciate the local culture around them, through visits to local places of interest. There are good opportunities for learning to respect the ethnic beliefs and culture of those in countries overseas. For example, the school's harvest focus was the Christian African Relief Trust and a group of African drummers visited the school. However, in contrast to the deliberate strategies and enriching first hand experiences used to study local culture, relatively little emphasis is given to improving pupils' knowledge of multi-cultural Britain.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is **good** because the quality of teaching is good. Teaching is helped by a very well structured curriculum, which in turn is enriched by a number of trips and visitors. There are however, fewer opportunities for pupils to take part in activities outside of lessons. The school takes very good care of its pupils and has established beneficial partnerships with parents and the wider community. In addition, provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good.

## Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is **good**; pupils work hard and learn effectively.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teachers know the pupils very well and ensure that there is realistic challenge in lessons for pupils of all capabilities.
- Teaching assistants make a telling contribution to pupils' learning.
- Questioning techniques used when talking to the whole class lack sophistication.
- Pupils learn well because teachers are good at finding links between subjects.

### Commentary

10. Two important improvements made in teaching since the last inspection have ensured that the relative weaknesses of using assessment and meeting the needs of higher-attaining pupils have been overcome. Teaching and learning as a whole are stronger because of this. Teaching is good or better in just over two thirds of lessons and very good or better in a fifth.
11. The thorough approach to assessing each pupil and the detailed recording of individual progress contributes to the targeted use of teaching assistants and the planning of a range of activities to suit needs. This has usefully been extended into setting targets in literacy and numeracy for groups of pupils to work on. Pupils are well aware of these because teachers often refer to them in lessons, which keeps them at the forefront of their minds. Individual learning plans for pupils who have special educational needs and, where necessary, for pupils who are at the early stages of learning English, also incorporate clear targets, which staff are aware of and meet well in daily activities. These are often incorporated into lessons for the whole class, which enables these pupils to learn alongside their peers for much of the time. Because of this, pupils have a good idea of how they should be improving and teachers are aware of what differing groups of pupils should be learning next. This has been a key factor behind the school's success in teaching writing.
12. The school has invested wisely in a good number of teaching assistants to join in with teaching and assessing. They make a significant contribution to the learning of all pupils. Teachers work very well with assistants and careful timetabling ensures that they are able to move seamlessly from one class to another, teaching a range of subjects during the course of a day. For example, to help overcome difficulties in using the ICT suite, teachers can confidently leave half the class with one or two assistants who organise and teach a reading session. In the nursery, the teacher has sufficient trust in the abilities of the nursery nurses to give them a lead role in literacy and numeracy related work, whilst she teaches a creative activity. This trust is well placed and assistants are good at questioning pupils, reinforcing key points from the opening of the lesson and ensuring that pupils are given individual attention. This system works well because teachers back it by planning a range of tasks that cover the full ability range for pupils. These are often carried out at times in lessons when pupils work in groups. It is at these times that assistants make a most valuable contribution to learning, as they work with the full ability range and become partners in teaching all of the pupils and not just one particular group. This suits the needs of both lower and higher-attaining pupils and is an important reason why the school has increased significantly the proportion of pupils working at a higher level than that usually expected in literacy and numeracy.
13. Throughout the school, the weakest part of teaching is to be found in the way teachers question a whole class. Techniques are too simple and more often than not teachers only require answers from pupils who are willing to put their hands up. Because of this, some pupils, often the most timid or disinterested, decide not to join in. At its worst, some pupils can become restless and the teacher distracted. There are too few opportunities for pupils to demonstrate and develop their speaking and listening skills and their understanding is not

tested enough at the beginning of lessons. This can lead to some superficial follow up work. To an extent, this is overcome by the deployment of teaching assistants to differing groups in follow up work, so that misconceptions can be tackled then. However, on occasions those expected to work independently do not work to their capability.

14. The curriculum provides a very good framework for teachers to explore and find links between subjects. On the whole this is done well and pupils' learning improves because they see a relevance and context for what they are doing. For example, an excellent RE lesson, in which pupils took part in a mock wedding, was the culmination of work that covered several subjects. In mathematics, pupils had planned how many people would be at the wedding and what they would need to eat, right down to how many pieces of bread they would require. In design and technology, they had made wedding cards and the sandwiches for the reception party, in English, they had practised writing invitations and in history they had looked at weddings past and present. Such activities maintain the in-depth learning for each subject. The exception to this is ICT. Here, tasks are often too simple, are not thought provoking enough and do not build on the good quality of ICT teaching and learning evident in the Foundation Stage.

#### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 29 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1	5	14	9	0	0	0

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.*

#### **The curriculum**

The school provides a **very good** curriculum. It has breadth, balance and depth. The quality of accommodation and resources are, on the whole, very good.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is an intelligent and innovative approach to ensuring a well-structured curriculum that meets the pupils' personal and academic needs.
- Shortcomings in resources for ICT hold achievement back.
- The curriculum is enriched by the very good use of educational visits and visitors to the school
- The provision for children with special educational needs is good.
- The quality of accommodation and the care taken over display creates a stimulating and aesthetic learning environment.

#### **Commentary**

15. The school's leaders think hard about how to organise the curriculum and have made well-considered choices that govern its organisation. Confident and reflective leadership has made entirely appropriate adaptations to national guidelines, keeping the best interests of pupils' personal and academic needs at the heart of its actions. Much thought has been given to implementing the National Strategy for Literacy. This has been introduced in a creative manner, moulding it to the school's own principles. The school has adopted its own approach to teaching writing, with standards of writing acting as testimony to the effectiveness of this approach.
16. The decision to teach many subjects through overarching themes is very well thought out. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught within these themes, with the school managing to maintain the integrity of individual subjects whilst at the same time giving them an increased sense of purpose and context. Pupils gain a great deal of enjoyment and satisfaction out of

this. The curriculum is added to by a well thought scheme for RE and for pupils' personal and social education, areas such as healthy living also forming part of overarching themes.

17. Whether it be visiting the local church, talking to firemen or attending a 'wedding' between pupils led by the local minister, there is always something planned to add interest to the pupils' learning. Such occasions are well considered and link closely to pupils' wider study and help bring learning alive. In contrast to this there are fewer occasions for pupils to take part in learning outside of lessons, a point also recognised by parents. At present, these are restricted to some extra recorder provision for older pupils and an after school library.
18. The school offers spacious and generous accommodation. Staff have worked hard to make the most of this by displaying work to very good effect. This creates a very calm and uplifting working environment. The way each area is set out and displayed says 'this matters' and this attitude transfers to pupils who take learning seriously. The one exception to this is the ICT suite, which is too small and not well enough equipped.
19. The curriculum provides well for pupils who have particular needs. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good. The close partnership teachers have with teaching assistants helps pupils join in lessons fully. Close attention is paid to pinpointing the learning needs of individuals and these are integrated well into pupils' everyday learning.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The school ensures that pupils get **very good** care, support and guidance. It seeks and acts on pupils views.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are very well prepared for introduction to school from the nursery class and there are good arrangements for transfer of pupils from one year to another within the school.
- Teachers know their pupils very well and are in a strong position to guide and support them through their school life.
- Good interaction between adults and pupils foster trusting relationships. Pupils know that their opinion is listened to and valued and that, where necessary, something will be done about their views.
- Secure procedures are in place for child protection and health and safety issues.

### **Commentary**

20. The school's systems for caring for pupils are well established and work very efficiently. Pupils say they are safe and secure; this is a view shared by parents. Arrangements for admission to the nursery are very good, ensuring that children get off to a smooth start in their learning. The arrangements include opportunities for parents to work alongside their child at the beginning of the day. There is very good tracking of children's progress and this ensures that good information is available when they transfer into Year 1. The school's strategies for measuring progress and for listening to pupils are very good. There are, for example, formal strategies for listening to pupils' views in personal, social and health education sessions, although teachers are very good at making informal occasions available to listen to pupils' interests, successes and concerns. This puts them in a very good position to make effective use of accumulated information about individual academic and personal needs. This is used well to guide the deployment of teaching assistants to ensure that needs are then addressed. This represents good improvement since the last inspection.
21. There are trusting relationships between adults and pupils, including relationships with lunchtime staff. As a result, pupils know that they will be listened to, that what they have to say is important and that they can rely on and trust the adults in the school. Good arrangements for the care and support of pupils who have special educational needs include effective strategies

for identification of specific needs and the careful tracking of their progress. These also suit pupils with other needs such as those who are at the early stages of learning English, and are beginning to be extended to more able pupils so that their needs are now better met.

22. There is an appropriately trained and qualified named person for child protection. There are good arrangements for ensuring the school is an appropriately safe place for the pupils and adults working in it.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school's links with parents are **very strong**. This is also the case for links with other schools and with the community.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents get very good information about what is happening in school and about the progress being made by their children.
- Home and school links have a strong effect on standards achieved, in the pupils' progress in learning, and progress in their social skills.
- Links with the school to which most pupils transfer are strong and helpful.

### **Commentary**

23. Parents have confidence in the school and are very committed to it. A measure of this is the numbers who help in the classroom. They strongly believe that their child likes school, makes good progress and that teaching and leadership and management are good. The amount of information is more than that given in most schools and is good in quality. Parents have regular opportunities to visit school formally to discuss their child's progress, written reports are full and informative and there is a regular flow of information about what is coming up in the curriculum. A feature of this was the 'Evening of Education', concentrating on the new handwriting scheme, mathematics and the topics to be covered during the term, with the follow up request from parents where they could obtain support material. The school has a strategy for welcoming parents to classrooms at the beginning of the day, when they can discuss tasks with their child and talk about concerns to teachers. This is a very good and successful strategy. Because there is a strong and positive home and school link, pupils benefit a great deal. The school is quick to support family values; the home gives strong support to learning through taking a keen interest in it. The impact is strong on both academic progress and on the development of social and personal skills. Pupils come to school ready to learn and the school capitalises well on this. There are good relationships with parents of pupils who have special educational needs. This ensures that these pupils are kept in touch with their learning and that parents have good information about their child's progress. There is a strong Friends Association, which supports the school through social and fund raising events and helps the school come together as a community.
24. Good arrangements are in place to work hand-in-hand with other schools and very good relationships exist with the school to which most pupils transfer, to ensure that new teachers have full access to the detailed knowledge the school holds.
25. The school sees itself at the centre of the local community. The pupils enjoyed the formal visit of the mayor and local businesses support school events. Visits from the utilities enhance the curriculum, especially when the father of one boy brought his police car to school.
26. All in all, the school has strengthened the way its works in partnership with others and progressed well since the last inspection.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The quality of leadership and management is **good**. Governors provide good support for the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has moulded teaching and support staff into a unified, mutually supportive and democratic team.
- The school development plan identifies the right areas for improvement and tackles weaknesses purposefully.
- On occasions, follow up work, on assessing the impact of changes, makes too little use of observing teaching and learning.
- The school makes very good use of data to track pupils' progress and to identify areas for development.
- Governors are supportive of the school and offer a great deal of practical help.

### **Commentary**

27. Since the last inspection, the school has changed from being a First school to an Infant school and, as a result, pupil numbers have declined. Through this period of change, the school has been able to improve standards in key areas, maintain a healthy financial position and move forward with a clear vision for the curriculum and how staff will work together to improve it.
28. One of the key factors behind the success of the school is the highly effective teamwork engendered by the headteacher. Adults at all levels are very aware of what is expected of them and how they contribute to the smooth running of the school. The mutual care and consideration demonstrated for the professional and emotional well being of all the adults on the staff team, underpins the success of the school. The fact that each individual knows that they are valued and listened to, means that the debate about what is provided for the pupils and the results achieved, can be carried out in an open and rigorous fashion. Staff readily help each other and there is a shared commitment to honest and open evaluation. As a result, the cycle of action necessary for sustaining school improvement is firmly in place.
29. On the whole, co-ordinators have a clear vision for their areas of responsibility and monitor provision closely. They are able to do this because the school has put much thought into improving school development planning, a weakness noted during the last inspection. The achievement of the Basic Skills Quality Mark has added impetus and structure to this and is symptomatic of leadership that tackles shortcomings head on. The plan draws all staff, including governors, into setting a common agenda and agreeing priorities. In this way, all sign up to moving the school forward, with co-ordinators leading key developments, given an enhanced budget and monitoring role to support development. This works well and ensures that the school tackles a manageable number of tasks. The impressive improvement in the quality of writing, a key task for the school last year, is testimony to the school's determined approach.
30. Improved use of assessment data, an area identified for improvement during the last inspection, provides the school with hard evidence of the impact of action it has taken. Regular testing and careful plotting of progress ensures that pupils in need of help are quickly spotted and additional help given. It also helps the school to pinpoint areas of concern. For example, the school has looked closely at the dip in test results in reading and mathematics last year and although not overly concerned, a view shared by inspectors, has avoided complacency by making both these areas the focus for performance management objectives for each teacher. In this way, the statutory assessment of the performance of teachers is closely linked to school improvement.
31. However, shortcomings can still slip through the net because the school does not always assess the impact of past changes. This is especially true of actions that do not necessarily generate objective data. Last year, the school targeted training in ICT and ensured that all staff took part in an extensive training programme. However, follow up has not been purposefully

planned for and so continuing difficulties with using the computer suite, the inconsistent quality of teaching and the lack of challenge in learning have largely gone unchecked. Part of the reason for this is that the school relies too much on second hand evidence of learning, for example by checking planning, collecting assessment data and talking to each other, rather than finding out first hand how well actions have been implemented.

32. The governing body has achieved a good balance between supporting and challenging the school. It is aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and joins well with staff in moving the school forward. The school makes good use of the varied expertise it has to offer. Many governors have close connections with school and bring a personal commitment to their work, being prepared to roll their sleeves up and get involved in every day matters as well as policy decisions. They discharge the statutory duties effectively and manage the budget prudently. They maintain a reasonable contingency, which has come down somewhat from last year, to respond to any unexpected spending and to carryout planned improvements, such as recent changes to the outdoor play area for the Foundation Stage.

***Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003***

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	398,282
Total expenditure	408,447
Expenditure per pupil	2,886

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	46,405
Balance carried forward to the next	36,240

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

33. Provision is good in the Foundation Stage because teaching and learning, leadership and resources are all good. Children experience an attractive and structured environment where there is a good balance of teacher led and child selected activities. Nursery and reception classes have separate classrooms, with an open door policy between them for part of the week, allowing for smooth transition between the two classrooms and some joint work. They also share an excellent, recently completed outdoor play area. Much planning and imagination have gone into its design so that it can facilitate learning in all the areas of the curriculum. There is a thorough induction package, which eases transition into the nursery and reception and finally into the rest of the school. When children enter nursery, although they have a wide range of ability, generally their attainment is above the level expected nationally in all areas of the curriculum. Children make good progress during the foundation years because of a very good assessment system and good teaching, which meets the needs of all, including those pupils who have special educational needs and at present those at the early stages of learning English. The co-ordinator is new in post but has inherited a very well-run foundation unit with well-trained and highly competent support.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Classroom routines are effectively established.
- Care, courtesy and consideration are taught at all times.
- Co-operation and collaboration are encouraged.

#### **Commentary**

34. Routines and procedures are effectively established in a calm and friendly atmosphere and children grow in confidence in the ways of school and in the way they treat each other. As nursery children enter for example, they self-register, place snack money in the relevant containers and choose an activity where parent and child can work together. In this way, a happy but purposeful atmosphere is established from the beginning. Children know how to line up sensibly and how to take turns. When told to stop or change activity, they respond immediately. In the reception class, children learn to put up their hands to answer and listen without interruption when another child is speaking. They obey the rules of a game and play well together. They are friendly and confident with visitors and have a growing respect for authority.
35. The teachers are very good role models, they speak respectfully to the children and take time to listen to them; they use the words 'please', 'thank-you' and 'excuse-me' often and expect the children to do the same; they organise for group activities and encourage children to participate and help them when they do. Because of these aspects, children interact with each other easily and harmoniously. They make encouraging and sympathetic comments to each other, give general help and initiate simple group activities such as chasing.
36. Because of these high expectations and the very good quality of teaching, the vast majority of children are on course to exceed standards set for children of this age. They begin school as well-adjusted and well-behaved children ready to learn.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers and nursery nurses provide good role models in enunciating clear standard English.
- Staff enthuse about reading.
- Speaking and listening opportunities across the curriculum are sometimes missed.
- Handwriting and the sound letters make are taught systematically.

### **Commentary**

37. Staff are very good role models. Children often utter phrases and expressions they have heard their teachers say and try to project their voices when talking in a group. This is helping all children, including those just learning English. In one nursery group session, the nursery nurse used good questioning techniques about the book 'Rabbit's woolly jumper' so that children experienced a variety of language uses. First she read the book dramatically and seized the children's imagination. Then in answer to her questions, the children labelled, predicted an outcome, gave reasoned answers, related events and projected into the feelings of a fictional character, making comparisons with his and their own choices. Love of reading is also engendered in reception, where to accompany their reading of 'The Farm Concert,' children enjoyed making the appropriate animal sounds and chose the appropriate written expressions to go alongside these.
38. However, although speaking and listening are planned and taught well in language lessons, opportunities are sometimes missed in every day teaching because teachers' questioning limits answers to few words and few purposes. In whole class sessions, teachers rely too much on seeking answers from children with their hands up, with questions not drawing children of all capabilities into conversation.
39. Handwriting is taught systematically from the beginning, and teachers model well the correct strokes, size and slant, working alongside children repeating instruction, so that they use the correct formation at all times. Currently, reception children write short legible sentences using the cursive school style. The sounds letters make are taught systematically during the foundation years and opportunities for revision teaching are seized whenever they occur across the curriculum. The children enjoy recognising sounds and basic vocabulary and are proud to demonstrate their knowledge.
40. Overall, teaching and learning are good in this area and pupils achieve well, with all but a few on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals comfortably.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers give very clear explanations.
- Children experience an interesting range of mathematical activities.
- Mathematics is taught across the curriculum.
- ICT is used effectively to support mathematical development.

### **Commentary**

41. Teaching and learning are good in this area. Children achieve well and almost all are on line to achieve the Early Learning Goals and exceed them in their knowledge of number.
42. Teachers give very clear explanations to introduce basic concepts, such as 'counting on' in the reception class. Activities and games, such as 'snakes and ladders' and 'find the missing number', are used to practise these concepts. Teachers' language is always straightforward when they are giving instructions; they repeat sequences in many different ways and use a variety of equipment until children understand and remember; they also use song and actions to appeal to children's different learning styles and language needs.
43. The children experience an interesting range of mathematical activities and games, which really motivate them and sustain their concentration. These activities are well supported by teachers who help the children match objects to numbers, check for accuracy and systematically work through an instruction or process. They give good help at the beginning of an activity until children have experienced success; then, once the children have become confident and independent, they begin to ask harder questions.
44. Mathematics is taught across the curriculum and teachers use every opportunity to reinforce basic concepts. In a discussion about the calendar, reception pupils counted the number of days to their birthdays. In nursery, the pretend shop area is used to give children opportunities in identification, counting and the use of money. Bricks and construction kits are used to develop children's concepts of length, space and shape. These largely, independent activities are further enhanced by the intervention of adults who ask questions about the number and shape of the pieces they need or when they join pretend play scenarios, such as demanding customers!
45. The class computer is also used well to teach mathematics and, because many foundation children are confident operating the mouse and choosing from icons, often work independently, further developing mathematical concepts such as matching, sequencing, ordering, shape recognition and basic number.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

46. It is not possible to make an overall judgement of provision in this area of learning as little teaching was seen. Teachers make good use of ICT, so that by the end of reception, most children can work on computers unaided. This was evident in a good ICT lesson in which the children were taught how to load and exit from a program, understand various icons and can label and print their work using a simple graphic package. Such teaching and learning prepares children well for the next stages of education.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers provide many opportunities for children to refine their fine motor skills.
- Facilities for outdoor play are excellent.
- Children use large apparatus well.

### **Commentary**

47. Good teaching ensures that children's fine motor skills are well developed and they are refined further by regular handling of pens, pencils, brushes and clay tools. Also, in general craft and small world materials, children exercise hand-eye co-ordination efficiently for the tasks they are required to complete. If children do have problems, teachers give good demonstrations and sit by the child until they have mastered the skill.

48. Facilities for outdoor play are excellent and some vigorous play was observed there. Nursery children organised an energetic game of 'cops and robbers', when one of the children put on a uniform and carried a walkie-talkie. This linked well with children's language and literacy development.
49. The very good range of vehicles means that children confidently use tricycles and scooters. They can ride at speed and change direction quickly and safely. However, because the teacher intervened as the 'lollipop man' at the pedestrian crossing, they also had to learn control, safety and general patience.
50. In the reception class, the children were taught good, safe procedures in using the large apparatus and, after a suitable warm-up, they explored various methods of getting on and off the equipment and travelling along it. This was because the teacher used children's own ideas to make them think more deeply about their movements and be more imaginative. Her commentaries as the pupils performed, drew children's attention to details of quality and originality so that the children knew what they were aiming for. The children are very capable in this area of learning and are on course to exceed early learning goals confidently.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

51. It was only possible to sample work in this area. From the work on display and the limited number of observations, it is clear that children are on course to exceed standards that are set for their age. Teachers organise a good range of creative activities and the children experience various materials and tools. Nursery children use packaging creatively to make three-dimensional models of space stations and rockets. Teachers help children well in their choice of suitable materials and discuss how they can put their intentions into practice.
52. In the reception class, the children are taught how to use clay tools effectively to shape and connect pieces in order to form a detailed and recognisable figure. In music, children are taught the idea of simple notation by imaginative instruction using large hand and foot symbols. The teacher also demonstrates well the effect of controlled volume and tone and the children are able to appreciate how this can communicate feelings.
53. Pretend play is well developed in both classrooms and because of the authenticity of especially established areas, children move easily into role and have the appropriate language to sustain their concentration.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Actions taken to promote pupils' writing have been very well led and pupils now achieve well.
- The curriculum is well thought out and incorporates a wide range of tasks that suit pupils' differing capabilities.
- Very effective partnerships between teachers and teaching assistants help pupils learn well.
- Teachers do not always question pupils well enough when they are talking to the whole class.
- Detailed assessment procedures ensure the school meets the needs of pupils of differing capabilities.

#### **Commentary**

54. Determined and thoughtful leadership has made several changes to the way the curriculum is planned and in particular how writing is taught. These are paying dividends. Since the last inspection, standards in writing have risen considerably and the school now makes better provision for higher attaining pupils, the latter being a weakness noted in the last inspection. Well thought out structures, backed by good quality teaching, means that pupils of all capabilities achieve well in learning to read and write and reach standards that are well above average.
55. Pupils quickly acquire skills in writing because the school seeks to develop writing through other subjects. Tasks have relevance for pupils and motivate them well. Pupils clearly enjoy writing. Teachers make good use of reading material to stimulate writing. In Year 2 for example, the reading of *The BFG* by Roald Dahl resulted in a class book littered with lengthy and imaginative pieces of work. Teachers ensure that lessons hang together well, with the discussion of reading matter closely related to written tasks. These are often very well differentiated and provide challenge for pupils of all capabilities. However, the pay off from well-designed lessons is sometimes undermined by weaknesses in the way teachers question the whole class. Teachers rely too much on seeking answers only from pupils who have their hands up. This is having two effects:
- It is not targeting speaking and listening skills routinely and, progress in this aspect of English is not as strong. Confident pupils can dominate discussion, while reticent pupils remain quiet. In general, teachers lack the techniques, such as placing pupils in role, commonly found to encourage pupils to join in whole class talk.
  - Follow up written work can on occasions become superficial. For example, in a lesson in Year 1, in which the class shared a book about a boy's feeling, a group of pupils who were working alone, were not able to write about their own feelings because not enough emphasis was placed on this in discussing the book. It is in the independent session that the shortcomings of questioning reveal themselves and, in this lesson, a group with a teaching assistant produced much more thought provoking work because the teaching assistant was able to guide the writing and ask follow up questions that enabled pupils to talk about their own feelings before writing about them.
56. The impact of teaching assistants goes far beyond helping differing groups write well. They work very effectively behind the scenes, ensuring that lessons are well prepared for and run smoothly. They often assess pupils and help with marking.
57. A further reason why writing progresses well is the decision the school has taken to separate the teaching of basic skills of spelling and handwriting from lessons that teach pupils to write with flair and imagination. Strong emphasis is given to teaching pupils how to spell and the recent targeting of handwriting means that many pupils in both Years 1 and 2 write in a cursive style. Demonstrations of handwriting by teachers are clear and there is a gentle but firm insistence that pupils write neatly. The high profile given to displaying pupils' work provides a further incentive for them to work carefully.
58. The teaching of reading is similarly very well structured. The school achieves a good balance between teaching individuals to read and teaching reading to groups of pupils. Teachers are experts at snatching odd moments to work with an individual. The judicious use of teaching assistants also helps here but their impact is most telling in providing extra personnel to work with groups of pupils. The well thought out policy of teaching pupils in groups, based on prior attainment, for one lesson a week helps with matching work to need and as a result, pupils progress quickly in learning the sounds that different letters make. This means that they know what to do when they come across an unknown word. This knowledge of words transfers to pupils' ability to spell well. The school has recently upgraded the library; this is very well organised, thanks in large to the work of a teaching assistant. The school has well-developed plans to teach pupils research skills more purposefully, an area in which pupils' knowledge is less well developed.

59. The school assesses pupils very well. Regular assessment in writing and in reading generates specific targets for differing groups of pupils and teachers are increasingly referring to them in lessons, so that they are at the forefront of pupils' minds. Information is also used well to identify those who are under performing and subsequent extra input by teachers and teaching assistants, is successful in bringing these pupils back up to speed. This not only helps pupils who have special educational needs but potential higher-attaining pupils who are little bit off the required pace.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

60. The school makes very good links with other subjects for pupils to consolidate and use their language and literacy skills. In particular history, geography, RE and science provide opportunities for pupils to write and to read. This is helped by the limited use of worksheets. The exception to this positive picture is ICT, which is currently underused as a vehicle for pupils to word process their work or to research for information habitually.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils work at challenging and differentiated activities.
- Good quality leadership has built effective assessment strategies.
- Full class sessions are sometimes less effective because of shortcomings in the way teachers question pupils.

#### **Commentary**

61. Standards at the end of Year 2 are high and pupils achieve well. The vast majority of pupils are agile at mental arithmetic. They know two and three- dimensional shapes and can discuss their properties. They use more than one method to solve a problem, can multiply simple numbers with confidence and apply their knowledge of mathematics well to other subjects. A higher proportion of pupils now exceed expected levels than at the time of the last inspection and this represents good improvement in standards. This is because teaching and learning are good and pupils are enthusiastic. Lessons are well planned, largely because of the efforts the co-ordinator has put into improving assessment. This is now very good. Good subject leaderships ensure that teachers analyse test results in detail and together, discuss implications for future priorities. These are built upon by effective monitoring so that, led by the co-ordinator, staff evaluate the results of any changes and the outcomes of any predictions they make. Individual and class work is constantly under review and work is always very well matched to prior attainment in task, language, recording and degree of support and challenge. Teachers track pupils' performance well and set clear targets for pupils. They in turn have good knowledge of these and are clear about what they need to do to improve.
62. Pupils work effectively in small groups because activities link back to an overall theme and subsequent tasks are interesting, challenging and well differentiated. In these, they are well taught by very capable teaching assistants and, because of the close attention of the class teacher, invariably complete the work set. The limited use of worksheets means that pupils learn to set work out for themselves and this aids the problem solving abilities of all, but the higher attaining in particular.
63. The main emphasis of the lesson is reinforced with effective demonstrations and searching questions, which are common place in group work. This extends the learning of all, helps the less able to perform at a similar level to the rest of the class and makes up for some shortcomings evident in the opening part of lessons. Lessons always end effectively with a

revision of teaching points and some extension work to motivate and prepare pupils for the next lesson.

64. The main problem with the teaching lies in class teaching. Questioning techniques do not consistently draw upon the methods outlined in the National Strategy for Numeracy. Pupil participation is not maximised and teachers rely on single answers to questions rather than probe understanding, so pupils are not actively engaged and some can become restless. Where this occurs, time is wasted because some pupils are unclear about follow up work and need additional tuition in groups, from either the teacher or teaching assistant, to make progress.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

65. Pupils use their mathematical skills effectively in other subjects, such as constructing a weather chart in geography and measuring the distance travelled by vehicles across different surfaces in science. However, there is little evidence of ICT being used in mathematics or of classroom computers being used often enough in mathematics lessons.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A strong emphasis is placed upon practical and investigational work so that pupils learn to think and act as scientists.
- Assessment is very effective and guides future learning very well.
- Pupils who have special educational needs are helped succeed in tasks that are well matched to their capability. There are some missed opportunities to challenge higher-attaining pupils fully.
- Not enough thought is given to using ICT in science.

### **Commentary**

66. Science is taught using well structured cross-curricular projects, one for each half term. These are under regular review by the teachers, who plan together a progressive scheme of work to teach appropriate scientific skills and knowledge. Co-ordination of science is good. The co-ordinator monitors planning, pupils' work, assessments and teaching and successfully ensures their effectiveness in meeting pupils' needs. Assessment is good and pupils' progress is effectively tracked, marked and analysed in detail throughout the year. Teachers review their future planning if skills and knowledge are found to be insecure and adaptations are made to timetables, resources, training and teaching techniques.
67. By the end of Year 2, standards in science are above average and pupils achieve well. By the end of Year 2, pupils know how skeletons support a body and that sound is made by vibration. They can organise simple experiments, using the principles of fair testing and record their findings in a variety of forms using pictures, diagrams and narrative. They can draw simple circuits and explain with reasons, why materials are used for certain purposes. This is because teaching and learning are good. Lessons are focussed, well planned and prepared and involve a lot of challenging investigation and practical work. Teaching assistants are well briefed and insist pupils use appropriate scientific vocabulary. They model recording well and offer practical help. Teachers organise interesting, collaborative activities for the pupils, who work with enjoyment and are willing to help others well. Good use of a wide range of equipment sustains their attention and the open nature of some of the experiments, such as "Do the strongest legs have the longest jumps?", motivates them to test their predictions. The use of a pupil observer for certain scientific experiments, enables pupils to see the process as a whole and enhances their appreciation of teamwork.

68. Teachers promote good work habits. They encourage pupils to predict results, to repeat processes in order to check findings and to explain why such results occur. Lessons always include some element of self-evaluation. "How could I improve this investigation?" This was incorporated into plenary sessions and pupils could always make suggestions to smooth the process and establish greater accuracy. All of this helps develop logical thought.
69. Teachers give much thought to the recording of experiments and because they provide writing prompts for less-able pupils, they are not held back by a lack of confidence in English. Occasionally, however, higher-attaining pupils are not challenged because tasks do not often ask them to combine a written and mathematical response to work or ask them to think in a scientific way using a computer.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The ICT suite is difficult to use effectively and limits learning.
- Teachers' demonstrations of skills are clear.
- Teachers do not plan for, or expect pupils to use computers in demanding enough ways.
- Assessment is strong and guides the acquisition of skills.
- Plans for the future are undermined by lack of first hand monitoring.

### **Commentary**

70. Pupils make steady progress in ICT and by the end of Year 2 reach standards that are in line with national expectations. In this respect, standards have not improved since the last inspection and fewer pupils than in other subjects, go on to reach standards that are above those expected. Well-targeted training has ensured that all staff has a basic knowledge of how to teach ICT. However, difficulties in using the ICT suite and tasks which lack imagination, hold progress back and at present are not building well enough on the level of expertise established in the Foundation Stage.
71. The ICT suite is small and cramped. To overcome this, teachers use it with half a class at a time. However, difficulties still remain. Pupils still have to share computers and this slows their progress. Where teaching assistants are available, pupils are able to spread out a little more to use nearby computers and, whilst this helps to a degree, it does not fully solve the problem. The suite has a large screen, which teachers use well to show pupils accurately what they are to learn. However, this is difficult to see and cannot be used in a way which involves pupils in the demonstration.
72. The co-ordinator has given much thought to assessment and together with a well thought out curriculum, which establishes links with other subjects, provides a good structure for the acquisition of skills. Teachers are beginning to use assessment to move learning along, by introducing pupils to new features of various programs. However, too little thought is given to the overall nature of tasks, which are often too simple and, for older pupils in particular, are not thought provoking enough. This goes back to a lack of ambition in teaching and a lack of detail in everyday planning, giving insufficient detail to guide learning. For example, much of the work on word processing through Years 1 and 2 is very similar and does not pick up from the increasingly high level of skills with which pupils leave reception. In Year 1 for instance, pupils learn how to write a sentence about a picture. In Year 2, the task is essentially the same, with pupils having more control over the selection of the picture, but expected to do no more than write a little about it. Because of such teaching, many pupils progress in their knowledge of features of various items of software but not in the use to which these skills are put.

73. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership with plans for the development of ICT, undermined by the lack of opportunity for the co-ordinator to check up on how well the suite is being used and to follow up on the impact of recent training.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

74. There are some good links made with other subjects but these are let down by the limited time pupils spend working on computers. This is not helped by the inconsistent use teachers make of computers they have in their classrooms. These are not used often enough to reinforce skills pupils are taught in the ICT suite or in study of other subjects.

### **HUMANITIES**

75. It was only possible to sample history and geography. One geography lesson was seen and further evidence gathered by talking to pupils, the co-ordinators and by looking at planning and pupils' work. **History** is taught as an aspect of six overarching themes, one for each half term. These projects incorporate national guidelines and feature visits within the local area. Teachers use few worksheets and so pupils are given every opportunity to write about history for themselves. Pupils could give enthusiastic, detailed accounts of the topics they had studied. They have limited experience of using the internet for history in school but some had done their own research at home. Pupils have a good knowledge of the range of sources historians use to study history and also appreciated that there were various viewpoints on history and many reasons why events occurred.
76. In the one **geography** lesson seen, teaching and learning were good. The lesson, on the theme of weather, was a good one because the teacher encouraged and sustained genuine discussion until pupils had chosen appropriate reference symbols for their charts and a fair organisation for recording. She also demonstrated well a computer program on weather offering multichoice icons. Pupils are familiar with a map of the British Isles and can mark England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. They also know the location of Altofts village and have followed a programme of local studies, compiling a traffic survey using the tally form. In addition, they have studied places farther afield and aspects of the African continent because of their involvement in a charitable cause. Through the eyes of the fictional character, they have compared Struay with Altofts and have designed their own island, displaying particular features at certain compass readings.

### **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good teaching draws upon the potential of RE to help pupils consider sensitive issues.
- Church visits and visitors enhance learning.

### **Commentary**

77. Standards are above those expected in the locally agreed syllabus and pupils achieve well. They make links between symbols, language and stories and the ideas that underlie them. They understand values and commitment and can compare aspects of their own experiences and those of others, identifying what influences their lives. They also respond sensitively to the experiences and feelings of others. This is a result of very good teaching.
78. Teachers help pupils explore religious themes thoroughly and make great efforts to make their teaching as interesting as possible. As a result, pupils enjoy this subject and learn much about religion and much from it. Well-chosen stories are used to teach themes, such as death,

memories and feelings. Pupils focus on these, reflect and are taught how to communicate with others about them. Teachers handle sensitive themes well. They are very good role models for the pupils. They listen to the children with respect and ask supplementary questions to draw out thoughts and impressions. Pupils listen well and show empathy with each other, particularly during class discussions when they relate emotional experiences, such as the death of a pet or an argument with a friend.

79. Pupils have a very good knowledge of Christianity because high quality teaching is extended through visits to the local Anglican and Methodist churches, to improve their understanding of a place of worship, and special occasions and regular visits to the school by ministers from these churches. As such, they bring additional resources and expertise to the pupils. In one lesson, the vicar in full vestments in front of the altar, officiated at a 'pretend wedding', ensuring that all elements of the sacrament were simplified for children's understanding. Because of this, pupils realised the symbolism of the occasion, the importance of the words and the legal need for a register to be signed. They heard about the miracle of Cana and enjoyed the wedding music. Dressed in their finery, the pupils made quite a picture! All pupils, because of the teacher's detailed planning and preparation, played their roles well. For much of the ceremony the pupils were in awe! The dressing up and reception were important to them but in the 'service', pupils captured the essence of the occasion and the serious nature of this commitment. Although pupils study aspects of Judaism and Islam in detail, their knowledge of these faiths is not as deep because learning is not further developed by first hand experiences.
80. Leadership and management of this subject are very good. There are plenty of resources including artefacts and there is a strong commitment to teach the subject fairly, not only to improve pupils' knowledge but to raise pupils' respect and tolerance for other people's beliefs. The subject is monitored by analysis of pupils' work and their responses and by observation of teaching and learning. Progress since the last inspection has been good.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

81. It was only possible to sample the following subjects and no overall judgement about provision can be made. Discussions were held with pupils and the co-ordinators and pupils' work and teachers' planning examined.
82. In **design and technology**, as with other subjects, work is related to overall themes, giving a context for work. Work is closely related to art and design and pupils' ability here has a knock on effect in design and technology, where pupils' models of vehicles showed good attention to the quality of finish and decoration. Pupils learn how to join boxes and other material together in a number of ways and have begun to experiment with axles and wheels to make things move. Plans are realistic and show careful consideration of a desired outcome. A creative afternoon held each week, provides further opportunities for pupils to make things and in particular for groups of pupils to use the nursery cooking area for food technology.
83. Pupils are introduced to forms of **music** in assemblies and on occasions, different forms of music are played in the background while pupils work. Pupils' singing in assembly was satisfactory. They can hold a tune well and sing with enthusiasm. In the one brief lesson seen, the teacher ensured that there was a good balance between singing and performing, using pitched instruments. Careful consideration was given to practice, improvement and performance and pupils were learning at a satisfactory rate. Because of the teachers' knowledge and insistence on the use of correct vocabulary, pupils were developing a vocabulary with which to discuss music. There is a recorder club for older pupils.
84. **Physical education** is given due prominence in the curriculum and benefits from a comprehensive scheme of work, which covers all elements of the subject and gives good guidance to teachers. Work is planned to allow for the progressive development of skills. This is helped by clear assessment procedures. The co-ordinator has been able to help less

confident staff and has a good idea for developing the subject further. Facilities, both for indoor and outdoor PE, are very good and the school has a good range of equipment to aid study.

## **Art and design**

Provision in art and design is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The effective use of teaching assistants helps provide pupils with a wide variety of art and design experiences.
- Art and design is used very well as a stimulus for learning in other subjects.
- The high profile given to art and design through display and additional activities, helps pupils develop a very positive attitude towards art and design and to themselves as artists.
- Pupils' knowledge of the work of other artists is not as strong as the quality of the work they produce.

### **Commentary**

85. By the end Year 2 standards of pupils' finished work are well above average and they are achieving well. This is an improvement on standards identified in the last inspection. This is largely because of the high profile given to art and design. Particular experiences, that tie in with the overall themes pupils are studying, are planned on a weekly basis. This enables art and design to play a leading part in the study of other subjects. Teachers are keen to ensure that pupils work with a variety of media and a good balance is struck between two and three-dimensional work. Lessons provide a menu of activities, with several going on at the same time. This leads to a vibrant atmosphere. This is only possible because of the very good work of teaching assistants, often more than one in each class, so that groups using different media can be taught in one lesson.
86. Teachers are good at demonstrating skills, instructions are kept to a minimum and time spent working is maximised. Teachers are clear about the differing purposes of group work and spend their time well, questioning and prompting pupils' efforts. As a result, pupils become self-critical and seek ways to improve their final product. For example, pupils will experiment with mixing colours to get just the right tone. Observational drawings are detailed and painstakingly completed, while clay and other models show confidence and an ability to mould and join materials together to a pre-determined finish.
87. The one drawback of the school's approach to link art and design to wider study themes, is that the work of other artists has a relatively lower profile. Whilst pupils are introduced to the work of other artists in assembly and occasionally in lessons, their knowledge of the work and techniques of other artists is not as strong as their ability to produce art.
88. Teachers and teaching assistants put a great deal of effort into displaying art and design, showing pupils how much they value their work. Pupils respond in kind and clearly enjoy the subject. Their experience is broadened by a more social art and design occasion towards the end of the week in which pupils get to work with pupils from other classes on self-chosen pieces of work. This culminates in an assembly, providing a whole school public celebration of art.
89. The co-ordinator has led the subject well, particularly in drawing up clear assessment procedures, which both teachers and teaching assistants use. These are being used well to guide the next stages in learning, so that pupils' abilities develop at a pace.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

90. This subject was sampled and no overall judgement about provision can be made. Only one lesson was seen and this linked closely with RE. Discussions were held with pupils and documentation examined. The school plans well for this subject, typifying an attitude of care evident in much of the work of the school. Trusting relationships between adults and pupils, and the strong links with RE, enable delicate issues such as death, to be discussed openly. Pupils' experiences are added to by the study of particular aspects of health, which are linked to the school's overall themes

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).*