

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **PRIMROSE LANE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Boston Spa

LEA area: Leeds

Unique reference number: 107869

Headteacher: Mr Peter Howard

Lead inspector: Mrs Lesley Traves

Dates of inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> March 2005

Inspection number: 273334

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	231
School address:	Westwood Way Boston Spa Wetherby West Yorkshire
Postcode:	LS23 6DX
Telephone number:	01937 842667
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Ian Taylor
Date of previous inspection:	November 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Primrose Lane is an average sized primary school, situated in the small town of Boston Spa, near Wetherby in West Yorkshire. The school is set in extensive grounds in a peaceful, residential area. The majority of the 231 pupils on role live quite close to the school in privately owned housing. The social and economic circumstances of pupils' families cover a broad range, but the majority come from socially advantaged homes. The percentage of pupils having free school meals (5.3 per cent) is below average and the vast majority are of white, British heritage, speaking English as their first language. A well below average number of pupils are identified as having special educational needs (6.9 per cent). These are mostly related to learning difficulties. This number has halved in recent years because of changes in national procedures. An average number have a statement of their needs. When children enter school, their skills and abilities are also wide ranging but attainment for the majority is above that expected for this age group. Each year, however, a small but significant minority enter school with ground to make up, particularly in their social and communication skills. In some classes, there is a high proportion of pupils who have joined the school after the usual starting point. The school received a DfES 'Achievement Award' in 2000 for its high standards. It has also achieved an impressive range of local and national awards. These include the Leeds 'Healthy Schools' award, 'Investors in People', 'Leeds Investors in Pupils' the 'Active Mark' and the 'Arts Mark' awards. The school has close links with other local schools through a cluster arrangement.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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4295	Mr D Dodds	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology
27337	Mrs S Oultram	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Art and design Music
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a very good school.** It ensures that the personal development of pupils is very strong and that they enjoy all aspects of school life. Standards are well above average overall. All pupils achieve well, as a result of very strong teaching. The school is very effectively led and managed at all levels. It gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership and management of the school are very strong and effective;
- Very good teaching enables pupils to reach high standards in English, mathematics, art and design, music, physical education and aspects of information and communication technology (ICT);
- The school creates an atmosphere in which children flourish and develop as mature, thoughtful, well rounded individuals;
- It provides a very rich and exciting range of experiences which ensure that pupils love learning;
- It creates very strong and effective partnerships with parents, the community and other local schools, which have a significant impact on learning;
- Pupils at Key Stage 2 could be provided with more opportunities to investigate and record their work independently in science.

Improvement since the previous inspection in 1998 has been very good. The school has dealt particularly well with the issues identified for improvement. For example, ICT has been transformed from a weakness to a strength and more able pupils are now challenged much more effectively. In addition, the school has strengthened other areas, such as the quality of information for parents. Standards in many subjects have also improved and more very good teaching was seen.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	B	A*	B	B
mathematics	C	A	B	A
science	A	A	B	A

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average; A\* indicates a result in the top 5 per cent.*

*Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

**Pupils achieve well overall.** Results in the national tests for 11-year-olds fluctuate slightly year-on-year, because of the varying numbers of pupils with special educational needs. Results are also affected in some years because of the number of pupils who have joined other than at the usual starting time. However, the above table shows that results have usually been above or well above average and occasionally in the top 5 per cent in the country. In 2004, the pupils did particularly well in relation to their attainment in Year 2. Pupils in the Foundation Stage get off to a good start and the majority are on course to exceed the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. Pupils throughout the school achieve particularly well in English and mathematics and standards in art and design, music and physical education are much better than usually seen. In science,

although pupils reach above average standards at both key stages and test results are very good, standards could be even higher if junior pupils were given more opportunities to plan their own investigations and choose how they record their work. In ICT, standards are better than in most schools overall at both key stages, with some aspects being particularly strong.



**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good.** Pupils show great enthusiasm for all aspects of school life and have a real thirst for learning. Behaviour is very good, both in lessons and around the school, and any problems are managed skilfully. Pupils get on very well with each other and with their teachers. They develop as well rounded, mature and confident individuals. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching is very good overall.** It is of particularly high quality in English, mathematics and music, where levels of expertise are strong. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the very good support they receive from all the adults who work with them. The curriculum is very well planned and organised to meet the needs of all pupils. Opportunities provided to enrich pupils' learning are very extensive, particularly in sport and the arts. Pupils develop very well as independent learners in most areas.

Pupils are very well cared for within a happy, secure, family atmosphere. All staff know them very well and pupils trust and respect all the adults who work with them. The school has forged extremely productive links with parents, other local schools and the community, which have a significant impact on learning.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are very good.** The headteacher's vision for the school and his commitment to providing the best for its pupils are outstanding. Other key staff play a very effective part in school development and teamwork is a very strong feature. Governance is very good. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities very well and are very closely involved in setting the direction for the school and checking on how well it is doing.

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

Parents have very positive views of the school. They are particularly happy that their children enjoy school and with the range of activities on offer. Pupils report that they enjoy their lessons and feel valued.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

In order to raise standards further, in line with its own action plan, the school should:

- Provide greater opportunities for pupils at Key Stage 2 to independently plan, investigate and record their work in science.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Pupils of all abilities achieve well. The majority reach well above average standards in English and mathematics at the age of 11. Standards are also significantly better than usually seen at the ages of 7 and 11 in art and design, music and physical education and in aspects of ICT at the age of 11. Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage and the majority exceed the expected goals by the time they enter Year 1.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average in English, mathematics and aspects of ICT at the age of 11;
- Standards in art and design, physical education and music are much better than those seen in most schools;
- Pupils get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage;
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the very good quality support they receive;
- Older pupils could achieve more in the investigative strand of science.

#### COMMENTARY

##### *Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004*

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	18.2 (15.6)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	17.1 (16.3)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.6 (17.5)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 29 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

##### *Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004*

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.8 (30.9)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	28.0 (29.7)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.8 (31.3)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

1. Standards have improved overall since the time of the last inspection. Results in the national tests for 7-year-olds in 2004 were well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics, when compared to all schools nationally. Over half the class achieved the higher level (Level 3) in reading and mathematics and a higher than average proportion also achieved Level 3 in writing. When compared to similar schools, the picture is also a strong one, with reading and writing results being well above average and mathematics above average. The trend in results has been more steeply upward than the national trend for several years. Inspection

findings confirm the school's own data for the current Year 2 pupils, indicating that they are achieving well in relation to their previous attainment and that the majority are on course to reach at least above average standards in this year's tests. Fewer are predicted to achieve the higher levels this year, as the profile of the class is not quite as strong.

2. At Key Stage 2, the results in the 2004 national tests for 11-year-olds were well above average in mathematics and science and above average in English, when compared to all schools nationally and to those whose pupils had achieved similar results when they were 7-years-old. Despite the overall dip from 2003, this was a particularly strong achievement, as the school had a higher than usual percentage of pupils with special educational needs within the class. This affected English results in particular. Also, a very high proportion of pupils (41 per cent) had joined the school other than at the usual starting time, some of whom had ground to make up. The overall trend at Key Stage 2 has been consistently above or well above average for the last 4 years. Occasionally, results have been in the top 5 per cent in the country. Inspection findings indicate a stronger picture in English for this year's Year 6 class than last year, with standards being well above average. In mathematics, standards are also currently well above average. However, in science, although pupils are reaching above average standards in their knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts, they do not always do as well in the investigative strand of the subject. Junior pupils, in particular, could have more opportunities to set their own hypotheses, for example, and design, carry out and record investigations independently. The school has identified this as an area for development and is currently working on this aspect.
3. Pupils reach standards that are much better than usually seen in art and design, music and physical education at both key stages. This is a result of the exciting, practical range of learning experiences provided and high quality teaching, which fires pupils' imaginations and inspires them to be creative.
4. Improvements in standards have been brought about through the hard work and commitment of all staff to improving the quality of teaching and learning. Assessment strategies have also been strengthened to ensure that pupils build on their knowledge and skills systematically and are challenged appropriately. Close analysis of data ensures that gaps in teaching and learning are identified and dealt with. For example, it was identified that throughout the school, pupils did not achieve quite as well in writing as they did in reading. This became a priority for action and the measures taken are having a good impact. At the last inspection, standards in ICT were judged to be below those expected at both key stages. Significant improvements have been made and standards are now above those expected at both key stages and in some aspects, pupils do very well indeed.
5. Pupils get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage. The majority are on course to exceed the expected goals in all areas of learning by the end of the reception year because of the consistently good teaching they receive. Pupils achieve particularly high standards in their personal, social and emotional development because of the high emphasis all staff place on this area and the very good examples they set.
6. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good. Work for these children is carefully planned and evaluated and they make good and sometimes very good progress towards their individual targets. Sensitive support and very good quality planning ensures that they are fully included in lessons. This raises their self-

esteem and develops their confidence. Those with particular gifts and talents also achieve well because the school makes every effort to stretch and challenge them appropriately.

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

Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes towards school are very good. Their personal development is very good. It is helped by very good provision overall for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy school because learning is made really interesting and they have lots of fun;
- Pupils of all ages get on very well together;
- Staff actively encourage pupils to become confident and mature;
- Pupils are rarely absent or late so they are able to learn progressively;
- The few pupils who find it harder to behave acceptably on occasions, are managed well by the staff.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.2	School data	0.2
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

## Commentary

7. Pupils' attitudes and personal qualities have strengthened since the last inspection as a result of the commitment that staff put into creating the school's very strong culture for learning. This ethos enables pupils to achieve high academic standards and develop into well adjusted individuals.
8. Parents strongly believe that their children like school. Their views are endorsed by the well above average attendance and very little lateness. Pupils say that their teachers are kind and fair to them and provide lots of enjoyable activities. They value the many extra-curricular clubs, lunchtime pastimes, educational visits and school productions that help them to socialise and form firm friendships.
9. Pupils work hard and want to please the staff. 'It's cool to learn and achieve in this school', said one of the parents. They enjoy gaining recognition for doing well and love being rewarded with weekly 'privilege time' spent on pleasurable, free choice activities. Deduction of precious minutes of this time for breaking the class-negotiated 'golden rules' works as an effective deterrent for almost all pupils. Parents rightly perceive, however, that a few sometimes exhibit more challenging behaviour, despite all of the school's considerable efforts to nurture them towards compliance. When necessary, staff deal firmly with these pupils using a range of strategies that include time spent out of lessons or the playground so that the learning or play of others is not marred. One pupil was excluded from school for a fixed period last year.
10. The pupils are delightfully friendly and affable. Mutual respect is key to their very positive relationships with all of the staff. Well trained and highly valued midday supervisors put their all into making the lunch period enjoyable for everyone. They are mindful to ring the changes by providing different challenges and experiences and actively involve pupils in the organisation. Pupils willingly take responsibility for getting out and clearing away the equipment that successfully promotes co-

operative, constructive play. Great excitement was generated when the whole school hunted for their names around the playground to win an Easter egg. Older pupils look after younger ones well and play with them sensibly. Year 6 ably set the example by mentoring reception children, particularly reassuring for the newcomers when they first start school. Bullying or any other form of oppressive behaviour is rare and dealt with swiftly and effectively. The school's policy for promoting racial harmony works effectively.

11. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their important role in influencing improvements through the well established school council. Extra-curricular activities are now much wider ranging than at the time of the last inspection. These clubs, along with musical instrument tuition and choir, successfully enable pupils to broaden their interests and develop talents that are often very special and a source of much pride. Music contributes greatly to the good provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Singing in assembly, led by the large choir, is wonderfully uplifting. Parents and governors are thrilled with the quality of school productions and performances, that very successfully boost pupils' confidence and self-esteem.

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	157	1	0

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching and learning are very good, overall. The curriculum is also very good, with a very rich range of exciting enrichment activities provided. Staff know pupils very well and take very good care of them. Links with parents, other schools and the community are very strong and have a very significant impact on learning. Accommodation and resources are also very good.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is very good overall and some excellent teaching was seen. A higher percentage of very good teaching was seen at Key Stages 1 and 2 than in the Foundation Stage. However, teaching staff in the nursery and reception are new to their roles, having taken over in September. They have made significant strides forward to achieve a consistently good teaching picture, with examples of very good teaching, particularly in personal, social and emotional development. Assessment procedures are also very good. This is an improved picture since the time of the last inspection.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between staff and pupils are very strong and underpin learning very effectively;
- English, mathematics, physical education and music are taught very well;
- Teaching is thoughtful, exciting and stimulating and, as a result, children enjoy learning;
- Very good quality support is provided for pupils who have special educational needs;

- Assessment is used very well across the school to ensure that pupils are clear about how they can improve.

## Commentary

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 34 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (6)	17 (50)	14 (41)	1(3)	0 (0)	0 (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.*

12. Children in the Foundation Stage get off to a strong start because of consistently good teaching. They do particularly well in their personal, social and emotional development because staff place a high emphasis on this. For example, reception children are able to organise themselves to undertake group tasks and work together with minimal adult direction. Staff use assessment very well to check what children know, understand and can do and set clear targets for their future learning. They achieve a good balance between supporting the children in independent activities and directing their learning.
13. In Key Stages 1 and 2, a high percentage of good and very good teaching was seen, which is accelerating learning very well. The school has had a strong focus on improving teaching and learning in recent years and the impact of this can be seen in the thoughtful way staff plan activities to challenge, interest and involve children of all abilities. For example, Year 5 is a particularly lively and active class and the teacher carefully breaks lessons into smaller chunks, which really involve pupils in challenging activities throughout. This was seen in a religious education lesson, in which children discussed in groups, acted out scenarios and used ICT to make presentations. Good use is made of drama and role play throughout the school, not only to engage and interest pupils, but also to develop their thinking skills. A particularly good example was seen in a Year 2 history lesson, where some children and the teacher took on the role of William the Conqueror after the Battle of Hastings and others questioned him. They had to think really hard to pose questions which elicited the best information and to develop empathy with 'King William'. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards in many lessons, for example to demonstrate in lively and imaginative ways and to involve the children practically. There were examples of excellent teaching. In a Year 2 music lesson taught by a music specialist who teaches all classes weekly, the highest of expectations, excellent teacher expertise and a very strong focus on technique ensured that pupils made excellent progress. In an excellent topic lesson in Year 3, the teacher combined elements of science, music, design and technology and ICT to stunning effect, as the children made their own paper from recycled paper and composed their own 'rubbish raps'. The children themselves say that lessons are fun because teachers make them exciting and practical. They feel that this helps them to learn well. Throughout the school, English and mathematics are taught with high levels of expertise and flair, which enables pupils to make very good progress and reach high standards.
14. In all classes there are very good relationships between teachers and pupils, which create a very positive climate for learning. Teachers have high expectations of work and behaviour. As a result, most pupils try very hard to please their teachers and produce much well presented work. Pupils are well managed in all classes. The small numbers of pupils who find it more difficult to comply with the teachers' expectations are handled skilfully by all the adults who work with them, to minimise disruptions to their own learning or to that of others. In response to teachers' expectations, pupils work together very well and are able, for example, to undertake joint projects, such as group presentations in religious education and group demonstrations in physical education. This has a strong impact on their personal development and their ability to take responsibility for their own learning, as they progress through the school. The very best lessons are carried out at a cracking pace that leaves children almost breathless and stretches them as far as they can go. In these lessons, teachers use questioning with high levels of precision to draw



out previous learning, to probe pupils' understanding and to extend learning further. This benefits the more able pupils in particular.

15. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the high quality support they receive, within classes in individual and small group sessions. This support helps speed progress. Precise targets are set for them and are well matched to their needs. The team of classroom assistants are knowledgeable, experienced and make a significant contribution to the learning of these pupils and of others within the school. Pupils with particular gifts or talents are also taught very well. For example, in mathematics gifted pupils are taught with children of the same ability in older age groups. Consequently, they move forward quickly and learning does not stagnate.
16. Assessment procedures are very good, overall and have strongly improved since the last inspection. Test results are carefully analysed to highlight areas of strength and weakness, so that teaching and the curriculum can be adjusted accordingly to bring about improvement. There are very good procedures in English, mathematics, science and ICT, where progress is carefully tracked and the information used to provide the appropriate levels of challenge and support for pupils. In the majority of other subjects, pupils' knowledge and skills are assessed in relation to the topics they cover, following national guidelines. The procedures for assessing the requirements and progress of pupils' with special educational needs are very thorough and effective. Pupils develop a very clear understanding of what they are aiming for and how they can improve because they are involved from the earliest stages in evaluating their own progress. This is done sometimes by check-up tests at the beginning and end of topics, so that children can check their learning. With pupils in Year 1, for example, a simple but really effective 'thumbs up, thumbs down, thumbs straight' strategy is used to encourage the children to evaluate their progress in subjects such as English and physical education. Marking is used well throughout the school. At its best, it is evaluative, positive and identifies clearly how pupils can improve.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is very good. It is rich and relevant to all of the pupils and provides an exciting and challenging range of experiences across all subjects and through all school activities.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The 'topic' approach gives rich opportunities for purposeful, in-depth learning in all subjects;
- Exciting opportunities are provided for the pupils, which meet their needs very well;
- Visits, visitors and activities outside lessons greatly enrich pupils' experiences;
- More opportunities could be provided for older pupils to work independently in science.

## **Commentary**

17. The school's vision is to create a strong climate for learning and how well it achieves this! All staff are dedicated to providing exciting learning opportunities in all areas of the curriculum. They are well equipped to challenge pupils and respond to their

needs because they are confident with the subjects they teach and use very effective teaching methods.

18. In the Foundation Stage, a very rich range of practical, 'hands on' experiences are provided in all areas of learning. There are particular strengths in the way role play is developed and utilised both inside and outdoors, to develop language and imagination. The wide range of activities provided outside, which are just as extensive and well planned as those inside the classroom, are also a strength. The curriculum is very well planned to encourage children to explore and investigate for themselves.
19. The school has many strengths within its curriculum. Although the school improvement plan has focused on key areas, such as literacy and numeracy, it has left 'no stone unturned' in terms of maintaining up-to-date provision in other areas. As a result, staff strive to ensure that innovative and exciting learning experiences are provided in all subjects. The 'topic' approach and 'focus weeks' (where one subject or topic is studied in depth) give pupils very good opportunities to delve deeply into their work and to extend their learning beyond subject boundaries. The school is rightly proud of the impact of this approach.

20. This exciting and stimulating climate for learning is accessible to all, because the teachers know the needs of the pupils well. For example, additional tuition groups are available for pupils with extra literacy and numeracy needs. A good example of this is the 'letter detectives' group in reception, who have great fun going on 'letter hunts' in the school grounds. This is accelerating their progress and others in the class are clamouring to join in! Those with special educational needs are well provided for by individual and group support of a very high order. Gifted or talented children are recognised and encouraged to extend their skills and abilities as far as they can, both in school and beyond. Out of school activities enrich the timetable very well, providing opportunities for the pupils to participate extensively in the arts and in a very wide range of sports and sporting events.
21. Provision in all subjects is kept closely under review in order to identify and plug any gaps or omissions in the curriculum. Consequently, the school is already aware of the need to see that, in science, for example, provision is strengthened through pupils having greater opportunities to become more enterprising by carrying out their own research and seeking to find solutions to questions of their own devising.
22. The quality of the accommodation is very good and adds much to pupils' learning. It is maintained to a high level and is kept clean and bright by the site maintenance staff. Learning is greatly stimulated and enriched by very well presented displays, which challenge and support pupils in every area. The outdoor areas are very well designed and used extensively to support work, for example in environmental studies. The children themselves take good care of the outdoor environment through being involved in a gardening club led by a keen band of parent helpers.

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

Staff take very good care of the pupils, and support and guide their academic and personal development very effectively. Involvement of pupils in the life and work of the school is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very strong pastoral care helps pupils to feel happy, safe and secure;
- Support for pupils who find learning or behaving difficult is very good;
- Trusting relationships are established throughout the school;
- Staff make very good arrangements to help newcomers settle in;
- Pupils' views really matter to the staff and are taken into account.

### **Commentary**

23. The quality of care, support and guidance for pupils has strengthened over the past six years. Improvements have largely resulted from meeting the exacting requirements of 'Leeds Healthy Schools' standard at its highest level, and 'Investors in Pupils' through the hard work of the staff. Parents, not surprisingly, are delighted with this provision and feel that their children are happy in school. They are particularly pleased with the measures that staff and pupils take to help their children feel at ease when they first start school. Home visits and pre-visits to school help the Foundation Stage staff get to know the children and their families. Older pupils maturely take responsibility for helping the newcomers to become well versed

with routines and expectations. The 'buddy bench' provides additional reassurance for those who need befriending. Parents of newcomers who start at other times say that staff are good at encouraging children to mix socially and make friends.

24. Weaknesses reported at the time of the last inspection have been tackled. Health and safety procedures have been tightened and staff are more aware of matters relating to child protection. Governors play a larger role now in assuring pupils' well being.
25. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported. They are identified quickly and receive the help which makes them successful learners. Meticulous records are kept and parents are fully involved. Close links have been established with agencies that support special educational needs. Sometimes targets on individual learning plans would benefit from shorter review times to ensure pupils move on at the fastest possible rate. Good provision is made for children who are gifted and talented. They also are identified early and programs are provided to ensure they are stretched. They also achieve well.
26. Parents, justifiably, are pleased with the very good behaviour of almost all pupils. Some feel, however, that staff do not deal firmly enough with the few pupils whose behaviour is sometimes challenging. This is not the case. The school's behaviour policy is excellent and staff implement it consistently and fairly. Deterrents have been strengthened in response to need, detention is has now been added to the range of strategies that are working well. Staff do all they can to get the message across that certain behaviour is unacceptable. Well briefed, skilful support assistants are strategically deployed to ensure that the low level disruption sometimes caused by these pupils is minimised. The same ethos and expectations of conduct are maintained very successfully at lunchtime, when the same personnel assume midday supervisory roles.
27. The few pupils who find it hardest to conform are very well supported. Specially designed individual behaviour plans and contracts are used effectively to reinforce negotiated expectations. Staff calmly and sensitively explain why their negative actions must have consequences. Parents are suitably involved and are generally supportive of the school's measures. The learning mentor and outside agencies, such as educational psychologists and the Pupil Development Centre, play an important part in supporting and guiding these pupils.
28. Very good relationships between staff and pupils enable them to discuss any anxieties or concerns. Staff, for example, offer 'bubble time' to those who want a private chat, and they plan special lessons for open discussion of issues that arise, such as bullying. Opinions are also canvassed through the school council that often influences decision making and school improvement. Pupils are very actively involved in assessing how well they are getting on and what they need to do to improve.

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

The school enjoys very good partnerships with parents, other schools and the community that contribute very effectively to pupils' learning and personal development.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Communication with parents has vastly improved over the last few years;

- Parents are very actively encouraged to be involved in their children's learning and school life;
- Local schools share resources and expertise very effectively;
- Mutually beneficial community links bring learning alive for the pupils.

## Commentary

29. The school's links with parents and the wider community are much stronger now than at the time of the last inspection, when several aspects were reported as minor key issues. These weaknesses have all been rectified. Parents are now very well informed about the curriculum and school life. They are fully consulted about its provision and developments, and encouraged to join its forums for gaining awards such as 'Healthy Schools' and 'Charter Mark'. Much information is placed in the public domain through the school's website which is exceptionally good. For example, online parents have access to a wealth of comprehensive policies, brochures, detailed survey outcomes and well indexed back copies of newsletters.
30. More conventional modes of communication also very effectively keep parents in touch with what goes on in school. The headteacher holds several curriculum briefings each year, parents particularly appreciating being shown how mathematics is taught nowadays. Teachers provide useful outlines of what the children are being taught and ways to help at home. This information helps parents to get very involved in their children's learning, as when fifty families responded to the challenge to create sculptures. Parents are welcomed into school for class assemblies, open afternoons, performances and productions that very successfully demonstrate what is being achieved. Parents and governors are well represented in school as teaching assistants, midday supervisory assistants, and extra-curricular providers because of the encouragement that they receive.
31. Many parents volunteer their highly valued assistance in class, on educational visits, with the reception to Year 3 reading initiative and the extremely successful parent and teacher association. The school keeps a high profile in the community through the Parent Teacher Association, which organises well supported, enjoyable social events that generate substantial funds for the school. Its popular annual bonfire, for example, has brought the community together for over thirty years and attracts huge crowds. The Parent Teacher Association is particularly proud of enabling the purchase of interactive whiteboards and the kiln that are so much enjoyed by the pupils.
32. Parents appreciate the ease with which they can contact the staff if they have any concerns, either in person or through home school diaries. Annual written reports on children's progress explain attainment well in terms of national expectations in the core subjects. Parents of children with special educational needs are better involved in reviews of their progress than at the time of the last inspection.
33. The school taps into the local community very effectively for visits and visitors that provide enriching first-hand experiences for the pupils. Valuable links with local institutions, such as a special school, a residential home for the elderly, a school for the hearing impaired and a children's hospice, contribute greatly to pupils' personal development. Standards, particularly in ICT and physical education, are raised through very strong links with local schools. The Elmete Partnership brings many cost effective training and other benefits for the staff. Very close relationships with a teacher training college enable students to bring fresh approaches into school.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The school is led and managed very well at all levels. The leadership of the headteacher is very strong and effective. Governance is very good and other key staff undertake their leadership and management roles very well. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The vision and commitment of the headteacher in providing the best for the pupils is outstanding;
- The deputy headteacher, members of the senior management team and other key staff do a very good job in moving the school forward;
- The governors play a key part in the strategic development of the school;
- There are very effective procedures in place for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and developing the skills of all staff.

### **Commentary**

34. The headteacher has an exceptionally clear vision of how he wants the school to be and is highly committed to doing the very best for the pupils. He achieves this not only through his own skilful leadership and high quality management, but also through utilising the skills and talents of others to very good effect. He is adept at supporting staff in achieving the high standards he demands of them and working through them to achieve the school's goals. He has created a strong climate in which all staff, whatever their role, are able to learn and develop and take responsibility for key aspects of the school's work. This is exemplified by the encouragement and support he has given to staff to further their expertise through training and to lead the school, for example, in gaining local and national awards and 'Charter Marks'. As a result, all staff are highly skilled in the work that they do and have a strong and significant impact on pupils' learning. For example, the physical education and personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) co-ordinator has led the school very effectively in working to achieve the 'Active Mark' and 'Healthy Schools' awards. The art co-ordinator has recently led staff and pupils in achieving the 'Arts Mark Silver' award. The senior management team, which includes the deputy headteacher, have implemented significant improvements in areas such as assessment, which are proving instrumental in raising standards.
35. Very effective systems have been devised by the school for checking on all aspects of its work. For example, pupils' performance is carefully analysed and challenging targets are set, as a result. The accuracy of these systems is one reason for the improvement in standards since the last inspection and the good performance of pupils, not just in the national tests, but in other subjects, such as ICT, art, physical education and music which are not tested. The high quality information gathered on pupils' progress enables teachers to set work at the right level of challenge and consequently, they achieve well and often very well. Teaching and learning are checked on systematically and the curriculum is constantly under review. The school is able to maintain a good level of consistency in all areas of its work because standards are not allowed to slip.
36. The special educational needs co-ordinator's leadership and management are very good. Although having only recently taken over the role, she has quickly established

systems and procedures to ensure that the children are very effectively supported. Similarly, the very good leadership and management of the Foundation Stage is ensuring that pupils get off to a good start because they are well provided for. Since September, the co-ordinator has forged strong links between the nursery and reception classes and they are now operating as an effective team. She has led the development of assessment and the outdoor area very well. The leadership and management of ICT is outstanding because of the joint commitment and hard work of the co-ordinator and headteacher to developing this area, which was judged to be unsatisfactory at the last inspection and has been completely transformed.

37. The impact of the governing body on the life and work of the school is very good and they play a key part in setting the strategic direction for the work of the school. Through their own monitoring of the school's work and the very good quality information they receive from the headteacher, they have a very comprehensive understanding of its strengths and its priorities for development. Governors play a key role, for example, in managing the school's finances, ensuring the health and safety of the pupils and making key staffing appointments. They bring a wealth of expertise, for example, in management, finance, personnel and building, which they use very effectively to support the work of the school. School finances are managed very effectively and efficiently. The governors have very clear strategic plans for dealing with a tight budget in a time of falling rolls locally and have costed and debated a range of possible scenarios for the future. However, whilst being mindful of the need to plan for future stability, governors also have a very clear understanding of the need to provide as effectively as possible for the needs of the current pupils. They have been instrumental in funding an increase in the support provided for classes and for individual pupils. This is supporting pupils' learning very effectively and helping to maintain and improve standards. Administrative staff carry out their duties very well and this enables the school to run smoothly and efficiently on a day to day basis. This enables teaching staff to get on with their work without interruption.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004*

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	626,550
Total expenditure	636,868
Expenditure per pupil	3,047

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	11,310
Balance carried forward to the next	990



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

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

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Teaching is good overall and is sometimes very good. There are currently 58 children in the Foundation Stage, 34 in the nursery on a part-time basis and 24 in the reception class. When they enter school, children's skills are wide ranging but with the majority being in advance of children of a similar age in many areas. However, there is a small but significant group in each cohort who have skills that are below those expected. Children achieve well in all areas of learning and they do very well in their personal, social and emotional development, because of the very strong emphasis staff place on this area. A very rich range of practical, 'hands on' experiences is provided in each area of learning and the outdoor area is particularly lively and exciting. Activities are well planned to ensure a good balance between those that children choose and explore for themselves and those that are directed by adults. Children's progress is monitored very well to ensure that the next learning steps for each individual are carefully matched to their needs. Very good leadership and management have resulted in strong teamwork between all staff and the rapid development of key areas, such as assessment and outdoor learning.

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

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

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

- Staff place a high priority on this area;
- All adults provide excellent role models for the pupils and have high expectations of them.

#### **Commentary**

38. A high priority is given to children's personal and social development and as a result of very good teaching, they achieve really well. Staff provide excellent role models and have high expectations of them and the children rise to this by behaving beautifully and showing a real keenness to learn. Staff ensure that opportunities for personal and social development are threaded through all areas of learning. The majority of the current reception pupils have already exceeded the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. Children are very happy and secure in the nursery and reception classes. In both classes, they demonstrate very good listening skills for their age. This has a significant impact on their learning in all other areas. Children in the nursery share equipment sensibly and concentrate on activities really well, both with and without direct supervision. In reception, children collaborate very well with each other, for example when working on a mathematical problem involving building a bed for a story character. Children also benefit considerably in this area from the very good examples set by the older children from Year 6 who help them each day.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Speaking and listening skills are very good;
- Good use is made of role play to develop communication skills.

## Commentary

39. Good teaching in communication, language and literacy ensures that pupils make good progress. The majority of pupils are likely to exceed the goals the children are expected to reach by the end of reception. In the nursery, both boys and girls actively choose the writing activities on offer for them. For example, two boys worked diligently in the writing area, to 'write' letters, addressing the envelopes carefully and sending them to their friends. They know that the 'words' they write carry meaning and will be 'read' by others. Already some of the nursery children are including recognisable letters in their writing, particularly those that are found in their own names or those of their friends. In reception, writing opportunities are provided in most areas of learning, both indoors and outside. For example, in role play they make lists in the 'garden centre' and take orders down in the 'café'. The more able are able to retell parts of familiar stories in writing, after the exciting opportunities they have had to retell the stories through drama and to sequence events using 'story trays'. All the adults who work with the children are skilled at encouraging talk in all activities. They use questions effectively to draw out what the children already know and develop this further. As a result, they use talk effectively to explain, describe, reason and negotiate. Early reading skills are also developed effectively and systematically. Reception children enjoy sharing books with others and can read their own simple reading books. They benefit here from regular opportunities to read, not only with the staff, but also with the older children and parent helpers. In both classes, the children hang on the teacher's every word when stories are being read. Staff provide good examples of how to read and this is ensuring that pupils use good expression when reading themselves.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

### Main strengths and weaknesses

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

- A rich range of learning experiences is provided both inside and outdoors;
- Good opportunities are provided for problem solving.

## Commentary

40. Children achieve well in response to good teaching and the majority are on course to exceed the goals the children are expected to reach by the end of reception. Children are provided with a very wide range of interesting, practical activities and are encouraged to find out for themselves. In the nursery, they sort objects for example, by colour and size. During the inspection, children were having great fun matching numbered 'eggs' to the right nests and sorting and adding up the yellow and orange ones. Good use is made of stories and rhymes to develop counting skills. In reception, staff also take every opportunity to involve children in practical mathematical activities. For example, they count the number of children present and absent each day and work out what date it is. The teacher carefully poses questions at just the right level of challenge for the reception pupils, so that they are stretched to the limit and have to think hard. For example, in one lesson, the teacher introduced a problem for them to solve, using a story as stimulus. She probed and challenged them to come up with ideas about how they might carry out the task before they did this practically. Very subtly, she set the task so that they would

discover the need for a standardised system of measuring for themselves. All staff are all skilled at teaching the correct mathematical vocabulary and encouraging children to explain their thinking. Very occasionally, however, staff miss the opportunity to encourage children to extend their explanations because they 'take over' from them. Good opportunities are provided for children to use computer programs to reinforce basic mathematics skills.

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

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

### **Main strengths and areas for development**

- A very rich range of 'hands on' activities is provided;
- A good balance is achieved between children exploring for themselves and being supported in finding out by adults.

### **Commentary**

41. A particularly rich and varied range of practical activities is provided in this area, which encourage and stimulate children to explore and investigate their surroundings. As a result, children achieve well and are on course to exceed the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. A particular strength is the way in which activities are set up outdoors, as well as inside the classroom to encourage the children to explore. For example, they plant seeds and check the conditions for growth. In reception, they chart their progress on a graph. They weed the garden and plant bulbs and seeds outside to watch them grow and make their area more attractive. Visits and visitors are used well to enrich pupils' experiences. For example, a visit from the new baby brother of a classmate led to much washing of the dolls in the nursery. Role play is also used effectively to provide experience of the world of work and children in both classes benefit from taking on roles in the 'vets' and the 'garden centre'. For example, a group of reception 'garden centre workers' in hard hats and fluorescent vests told the inspector they were on their tea break, as they tucked in to 'pizza'. When the inspector tried to join them, the waitress in the café was brushing up and said they were closed! There are many activities on offer for children to choose for themselves. For example, they build with construction toys, use 'small world' equipment, and 'mow' the grass. Good use is made of the computer. For example, nursery children have used an Internet program confidently to grow their own plant on screen. In reception, children learned to program a robotic toy decorated as a frog, to ensure it took just the right amount of steps to reach a numbered lily pad.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good use is made of the accommodation to ensure both nursery and reception children have good opportunities for active learning.

### **Commentary**

42. Children are on course to meet, and many to exceed, the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. A good range of activities is provided, both indoors and outside to enable them to develop both their large movements and their manipulative skills. Children in both classes have daily, well planned and organised opportunities to develop their large movement skills outdoors, using

wheeled toys, balls and climbing equipment. Regular games and gymnastics sessions are held in the hall for reception children to develop and refine their movements indoors. Pupils' manipulative skills are also developed well through good opportunities, for example, to write, paint, colour, thread beads and do jigsaws.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children work with a good range of materials and media;
- Visits are used well to enrich learning.

### **Commentary**

43. Children achieve well and are on course to reach or exceed the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. Teaching is good and plenty of good quality opportunities are provided for children to work with a range of tools, materials and media. For example, they build models using everyday materials and use knives, cutters and rollers as they work with clay. There are plenty of good examples on display of children's paintings, models and collages. Large projects are regularly undertaken and the huge Chinese dragon on display is a good example of this and of learning about creativity in other cultures. Photographs taken of sculptures made in response to a visit to a sculpture park show excellent examples of children's group 'works of art' made with natural materials. Role play is a key feature and children's imaginations are developed very well through the opportunities to take on many different roles and act out scenarios. Pupils have good opportunities to respond to music, to sing rhymes and songs and to play a variety of instruments.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision for English is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in all aspects of English throughout the school are high; they are very high by the time children are at the age of 11;
- The curriculum provided excites the pupils and they are very involved in their own learning;
- Very good teaching and learning ensures that all pupils make very good progress and learn well;
- Very good use is made of literacy skills across the curriculum;
- The subject is very well led and managed.

### **Commentary**

44. Standards are above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and well above average at Key Stage 2. They have risen significantly since the time of the last inspection. Pupils of all abilities achieve well from their starting points. In the 2004 national tests for 7-year-olds, pupils reached well above average standards in both reading and writing in relation to all schools and in relation to those in similar contexts. Results have improved since the time of the last inspection and the trend has been above that nationally. The current Year 2 pupils are on course to reach standards that are at least above average. In the 2004 tests for 11-year-olds, results were above

average in relation to all schools and also in relation to those who had similar results at the end of Key Stage 1. This represented a dip on the previous year, when results had been in the top 5 per cent in the country. This was largely due to the profile of the class, which had a higher percentage of children with special educational needs than the previous year. In addition, 41 per cent of the pupils had joined the school at other than the usual starting time, which also had an impact. The current Year 6 pupils are on course to reach well above average standards.

45. Standards have risen because of improvements in the quality of teaching, which is very good. Work is planned carefully; tasks are interesting and make connections between English and other subjects. This allows children to see real purposes for their work and speeds progress. For example, in Year 6 the children write letters to famous people asking them about their favourite recipes. This is part of a fund raising project led by the Parent Teacher Association. Even learning of a more routine nature, such as spelling strategies and language features, are taught in interesting ways. For example in a Year 4 lesson, pupils made great strides forward because the teacher introduced work on masculine and feminine forms of words in an innovative way. Throughout the school the children are encouraged to become very good listeners and confident speakers. In pairs, and small and large groups, their opinions are sought and given on a wide range of issues. For example, in Year 3 during their gymnastics lesson children gave their opinions about individual performance. All the responses showed maturity and sensitivity; opinions were often acted upon. The school places great emphasis on improving all aspects of English. Recently, a new system has been introduced in the teaching of writing. Early evaluations show that standards are rising as a result. Children eagerly await the weekly 'big write'. Classroom environments are changed; for example, music is played, lighting is altered and different papers and writing utensils are used. All the staff give a lot of thought to their lessons and, as a result, children are highly motivated, attentive and confident. In addition, very good systems are in place to assess pupils' progress and set finely tuned targets for their future learning. Marking is used very well, not only to motivate and encourage, but also to point the way towards improvement. Pupils are also regularly involved in evaluating their own progress and, consequently, they have a clear understanding of their own learning. This particularly benefits the more able pupils, who are stretched and challenged effectively as a result.
46. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support from classroom assistants. Consequently, good progress is made against the targets in their individual learning plans. There is also very good support through a wide range of initiatives, which are skilfully planned and delivered. For example, the school recently introduced 'brain gym' to their work. This programme is designed to improve concentration skills. Two older children described in detail the beneficial effect this was having on their concentration levels in English lessons. The success of such programmes and interventions has resulted in these children becoming more confident learners. Pupils with behavioural difficulties concentrate appropriately because of the intervention and support programme in place.
47. The subject is very well managed by an enthusiastic and experienced co-ordinator. She monitors standards, planning, work and lessons to ensure consistently high standards. She has developed a successful innovative curriculum and supports her colleagues very effectively in their delivery of it.

## **Literacy across the curriculum**



48. The school provides very good opportunities for children to further develop and apply their skills in literacy across the curriculum. Opportunities to develop speaking, listening and reading skills are evident in all subjects. For example, when reading aloud to the class in Year 6 the children were very expressive. They varied their intonation and responded to punctuation well. They changed their voices when different speakers were introduced in the text. Writing in subjects such as history, geography and religious education is interesting and purposeful. For example, in geography the children are able to describe family life in Africa. Information was extracted from a photograph of an African family. The writing showed children's ability to compare and contrast their own lives to that of the African children. Their writing was very detailed and persuasive. However, more opportunities could be given for the children to develop extended writing skills in science.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average at Key Stage 1 and well above average at Key Stage 2;
- Pupils achieve very well throughout the school because of very good teaching;
- The school provides very well for those pupils with special educational needs;
- Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together;
- The subject is well led and managed;
- Mathematics is used widely in many other areas of the curriculum and ICT is used very well to support teaching and learning.

### **Commentary**

49. At the time of the last inspection, standards were above average throughout the school. Standards are now above average in Key Stage 1 and well above average in Key Stage 2. Pupils throughout the school are achieving very well in mathematics. The very effective teaching is ensuring that pupils are appropriately challenged in all the lessons and very good quality support is provided for those pupils who need it.
50. In the tests taken in 2004, Key Stage 1 results were well above the national average and above average when compared to similar schools. Over half of the pupils reached the higher level (Level 3). Key Stage 2 results were above the national average, but average when compared to those schools with a similar background. Inspection evidence indicates that results in Key Stage 2 are likely to improve this year and the pupils should reach the high targets that have been set for them.
51. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well. This is because appropriate work is planned for them and they receive very good support from the classroom assistants. They ensure that the main teaching points are reinforced and that pupils carry out tasks practically, whenever possible. This develops their confidence and raises their self-esteem. This was seen in Year 2 when a child was walking around a large number square. Careful questioning and guidance ensured that the child was able to use correct mathematical vocabulary as he moved and could recognise whole, half and quarter turns.
52. Teachers know the pupils very well. Detailed and accurate assessments are kept so that they have very good knowledge and understanding of how well the pupils are doing. These assessments are used to plan the next stage of learning. Pupils enjoy mathematics and participate in the lessons with enthusiasm. They take pleasure in explaining to the rest of the class how they calculate their answers. A very good example was seen in a lesson in Year 3, when a child said 'I know an easy way to answer that problem; you multiply the three fifty pences to get £1.50, then add three pounds to get £4.50, then you take off one penny to get an answer of £4.49!' (He was adding £2.99).

53. A strength of teaching in mathematics is the way in which ICT is used to support the learning. Pupils confidently use mathematical programs that help to reinforce the learning in the lessons. Teachers use the interactive whiteboards imaginatively to bring the learning to life for the pupils. This was seen nowhere better than in Year 6 when the teacher was showing the pupils how to measure angles accurately using a protractor. The very good direct teaching ensured that all the pupils achieved very well in the lesson and were able to recognise, measure and name all the angles on their worksheets.
54. The teaching of mathematics is very good and pupils achieve very well throughout the school. Features of this very good teaching include teachers' very good subject knowledge and understanding of the lesson content and very effective questioning, which is used to check the pupils' understanding and then to develop their learning further. Teachers share clear learning objectives with the pupils and then refer back to them at the end of the lesson, to make sure that the pupils have learned effectively. They set challenging activities that spark the pupils' interest.
55. The subject is well led and managed. Very effective systems are in place for assessing, analysing and tracking pupils' progress. Pupils' work, test results and teaching are carefully monitored to see where improvements can be made. As a result, progression in calculation is being developed throughout the school. Plans are in hand to repeat the highly successful 'Maths Week' that will again enrich the learning.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

56. This is very good. Pupils are given many opportunities to use their knowledge and skills in other subjects. In science, pupils collect data and produce graphs and charts. In design and technology, they use their measuring skills and construct three-dimensional shapes. In geography, they use co-ordinates and directions to support their map reading skills and in history, they use time lines to help them understand the chronology of events. ICT is used very well as pupils work on selected programs to help their work in almost every lesson.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**, and in environmental science is very good. The pupils achieve well in both key stages, and standards are above average.

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

- The subject is very well led; self-evaluation is used very successfully to identify and improve areas for development;
- Environmental science is promoted very successfully and is used effectively to develop practical scientific experiences;
- The school's approach to teaching and learning by using 'topic work' enriches the subject greatly and provides powerful contexts for learning;
- The school uses ICT very well to promote learning in science;
- Insufficient opportunities are provided for the pupils to develop independence in their research and investigations.

#### **Commentary**

57. Standards in science are above average overall at both key stages. Pupils have done particularly well in the national tests for 11-year-olds, where results have been above and well above average for at least the past five years; on occasions, they have been in the top 5 per cent in the country. However, in aspects of science that are not formally tested, Year 6 pupils do not achieve as highly.
58. At the time of the previous inspection the teaching of science was reported as 'good' and this standard had been maintained and in some aspects, improved since then. This is because the school is not 'resting on its laurels'. The subject is very well led and managed. The new subject co-ordinator has clearly identified areas for growth and has energised the subject still further through innovation and enrichment. For example, the school has created wonderful environments for learning through the development of areas of the school grounds into a range of wild and cultivated habitats. These are used very effectively throughout the year by all classes, through a planned programme for environmental science. This is being used as a vehicle to provide opportunities for practical observation and investigation and to provide links with other subjects, such as art. This approach is proving very effective.
59. Currently, Year 6 pupils are studying plants. Having selected spring flowers from the grounds, the pupils have been identifying their parts and annotating their very well drawn diagrams. This work has been supported effectively by the use of an interactive whiteboard where the scientific terms for parts of plants can be 'dragged' to that part. Work has been further enhanced by the use of a digital microscope to magnify dissected parts. During part of this lesson there was a 'jaw-dropping' moment when the class were shown the large number of miniscule seeds within the ovary that were almost invisible to the naked eye. 'Those are the eggs', a girl told the inspector, 'When they are fertilised they become seeds.'
60. Much of the school's approach to teaching and learning is based upon a 'topic' system. This enables very good links to be made between science and other subjects and provides time for depth of study which the pupils relish. A good illustration of this comes from a page from a Year 2 child's topic on living things, which brings together a digital photograph of the child performing a curved shape in physical education, a skeletal model constructed from straws in the same pose and her labelled diagrams of the main bones of the skeleton. This work links science, physical education, art and ICT to the benefit of pupils' learning.
61. Lessons are usually very productive because pupils like science and are very interested. They concentrate very well; they work well individually and in groups; the teachers use discussion very well within pairs or groups to promote learning and understanding. Through discussion and practical activities, effective use of visits and visitors, good subject knowledge and good teaching strategies by the teachers, the pupils in both key stages have a very good grasp and understanding of living things, materials and their properties and physical science.
62. The pupils are taught how to investigate well and they understand the importance of a fair test. However, junior pupils are given too few opportunities to use this knowledge for themselves. They do not pose questions for their own investigations, or independently find out information from a variety of sources as often as they could. This over direction by teachers means that the more able pupils are not reaching standards that they could achieve in investigative science. They are not always being given their head to take on the optimum level of challenge.

Opportunities are missed to encourage children to choose the methods by which they record their work and there is an overuse of worksheets, which sometimes limits the quality of pupils' responses. The subject leader knows this and is already taking steps to improve the situation.

63. Assessment is used very effectively. The pupils are developing a good understanding of their own learning through a self-review of each topic. The teachers have a clear view of the progress that individuals and groups of pupils are making and plan their work accordingly.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The leadership of the subject is inspirational and management very good;
- The teachers have very good subject knowledge and expertise and teach with a spirit of adventure;
- Exciting and stimulating opportunities are provided for ICT in all subjects;
- Most pupils are very self-confident and use ICT with flair.

## Commentary

64. Pupils achieve well overall. Standards are above average throughout the school and, on occasions, well above. In the period between the previous inspection and the present one the school has moved from having standards below those expected to being above average in both key stages. Pupils now make very good progress and ICT is used imaginatively in all areas of the curriculum. This has happened because of the inspirational leadership of the subject leader, with the full backing of the headteacher. This has ensured very good curriculum and staff development and also the very good levels of expertise demonstrated by staff and pupils in the innovative uses of ICT. All staff are well trained and enthusiastic, and constantly seek opportunities to provide exciting ICT experiences in all curriculum areas. The school has a rich range of equipment and resources, which the staff are very confident to use. Pupils demonstrate great self-confidence and independence in using the resources. In many of those areas where development has been particularly focused, standards are well above those expected. Provision and standards are only limited by those very few areas that have not yet been as fully developed, such as controlling events and capturing data in Key Stage 2.

In a shared area outside the classroom, four Year 3 pupils work totally independently with a digital video camera to prepare a sequence about throwing away a piece of paper in a rubbish bin and then recycling it. They design the sequence, script the voice-over, practise it, record it, play it back and evaluate the outcome. They are not happy with the voice-over. They are comfortable to delete their effort and start again. In the re-shoot they move closer to the speaker. Upon reviewing their work they decide it would be more effective if they included a close-up of the paper being thrown into the bin. They record this separately and then use the editing facilities to re-sequence their work. At this point they call in their teacher for her opinion.

65. The school uses the computer suite of a neighbouring school to teach the skills and applications of ICT to very good effect. Pupils are very highly motivated and captivated by the work. Lessons have a good pace and all pupils make rapid progress in every session as a result, including those with special education needs.

## ICT across the curriculum

66. The school's approach to teaching and learning, and its organisation of subjects through the use of topics and 'focus weeks', is another reason why ICT flourishes so well. For example, the pupils in Year 3 are undertaking a topic on recycling and the environment. This involves listening to a recycling rap downloaded from the Internet and shown on an interactive whiteboard. Groups of pupils then compose their own rap. Another group is creating 'recycled' paper to make Easter cards. A third group is making their part of a documentary. This topic has embraced science, art, design and technology, literacy and ICT to very good effect. Other examples are legion, for instance a Year 2 boy made a very good model of a tank in design and technology, used his knowledge of circuits in science to give it a light and then used control technology to cause the light to flash. In Year 3, pupils retold the story of the Good Samaritan by using cutout digital photographs of themselves against hand drawn scenes from the Bible story. Digital video is used by several classes to record and evaluate performance in dance and gymnastics. The Year 6 class is using spreadsheets to work out the costs of this year's residential visit.

## HUMANITIES

67. During the inspection **geography** and **history** were sampled but not examined in detail. Pupils' work was analysed and discussions took place with staff and pupils. No lessons were seen in geography and only one lesson was observed in history. It is, therefore, not possible to make an overall judgement about the provision or judge overall standards. However, the curriculum is good and pupils achieve well.

68. In geography, pupils have covered a wide range of topics, often in practical and exciting ways. In Key Stage 1, for example, pupils have constructed sketch maps showing their journeys to school. They extend their knowledge of Boston Spa when they are involved with fieldwork activities, such as traffic surveys. In Key Stage 2, pupils learn about the British Isles and develop their mapping skills particularly well. For example, older pupils work with six figure grid references. Year 6 pupils have compared their own country to Kenya, producing a very good selection of written work as they compared their own lives and homes to those of children in Kenya. A strength of the curriculum is the use of visits, such as to the factory where the school uniform is made or to the archaeological dig. The residential trip to Alnmouth gives Key Stage 2 pupils a very good, first-hand opportunity to conduct a coastal study.
69. In history, the pupils develop a good knowledge of the topics covered. They understand chronology and can explain how things have changed over time. Good use is made of visits and visitors to support learning; for example, Year 5 pupils visited Eden Camp as part of their topic on World War II, whilst Year 3 have had a Viking Day in school as part of their topic on Invaders and Settlers. These experiences really fire their imaginations and they can describe them in great detail. In the lesson seen in Year 2, teaching was very good and pupils made very good progress. The pupils were learning about William the Conqueror and the Bayeux Tapestry. Excellent use was made of role play techniques such as 'hot seating', where children took on the roles of the main characters and others questioned them. 'Freeze framing' was also used, which required groups to act out a scene from the tapestry and hold their positions. They had a wonderful time trying to get this exactly right and working out what the characters would be feeling and saying. Pupils gave thoughtful answers to the teacher's questions; for example, when the teacher asked if they thought the story was true, a child replied 'If it wasn't true they wouldn't have sewed the Tapestry!' The quality of work in the children's books is of a much higher standard than usually seen for children of this age.

## **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good use is made of role play to deepen pupils' understanding;
- Good links are made between religious education and other subjects.

## **Commentary**

70. Standards are well above those seen in most schools at Key Stage 1 and better than usually seen at Key Stage 2. They exceed the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. At both key stages, good teaching, with exciting use of role play, ICT and collaborative work enables pupils to learn effectively. Pupils cover a good range of topics related to both Christianity and other religions, including Islam and Judaism. The current Year 6 pupils report that they enjoy religious education because it is very often practically based and enables them to discuss important topics. They are currently working on group presentations about Easter. Pupils are busily engaged in research, using books and the Internet and are designing presentations, with some choosing to use ICT and some using other methods. One group brought in hot cross buns for the class to share to demonstrate a symbol of



Easter, which met with great approval. They were full of excitement as they described their work. However, the quality of the work in their religious education books is not of such a high standard, being quite limited in its expectation of children's responses. Work on display demonstrates that high standards are achieved in some classes; for example work in Year 3, showed innovative and imaginative links made with ICT and literacy in depicting the story of the 'Lost Sheep'. In a good lesson observed in Year 5, the teacher also used ICT well, which resulted in pupils learning about Easter symbols and customs very rapidly through using a very good interactive Internet site. By the end of the session, they could explain for example, the significance of Golgotha and why it was 'the place of the skull'.

71. At Key Stage 1, Year 2 pupils have produced copious amounts of high quality work. Teaching quality is very good in this class and tasks are set which really stretch and challenge all pupils to think hard. Their writing is very mature and thoughtful. In the lesson seen, pupils discussed the crucifixion in a sensitive manner, expressing thoughts and feelings about the event with great poignancy. One child wrote, in the role of Mary Magdalene, 'When I found out that Jesus died, I was heartbroken. I would miss him and he would miss me as well'.
72. The subject is currently without a co-ordinator and the headteacher has assumed a 'caretaking' role for this year. However, the staff have ensured that the subject receives appropriate attention, even though it is currently 'on the back burner'. Good use is made of visits, for example, to a synagogue and visitors to enhance learning.

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

73. No lessons were seen in **design and technology** and only one lesson was seen in **art and design**. It is, therefore, not possible to judge overall provision in these subjects. However, there is a wealth of evidence that the school has retained, including work in progress, very detailed and informative portfolios, photographic evidence, high quality displays of pupils' work around school, assessment data and teachers' planning. Through talking to pupils and teachers, it is clear that pupils achieve standards which are much better than usually seen in art and design at both key stages. In design and technology, pupils are above the level expected for them by the age of 7 and meet the standards expected by the age of 11. The majority of pupils make good progress, including those with special educational needs.
74. Standards of work in art and design are better than usually seen at both key stages. Children cover an appropriate range of work that takes full account of the art and design curriculum. Their skills in drawing and using paint have been developed well and teachers are introducing good opportunities for artwork designed on computers. In Year 1, children make paper collages to show the growth of a plant. The clay coat of arms designed by Year 2 children showed very detailed imprints and three-dimensional work. In Year 5, work on abstract art the children developed the sketches in their sketchbook and replicated them in paint. They then further developed these into paper collages with three-dimensional features. The oldest children's clay portraits were well proportioned and showed high level skills in the application of details such as eyes, nose, lips and skin tones. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator for art provides good support and has a clear understanding of the standards reached by the children. The curriculum is exciting and dynamic. Visits, for example, to a Sculpture Park and workshops with

visiting artists are used particularly well to develop high standards. The art club is well attended. Children produce pleasing pieces, often linked to other subjects. For example, they are currently making and decorating rain sticks to make sound effects in music.

75. Although design and technology has not been a priority for some time, standards have been improving since the previous inspection. This is because of the very positive impact of the subject leader's drive to raise standards and the school's approach to teaching and learning, through topic work that gives opportunities for extended work across many subjects in stimulating and challenging contexts.
76. The subject leader's influence has brought about a very effective whole school approach to investigating, designing, making and evaluating. Consequently, the pupils design well, especially in Key Stage 1, and their ability to evaluate their work is improving. Her current focus on developing skills through practical tasks is raising standards in the things that children make; for example, the pupils in Year 2 have made delightfully individualistic shields, incorporating an heraldic design based upon their own interests and family background. In the process they have learned a lot about clay, how to emboss, indent, join, paint, glaze, and fire in the school kiln. Because of the school's topic approach this work has been drawn from a visit to a nearby castle in history, art and design work and design and technology. They have had time to undertake research, hone their skills and to design and make to a high standard.
77. Pupils continue to develop their skills in designing and making through Key Stage 2, but the school is aware that there is a need to improve aspects of designing, such as scale drawing, and the quality of evaluating by Year 6. The school is already working on this.

## **Music**

Provision in music is **excellent**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' attain high standards throughout the school;
- Standards in performance are excellent;
- The school enriches the music curriculum very effectively;
- The subject is very well led and managed.

### **Commentary**

78. Pupils' standards of performance are at the highest level. The many instrumentalists are very skilful and attain very high levels. The woodwind band, recorders and drumming groups perform with vigour. They read their music accurately and watch and listen to each other attentively. They are trained, accompanied and conducted by two knowledgeable and dedicated teachers and this high quality teaching results in inspiring and enjoyable performances. When pupils sing and play, their audience is totally captivated. Throughout the school, children sing particularly well and the quality of sound created by the choir is very good indeed. Their diction and enunciation of words is almost faultless. Everyone enjoys their singing and the way

in which they add gestures and actions to their songs adds to their rousing performance.

79. Teaching is of a very high standard. The specialist teacher has great expertise and, consequently, the children themselves are very able musicians. In Year 1, the children sing confidently and tunefully on their own. All Year 2 children can play simple phrases and tunes on their recorders. Their level of commitment, concentration and enthusiasm is commendable. In Year 6, children compose and perform very effectively in small groups. They are able to recognise which is a major or minor chord. Wherever possible, music is linked with other subjects in a very meaningful way. For example, in Year 3 as part of their environmental work the children composed and sang 'Rubbish Raps'. These were of very good quality, with thoughtful lyrics, showing a really good understanding of both the nature of 'rap' and the topic they were studying. Such experiences contribute to the very good provision for music.
80. The subject is very well led and managed by the co-ordinator and the specialist teacher. Everything is thoroughly planned, with visits to theatres and opportunities to perform or listen to live professional musicians included.

## Physical Education

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

### MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Standards are much better than usually seen at both key stages;
  - Very good subject leadership and strong commitment from the headteacher ensure the subject goes from strength to strength;
  - Very good teaching leads to rapid learning;
  - Very good use is made of links with other schools and the local community to extend and enrich learning.
81. Pupils achieve very well in physical education and reach standards which are significantly higher than seen in most schools. Very good teaching throughout the school ensures that children learn at a rapid rate. Teachers are confident themselves and this rubs off onto the pupils, because skills are taught very well. Much is expected of the pupils in terms of both their attitudes and the quality of their work. The culmination of children's learning and development in gymnastics was seen in a very well taught gymnastics lesson, in which all pupils were stretched to the limit. They worked very hard in groups to put together three-part sequences to music, taking account of tempo, using appropriate joining movements to ensure flow and using a chosen range of movements, including balances, rolls and leaps. The quality of their work was very good, because the teacher was adept at knowing just the right point at which to intervene, to help them refine their movements further and to spur them on to more challenging efforts. In addition, the children themselves were thoroughly absorbed in the task, collaborated extremely well and gave and acted upon constructive criticism. Other lessons observed, for example in games in Year 1 and gymnastics in Year 3, showed similar features of very good teaching and high quality response from the pupils.
82. The high standards reached are also the result of very effective leadership and management and the commitment of the headteacher, staff and governors to developing the subject. The school gives a high profile to physical education and provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their skills. A key feature of this very good provision is the links the school has forged with its local sports college, in particular, and with other local schools. The co-ordinator ensures that best use is made of the links with the sports college in terms of sharing expertise and resources, and this has a very strong impact on learning. The involvement of experts, such as local coaches and sports people, both within the curriculum and in the many after school clubs on offer, gives pupils plenty of exciting and worthwhile sporting experiences. Pupils also have very good opportunities to take part in local team events and competitions within the 'family' of schools they belong to and further afield provides excellent social as well as physical opportunities. The school has had many successes at local and county level. Such events have a strong impact on pupils' social and moral development. The co-ordinator has very successfully steered the school through the process of achieving the 'Active Mark' award. He has been proactive in monitoring teaching and learning to ensure consistency of approach, and has given particularly good support this year to the two newly qualified teachers on the staff. He has very secure plans in place to keep the momentum of development going and to raise standards even further.

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

83. Since the last inspection, staff have wisely invested considerable time and energy into establishing PSHCE as a major part of the curriculum. Aspects that were reported then as minor key issues have been strengthened and PSHCE now successfully underpins all that happens in school.
84. Much has been achieved through gaining awards such as 'Leeds Healthy Schools Standard', 'Investors in Pupils' and 'Active Mark'. Pupils learn how to keep safe and well by choosing healthy lifestyles, seen as paramount to their emotional and physical well being. Sex and relationships education and drugs education have greater emphasis now. Year 2 pupils have talked maturely about strategies to use if someone tries to make them do something against their wishes. Pupils share ideas on moral and social issues, sometimes using stories to trigger the discussions that bring home important messages. Racial awareness is raised effectively. Visitors from different ethnic heritages talk to pupils about their personal experiences, and nursery and reception pupils have visited a Hindu temple in Bradford.
85. Pupils are actively encouraged to be good citizens by thinking about and responding to the needs of others. They distribute harvest produce to the elderly and have produced a colourful Easter frieze in their free time to brighten a local residential home. Year 6 take responsibility for sponsoring a child in Uganda and Year 3 for supporting LEPRRA through charitable fundraising. Year 3 were so moved by the Tsunami disaster that they made a CD recording of their singing to raise funds for the appeal.
86. The school council gives pupils in Years 2 to 6 a really good opportunity to influence school improvements. Chosen by panel or class vote according to age, they maturely represent the views of their classmates and elect officials to chair and take minutes of their meetings.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
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	2
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>2</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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