

INSPECTION REPORT

OAKHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ardsley, Barnsley

LEA area: Barnsley

Unique reference number: 130341

Headteacher: Mrs Elaine Greenoff

Reporting inspector: John William Paull
22028

Dates of inspection: 5th - 9th February 2001

Inspection number: 195754
Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior (with nursery)

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: Three to eleven

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Doncaster Road,
Ardsley,
Barnsley,
South Yorkshire

Postcode: S71 5AG

Telephone number: 01226-284493

Fax number: N/a

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr H. Wilson

Date of previous inspection: June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22028	John William Paull	Registered inspector	Science Music	What sort of school is it? Results and achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19446	Susan Wood	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
20142	Malcolm Childs	Team inspector	Mathematics History Equal opportunities	How well are pupils taught?
30677	Peggy Waterston	Team inspector	Art Design and technology Physical education Foundation Stage (children under five)	
1578	Maureen Sinclair	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Religious education	How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils?
22778	Anne Shannon	Team inspector	English Geography Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Oakhill caters for boys and girls of three to eleven years old. It is a community school in Ardsley, Barnsley. It has a roll of 308, which is larger than most primary schools. Currently, there are 52 children in the nursery who are under five, attending part-time for a morning or afternoon. Nearly all pupils at the school are white. Currently around seven per cent of pupils are known to qualify for free school meals, which is below average. However, evidence exists to support the school's view that the figure should be higher. A tiny proportion speaks English as an additional language. Around ten per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs, which is well below average. Most of these are identified as pupils with learning difficulty, and a few have impaired speech. Eight have a statement of need maintained by the local authority. The overall attainment of pupils entering the school is average, and socio-economic circumstances in the area are also about average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Oakhill is an effective school at which strengths outweigh weaknesses. Overall, teaching is good. Nearly all pupils achieve adequately and often well in subjects such as information and communication technology, history, geography and music. However, National Curriculum test results show that the proportion of pupils attaining above expected levels is generally below the average of similar schools. In the inspection overall standards were found to be average. The school has passed through an unsettled period, including several changes in senior management, since its last inspection in June 1997. As a result, many of its policies have passed beyond the dates when they were due for review. A new headteacher took up leadership of the school at the beginning of the current term. She has made a very good start, working closely with senior staff and co-ordinators to produce holding statements about what the school provides in most subjects. These are realistic, showing clearly where elements of provision are in need of review. Priorities match what is contained in these statements well and improvements are underway. Bearing in mind pupils' good behaviour, the quality of teaching and learning that occurs, and pupils' achievement compared with their starting points, value for money at the school is satisfactory.

What the school does well

- By Year 6, standards in information and communication technology, history, geography and music are above those normally expected.
- Teaching is generally good through the school, often very good. Good methods and encouragement promote effort and concentration from pupils, which leads to secure learning.
- Ways of teaching numeracy skills are good, including good uses of number, measurement, graphs and charts in other subjects, such as science, information and communication technology and geography.
- Assemblies provide very good spiritual guidance and the school helps pupils to work and play co-operatively. Moral and cultural opportunities are good. These factors contribute to strengths in pupils' behaviour, politeness and relationships with others.
- Very good links with other institutions, such as the local church, museums, other places of interest and local colleges support the quality of what is provided for pupils well.

What could be improved

- The reading of seven year olds and English of eleven year olds is below the average for similar schools, and standards in physical education are below expectations at the age of eleven.
- Financial resources are not sufficiently targeted towards improving identified areas of weakness.
- Co-ordinators and senior managers, notably the deputy head and special needs co-ordinator, are not given sufficient time to monitor and develop aspects of the school's work that are delegated to them.
- The identification and support of pupils with special educational needs, who do not require a statement of need, are not rigorous enough, and especially so for those with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory improvements since the last inspection, although in some instances these have been spasmodic. Taken together, the proportion of eleven year olds at expected levels and above have improved in line with national trends in English, mathematics and science and is broadly average. However, attainment at higher levels is below national averages. Raising the achievement of higher attainers was a key issue in the last inspection (June 1997) and the school has struggled to manage it, even though the quality of teaching has been successfully improved (another key issue). However, this good teaching has resulted in better standards in several other subjects. Some of the reasons for this apparent anomaly are beyond the school's control. For example, evidence exists to show that in 1999 a few pupils left the school who were on course to achieve above expected results in the 2000 tests. Improvements in the school's systems for tracking and monitoring progress in English, mathematics and science, and of planning the curriculum accordingly have been introduced only in the last year or so. They are therefore too recent to impact fully on standards. Although English is well taught during the school's literacy hours, teachers do not consistently take opportunities to extend literacy. This factor also helps to show why standards in English are not as high as in mathematics and science. Systems of assessment and target setting have been introduced since the last inspection and are proving helpful in raising standards. However, the special needs co-ordinator has full responsibility for teaching a class, which, despite her good knowledge and conscientious approach, prevents her from checking and evaluating practice around the school, leading to weaknesses in the identification of needs. Similar lack of time prevents the deputy head from assisting the headteacher fully with, for example, monitoring teaching and the curriculum. These weaknesses are linked with the school's use of financial resources. The governors hold considerable funds in reserve that could have been better used to address these matters. The school's staff has done well to maintain high standards of provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in all age groups from the nursery upwards.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by eleven year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	C	C	C	D
Mathematics	B	C	C	C
Science	C	C	C	C

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The table shows that National Curriculum test results in English, mathematics and science have been average for the past three years in comparison with all schools up and down the country, except in 1998, when in mathematics they were above the national average. Results are broadly similar to those reported at the last inspection. In comparison with schools with similar numbers that qualify for free school meals, the 2000 results show that standards are below average in English and average in mathematics and science. In general, standards are similar at the age of seven. In 2000, they were below average in reading, but average in writing and mathematics. Based on teachers' assessments, they were also average in science, based on the proportion that reached the expected levels for their age. Although baseline tests suggest that five year olds attain above what is normally found, the finding of inspectors is that attainment closely matches what they usually find at this age. Pupils' overall achievement by the time they leave the school is therefore satisfactory. However, achievement at higher levels is sometimes below national averages, especially at seven, when attainment at the higher than expected Level 3 is below average in reading, writing and mathematics, and well below in science. Trends show that overall attainment of eleven year olds at the school has risen in line with national improvements, although in reading at seven, it is not quite as good as in 1996. No significant differences were found in the performances of boys and girls. Standards in information and communication technology, history, geography, music and religious education are above expectations. They are below expectations in physical education.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good – pupils enjoy school and work enthusiastically. They are sensible during discussions and often produce thoughtful written work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good – nearly all pupils are orderly in classrooms and around the school. A few older pupils in Year 6 are not consistently well behaved, which reduces the impact of otherwise very good behaviour. Two exclusions occurred last year.
Personal development and relationships	Very good – pupils' relationships with each other and their trust of teachers makes a strong contribution to their learning. They are polite and often offer help to teachers, collecting, setting up and clearing equipment.
Attendance	Good – not quite as high as at the last inspection, owing to more holidays being taken during terms. Punctuality is also good, with lessons beginning and ending on time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of teaching is good across all age groups and stages. In the inspection, over 70 per cent of lessons were good, including 32 per cent that were very good and one excellent English lesson involving pupils in Years 4 and 5. The remainder was satisfactory. Very good lessons were spread out through the school. These very good lessons occurred in a wide range of subjects, including literacy and numeracy. Teaching of English, mathematics and science was good through the school. This high quality of teaching helps pupils to make a good effort and contributes to good overall learning. However, pupils with special educational needs are not consistently identified. For example, in Year 6, pupils with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties have not had their needs properly assessed. As a result, they and their teachers do not receive sufficient support to ensure that some unsatisfactory behaviour does not have a negative impact on otherwise sound teaching. Literacy and numeracy are generally taught well. However, in subjects such as science, history and geography, opportunities are sometimes missed to focus on extended factual writing and to help pupils to acquire better spelling.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory – literacy and numeracy hours are well planned, although opportunities are sometimes missed to extend literacy into other subjects. Planning for children under five includes all areas of learning in the new Foundation Stage. The National Curriculum and religious education are taught from the age of five up to eleven.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Inconsistent with some elements unsatisfactory – although teachers and classroom assistants work hard with pupils whose needs are identified, weaknesses occur because systems do not guarantee that all needs are identified. Conversely, pupils with statements of need are catered for well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good – although only very few pupils with English as an additional language attend the school, where the judgement applies, progress in acquiring English and learning across the curriculum is rapid.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good – in assemblies especially pupils are given excellent opportunities to reflect on their attitudes and values about the world, and how to get on well with others. Opportunities to work and play together are provided in many situations. A strong emphasis is placed on sharing and looking after toys and equipment in the nursery.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good – procedures for child protection are sound. Good procedures exist for supporting and rewarding good work and behaviour. Systems for assessing pupils' work are good, and the information gathered is used to plan in English, mathematics and science.

In general, the school is open to parents, offering information about pupils' progress. Those who support in classrooms are well briefed, so that their contributions are effective. However, there is no parents' and teachers' association (PTA) to support the school and what it provides for pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory – the new headteacher has made a very good start and is working hard to establish what needs to be tackled to improve standards. However, key staff such as the deputy headteacher have little time away from their teaching responsibilities to support her in these important decisions.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory – many governors visit the school frequently and take the opportunity to talk to staff and pupils to gather information. However, important statutory duties, such as the preparation of an annual report and meeting, were overdue at the time of the inspection.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory – assessment records are well used to set targets and to track pupils' progress individually. Subject co-ordinators have prepared holding statements that describe what the school provides for pupils across a wide range of subjects and other provision. However, co-ordinators have little time when they can work alongside their colleagues to monitor what is taught and how it is taught in their subjects.
The strategic use of resources	Unsatisfactory – governors have not effectively reviewed how best to use their accrued financial surplus to improve, for example, co-ordination of subjects or provision for pupils with special educational needs.

The teaching staff are well qualified to teach the subjects of the National Curriculum and other aspects of what primary schools are usually expected to offer. Accommodation is generally good. Resources in most subjects are satisfactory, although minor weaknesses such as a lack of enough modern Bibles for religious education were found. Conversely, information and communication technology is well resourced with computers and software. Availability of non-teaching staff is insufficient to provide all teachers with the necessary support to meet all pupils' needs.

Day-to-day accounts are managed well, and the headteacher and senior staff are aware of the need to audit and check resources to find out what will support learning best, before spending. Quotations of prices are sought and compared before capital is spent. In these ways the principles of best value are beginning to be applied.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
• Their children like school and behaviour at school is usually good. • Teaching is good and their children make progress. • The school is well led and managed and parents are comfortable when they approach it. • The school expects their children to work hard and helps them to grow in maturity.	• Some parents believe that the school does not work closely with them, and that not enough information is given about how well their children get on. • Some feel that children do not get the right amount of work to do at home, and that an interesting range of activities outside lessons is not provided.

Most parents have a positive opinion of the school, and inspectors broadly agree with their views. Some parents feel that the right amount of homework is not set. Inspectors did find inconsistencies in this respect. For example, what was set during the inspection often featured work connected with numeracy. On occasions, pupils were asked to complete what had been started in class. As a result, amounts to be done could vary from none at all, for those whose pace of working was rapid during the lesson, to a lot in the case of some other pupils. A similar proportion of parents feels that the school does not provide sufficient information or work closely enough with them. Inspectors found, however, that teachers work hard to provide information and that the school is generally open and friendly when enquiries or offers of help are made. The school's range of activities outside lessons is not untypical of primary schools nationally.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests of eleven year olds, attainment in English, mathematics and science is broadly in line with national averages. In this respect, results look similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection. However, it should be remembered that the national average has improved considerably since then. More pupils are therefore reaching the expected level for their age in all three subjects now, than was the case in 1996 tests. Compared with those of similar schools, these results are also broadly average, except in English, in which they are below average. Similar schools are defined as those with similar percentages of pupils who are eligible for free school meals. In English and science, although an above average proportion of pupils reaches the expected level for their age, the percentage that reaches a higher level is a little below average. Due weight is given to schools' results at these higher than expected levels, and this factor is the main reason that the school's performance in English drops to below average in comparison with similar schools. This weaker performance at higher levels was pointed out at the last inspection. The school has introduced measures such as different levels of work for groups of differing prior attainments as an attempt to solve it. Furthermore classes are rearranged into sets of pupils of different attainments in mathematics. However, this has been only partially successful. Two reasons emerged for this during the inspection. First, it is too recent to have reached its full impact. Secondly, evidence was produced to show that a small number of pupils leave the school in Year 5 or early in Year 6, and that these tend to be from groups that are predicted to attain the higher levels for their age. Trends show that since 1996 the greatest improvement in test results of eleven year olds has occurred in science, and that the school's improvement in the three subjects taken together matches the national trend closely over the past five years. Differences between the results of boys and girls at the school are not significant.

2. These results are consistent with a judgement that achievement at the school is sound. On entry to the school, attainment is broadly in line with what is usually found nationally, and pupils make sufficient progress for overall attainment to remain average for their age by the time that they leave. Between the ages of about five and six, when children begin work on the National Curriculum, attainment broadly matches what is described in the national early learning goals for their age. This judgement is reflected in all areas of learning, including language, communication and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. The overall standard in personal and social development is good. Nearly all children reach the early learning goals, and several exceed them.
3. The 2000 National Curriculum test results of seven year olds indicate that standards are in line with average in writing and mathematics and below average in reading, both in comparison with national averages and the averages of similar schools. National tests are not undertaken in science at this age. However, based on the percentage that reaches the expected level in Statutory Teachers' Assessments in the subject, attainment is a little below the national figure and well below at the higher level. Trends indicate a slightly improving picture in writing and mathematics since 1996, but overall attainment in reading is not as good.
4. At seven years old, pupils' speaking and listening skills in English lessons and in other subjects are generally around the expected levels for their age. Most pupils listen attentively and talk with some confidence. By the age of eleven, standards are a little above what is normally expected. Pupils have good listening skills and many are confident speakers, who explain their views logically and express them clearly. For example, they talk enthusiastically about favourite pastimes, including books and authors. They demonstrate good listening skills through the relevant responses that they give to each other and to teachers' questions.
5. The results of national tests are reflected in the standards of attainment that were found in reading and writing during the inspection. Literacy hours are taught well, and pupils are encouraged to use reading to seek information, and writing to express their ideas in a range of different styles for different purposes. However, literacy across the curriculum is not as strong. Sometimes opportunities were missed in lessons such as history and science, for example, to consolidate spelling skills and to broaden or point out flexible uses of specific vocabulary. Nevertheless, seven year olds generally read accurately, talking about stories and giving reasons for their likes and dislikes. As they progress, texts become more complicated. By the age of eleven, reading remains in line with what is normally expected. A few higher attaining pupils read at a higher level than expected for their age. These higher attainers clearly enjoy reading, and speak enthusiastically about writing poetry in the style of what they have read. Good teaching contributes strongly, and many pupils are positive about poetry. By the ages of seven and eleven, pupils' attainment in writing is average. Higher attaining seven year olds are beginning to use adjectives and exciting sequences in their writing, which is punctuated well for their age. A few lower attaining pupils, however, struggle with letter formation and have a limited vocabulary. Many other pupils in Year 2 do not routinely join their letters, which makes it harder for them to achieve higher levels of attainment than the average. By the age of eleven pupils write in many forms and for different audiences. Attainment is broadly in line with national averages. Presentation of work is usually satisfactory. A new handwriting scheme has been introduced recently to address weaknesses in this aspect of the subject. During the week of the inspection considerable improvement was seen.
6. In mathematics, at the ages of seven and eleven, attainment in the inspection was broadly average, and closely in line with the tests. Lessons follow the pattern of the National Numeracy Strategy with plenty of pace and variety of activity. As a result, pupils through the school develop a good sense of the relative sizes of numbers, and mental mathematics sessions at the beginning of each lesson include good skills in working out simple sums in their heads. Seven year olds understand how to add, subtract, multiply and share simple sums. They count up to and back from 1000, in 100s. They confidently estimate numbers of squares and dots when they are flashed on to a screen using an overhead projector, and know the names and simple properties of regular shapes. Nearly all eleven year olds also demonstrate good skills in making calculations in their head. They understand place value well, and work with clear understanding of fractions. Even lower attaining pupils confidently discuss different methods of adding numbers such as 276 and 159. Teachers' planning and assessment records confirm that pupils' attainment in shape and space also matches expected levels well. Pupils' understanding of data handling is developed and supported strongly by the use of

information and communication technology, and, as a result, standards in this element of the subject are a little above what is normally expected.

7. The results of tests and assessments are used in English and mathematics to set targets for both individuals' attainment and attainment overall. Pupils' progress towards their targets is tracked well through the school. However, teachers are not putting these targets into simple enough language for them to be usefully shared with pupils as a further means to raising standards.
8. Attainment in science is close to what is expected at the ages of seven and eleven. Seven year olds show interest in living things and use careful observation to record the main parts of plants by drawing and labelling them. Their understanding of properties of different materials includes features such as 'transparent' and 'opaque', and they know how to complete a simple electrical circuit to make a bulb light up. The school's recent involvement in the *Zeneca Project* has resulted in a strong emphasis on experimental science. A scrutiny of pupils' work provided evidence that eleven year olds understand many features of fair testing and the need to carry out investigations in a systematic way. Standards reached in work on living things, materials and physical processes, especially in connection with forces, match national expectations in the National Curriculum well.
9. At eleven years old, standards in information and communication technology, history and music are above what is normally expected in the National Curriculum. In history, geography and music, they are also above average at seven years old and in information and communication technology, they are well above average. The main reason that the much higher standard is not maintained at eleven is that insufficient experiences are provided for sensor and control technology to progress to a higher level of understanding. Nevertheless, achievement in other elements of the subject often remains well above average. During the inspection, for example, there were examples of very good work in graphical display, spreadsheets, artwork and the use of programs and software for desktop publishing. In history and geography, a group of pupils discussed their work with an inspector and displayed considerable knowledge of different historical eras. In music, the use of traditional tuned and untuned percussion, as well as electronic instruments to compose and perform, is resulting in high standards and the quality of pupils' singing is good. In nearly all other subjects, including art, design and technology, and religious education, standards meet those normally expected. In physical education, standards are below expected levels in some elements of the subject.
10. Generally, pupils make similar progress whatever their level of prior attainment. In science, higher attainers receive less support from work that is adapted to their particular needs, than in mathematics or English. Furthermore, owing to her full-time responsibility for teaching a class, the special educational needs co-ordinator has very little available time to monitor provision for pupils with learning difficulty as they work in their classrooms. As a result not all pupils with special educational needs are identified, which means that the progress and attainment of these pupils is less than it would otherwise be. However, pupils with statements of special educational needs maintained by the local authority are supported well by teachers and classroom assistants alike. These pupils often make good progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good, which was also the case at the time of the last inspection. Many pupils are very enthusiastic about school and enjoy their lessons. They listen very carefully to teachers and classroom assistants, eagerly responding to questions, giving answers that are sensible and relevant to discussions. A very good example was seen in a literacy lesson. Pupils were asked to provide a second verse to Walter de la Mare's poem, *Someone*. They made suggestions, reviewed and altered their own and others' ideas. This sensible approach resulted in a very well thought out piece of work, of which they were justifiably very proud. They are interested in their learning and show respect for each other's views and ideas. Many pupils show a mature attitude to their peers when they make mistakes or misunderstand an idea or method. Pupils clearly know what is expected of them and they are often eager to please the class teacher. They work sensibly and generally quietly, sustaining concentration whether they are working as individuals, in pairs or in a group, for example, during group activity in a very good music lesson. Pupils sang short solos, discussed together, and played instruments in a group. On rare occasions, a few pupils become restless and easily distracted for little reason. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, teaching was interrupted by a group of boys who made immature and inappropriate remarks. When this

occurred, although the teacher employed good techniques to manage their behaviour, the pace of the lesson nonetheless slowed down.

The school has not placed pupils with behavioural difficulty on its register of special needs. Although the advice of experts, and the support of parents have been sought, none of these pupils was supported directly by a classroom assistant, to reduce the effects of their behaviour on their own and others' learning.

12. The behaviour of nearly all pupils in their classrooms and around the school is good. The school is an orderly community and pupils move about the building sensibly and quietly. For example, when they enter assembly, they sit quietly and listen to music, while the rest of the school enters. Pupils are polite to visitors and often open doors, offering help without being prompted. Pupils respect property and handle resources well. Nearly all pupils understand and give the quality of behaviour that the school expects of them. Two exclusions are recorded in the last academic year. The previous report found behaviour to be very good. In this inspection it was good, which is not quite as strong, although many instances of very good behaviour were found in lessons. The overall judgement was brought down a little by the small amount of unsatisfactory behaviour that occurred.
13. The quality of relationships throughout the school community remains very good. Nearly all pupils show high levels of respect for the feelings of others. Pupils know the daily routines of the school and quickly respond to teacher's requests. Pupils enjoy opportunities to take responsibility and to help. For example, pupils are proud to be 'helpers' to their teachers, wearing badges to denote their position with pride. Examples of what they do include setting up equipment before school, helping to prepare for science experiments, and checking availability of resources. They respond maturely and often use their own initiative in these situations. A very good example occurred when pupils realised that an upgraded computer could enhance the learning of a friend with a disability. Having heard an appeal on a local radio station, they raised funds until the required alterations could be funded.
14. Although rates of absence have risen slightly since the previous inspection, the school's attendance figures are broadly average. The vast majority of pupils consistently arrive at school on time, enabling the school day to start promptly. Staff at the school believe that more families are taking holidays during term time, despite regular reminders that this can be detrimental to pupils' achievement. This factor is identified as the main reason why attendance has dropped. Quiet uses of time during registrations provide a quiet and constructive start to each day, preparing pupils for the tasks ahead.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching observed is good, with around three-quarters of lessons judged good or better. Just under a third of lessons were very good and about a quarter were satisfactory. One excellent lesson was seen and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. This represents a significant improvement on the quality of teaching at the time of the last inspection, when only 14 per cent of lessons were judged to be very good or better and 14 per cent were unsatisfactory. It is this improvement in the quality of teaching that has raised attainment in line with national improvements and is beginning to increase rates of progress, raising standards further still.
16. The quality of teaching of children under five is a strength of the school with all lessons observed judged to be good or very good. This quality is resulting in good progress from the time that children start in the nursery to the time that they enter Year 1. Teachers have high expectations and very good understanding of the way in which young children learn. This is a similar position to that found at the time of the last inspection. Teachers provide a good range of activities to encourage positive attitudes to learning. These activities are supported by good assessment procedures based on direct observation that ensures that each child takes part in a balanced range of activities. The provision for acquiring language skills is good. However, opportunities for playing games that specifically support the acquisition of sounds of letters (phonics) are restricted by a lack of available adult support. Children's creative and physical development is also limited to some degree by the lack of a permanent exterior climbing frame on a safer surface. Teachers use resources well to support children's learning. However, in both the nursery and reception classes levels of additional classroom support are low, compared with other schools, making the teachers' jobs more difficult. For example, in the nursery it is often only possible to divide the children into two areas of activity because there is only the teacher and a nursery nurse. Teachers maintain close links with parents.

17. Teachers' knowledge of the National Curriculum and the age groups that they teach is good. Planning is usually thorough and very good use is made of assessment information to meet the needs of individual pupils in mathematics and good use is also made of information in English and science. The use of assessment is satisfactory in religious education, but it is often less well developed in other subjects. Target setting is well developed in mathematics and is being put into place to a similar standard in English and science. However, the targets shown are not put into sufficiently simple language for pupils to understand. This factor reduces their usefulness in helping pupils to understand their own learning and achievement. The school has identified this as an area for development over the coming year. Marking is conscientiously kept up to date, but does not consistently offer comments that tell pupils how to improve their work. Throughout the school, including the nursery, the range of appropriate teaching methods is good, and in some classes very good. There are particular strengths in the way in which teachers encourage discussion and the sharing of ideas and knowledge. In general, lessons have good pace and challenge, and the progress made by pupils was good or better in just over two-thirds of lessons. Teachers' management of pupils is good overall, although a small number of pupils with poor attitudes sometimes offer challenging behaviour, and little classroom support is provided to help the teacher.
18. Teaching in literacy hours is a strength of the school, with around nine out of ten lessons being good or better, and a little more than a third, very good or better. One lesson was excellent and one was satisfactory. Teaching of this quality represents a significant improvement since the last inspection, when teaching of seven year olds upwards was mostly satisfactory, and despite some good and very good teaching, was unsatisfactory in two out of ten lessons. The National Literacy Strategy is being implemented well in English lessons, although its influence in subjects such as religious education, geography and history is weaker. Six year olds worked very hard, producing considerable amounts of work in response to very good teaching, particularly enjoying reading and, for example, discussing *The Runaway Pizza*. Work associated with this book, including pupils' writing, was above average and very good attitudes and behaviour were also a direct response to the high quality of teaching. In Year 6 pupils benefit from well-planned lessons with plenty of challenge and variety. They enjoy opportunities for discussion, which was apparent in their construction of convincing arguments. Pupils concentrate hard and make good progress based on secure learning that stems from good teaching. Individual target setting is being developed, and is beginning to match individuals' needs well. For example, the one pupil who has recently entered the school with English at an early stage of acquisition is now fluent, and reading and writing above expected levels for his age. In the past, the teaching of handwriting was a weaker element, as skills were not consistently developed. Recent improvements are evident, following the introduction of a new scheme.
19. The teaching of mathematics is good. In the lessons that were observed, half of teaching was good or better and half was satisfactory. The way in which the National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced is a strength of the school, with numerical skills making an important contribution across the curriculum. Teachers have good subject knowledge and teach this subject confidently. Where lessons were satisfactory, the pace of working was slower and less challenge was evident than in the better lessons. In other aspects all the lessons observed were good. For example, planning was very thorough, based on detailed analysis of assessment information and with individual targets identified for all pupils. Pupils, whether they have special educational needs or have high levels of prior attainment, have access to a curriculum that suits their needs well. Seven year olds receive very good teaching that prepares them well for the next stage of their education. From the start of their lessons they are challenged, for example, when counting up to and from 1000 in hundreds. They are keen to answer questions and they show secure understanding of place value, two- and three-dimensional shapes, money and other measures. Teachers encourage them to use mathematics in other subjects such as science, design and technology, history and geography. Teachers build on good foundations that were laid in earlier years, so that most eleven year olds work confidently with numbers up to 10,000 and even beyond. A particular strength is the way in which information and communication technology is used to give pupils an opportunity for carrying out research, analysing data that they collect and making judgements as to what tables, charts and graphs mean. All other aspects of the subject are taught well and the rearrangement of pupils into classes that match their prior attainment is enabling teachers to improve rates of progress and raise standards further.
20. Teaching is good or better in nearly two-thirds of lessons in science, with the remainder being satisfactory. One very good lesson was observed. Other evidence such as discussion with teachers

and pupils confirms that teaching is good and effectively develops positive attitudes. This is a similar position to that found at the time of the last inspection. Effective planning is a strength of the teaching and it is based on effective use of information about how pupils are getting on. This planning ensures that most pupils, including those with identified special educational needs, have access to learning that suits them. However, not all pupils with special educational needs are being formally identified and levels of classroom support are sometimes low. Adaptations of the work that is set are not consistently provided for pupils of higher prior attainment. However, teachers provide good opportunities for investigative science and allow pupils to show surprise or pleasure at what they discover. For example, six year olds were observed showing excitement and some amazement when they discovered that a metal could be non-magnetic. Teachers use scientific language accurately and expect their pupils to do the same. Often, eleven year olds are encouraged to think for themselves. One lesson was made more interesting by the teacher's effective reference to a local landfill site and the important role played by bacteria.

21. Teaching is good in information and communication technology. Two-thirds of inspected lessons were judged good or better and half of these were very good. The remaining third was satisfactory. This quality of teaching represents an improvement on the position at the time of the last inspection when there was some good teaching, but most was satisfactory. Teaching is especially strong for six and seven year olds. Teachers use the computer suite well to support the whole curriculum as well as developing computer skills. However, the use of control technology is less well emphasised owing to lack of resources in this area. Teachers are currently working to improve this element of the National Curriculum. A further strength is the way that the school uses its older computers, supporting the teaching of literacy and numeracy. For example, a program about three-dimensional shapes enhances the learning of seven year olds, and another is used well to illustrate speech marks for six and seven year olds. Older pupils also achieve at above average levels as a direct result of good teaching, for example, when copying and pasting drawings and text with ease.
22. Teaching is good in religious education, with four-fifths of lessons judged to be good and all others satisfactory. Teachers follow the locally agreed syllabus closely and make satisfactory use of pupils' literacy skills when reading original texts such as the Bible.
23. Teaching in art, design and technology, geography, history and music is good. It is satisfactory in physical education. The progress made by pupils is generally in line with the quality of teaching and in subjects such as geography and history is resulting in above average levels of attainment in pupil's knowledge, although not always in the quality of written work, which is closer to average in standard.
24. Very good use of assessment in mathematics and good uses in English and science mean that pupils' learning needs are generally met well. However, the organisation of the school into mixed-age classes adds complications. A weakness in identifying all pupils with special educational needs reduces the appropriateness of learning tasks for some of them.

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

25. The last inspection expressed concern about two curricular issues. One centred on a lack of detailed schemes of work for all subjects and the other on the provision for pupils with higher attainment. The first has clearly been addressed. Schemes of work now exist for all subjects. Often these are based on national recommendations, such as those published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority or the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Particularly good planning occurs in mathematics and information and communication technology and strongly supports the effective teaching of these subjects. The school has begun to address the needs of higher attainers more effectively, reorganising its classes to match pupils' prior attainments when mathematics is taught, and grouping pupils more effectively in English lessons. However, less evidence of similar provision was found in science. A lack of available time away from their own responsibilities for teaching classes prevents subject co-ordinators and senior staff from evaluating fully what is taught. As a result, it is not completely certain that unnecessary repetitions or omissions of parts of subjects such as geography, history and religious education do not occur.

The organisation of pupils into classes is complicated in some years, resulting in unbalanced mixes of age, which makes it harder still to check that all pupils receive equal access to what is taught as they move through the school. The deputy headteacher, during a period when she acted as head, identified these weaknesses, and the new headteacher is also fully aware of their implications. Senior managers are therefore already seeking and planning ways of improving the situation.

26. The needs of higher attainers are met in mathematics and in English but to a lesser degree in science. The way that information and communication technology is taught enables the more talented to forge ahead, but provision in other subjects is more variable. Shortages of available opportunities for the special educational needs co-ordinator to use her expertise in assessing pupils' needs are a weakness. Furthermore, low levels of classroom assistance are also a difficulty in some classes. As a result, support and curricular adaptations for pupils with special needs are sometimes insufficient to ensure that they engage fully with learning tasks. Lack of large frames built over a safer surface in the outdoor area for children under five limits achievement in climbing and balancing.
27. Overall, the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught and statutory requirements are met. Appropriate proportions of time are allocated to each subject, although the amount of time that the school allocates to physical education in classes for seven to eleven year olds is relatively low. It is insufficient to build fast enough on what has been achieved up to the age of seven. The school has recently joined *Healthy Schools* (a programme that supports personal, social and health education), and a well-organised co-ordinator has begun the process of creating a syllabus that builds up through all age groups. The school's policy for sex education complies with statutory requirements. All the areas of learning in the new Foundation Stage (the requirements for young children, who are not old enough to begin the National Curriculum) are taught in the nursery and reception classes. However, lack of adult support in the nursery hampers a rigorous approach to the teaching of sounds of letters. The children's outdoor area lacks large frames, which also restricts their physical development of climbing, balancing and similar work.
28. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been introduced successfully. The organisation of the numeracy initiative is particularly good as it supports a range of subjects across the curriculum, whereas the support of literacy in other subjects is not as widespread.
29. Teachers respond well to initiatives that improve the relevance to pupils of what is taught. For example, additional literacy support and reading recovery are available to pupils who might benefit. Similarly, in science, the *Zeneca Project* has heightened awareness of investigative and experimental skills. As a result, plenty of evidence of this important aspect of the subject was found. The *Parent and Child Project* enhances parents' skills in information and communication technology. It enables parents to work with their children on a one-to-one basis, supporting teaching and raising standards in the subject. Some good learning was seen as a direct result of this initiative.
30. Other aspects of what is taught also offer good learning experiences. Very good use is made of the community to extend opportunities for learning. Pupils listen to song-writers and watch plays. They visit York to research the history of the area. Pupils study modern sculpture, and go on field trips to look at farming methods. They benefit from a link with British Telecom in the area of information and communication technology. Yorkshire Cricket Club coaches assist with physical education, and strong links with the local church result in marked enhancements of religious education and provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Constructive relationships with other institutions help the school to deliver the curriculum well. Undergraduates who are training to be teachers bring new ideas and approaches to learning, and students, on placements to gain experience of a working environment, contribute their support to individual pupils and groups.
31. What is provided outside normal school time is satisfactory. A significant number of parents were critical of this aspect in questionnaires. However, inspectors found that, although clubs and other activities provided at lunchtime and after school are not extensive, they are similar to many schools. Netball and football clubs are available when the weather and light permits, and the footballers have experienced success recently in a local competition. Music groups, including recorders, woodwind and brass, are also provided. Dance and drama clubs have also met, although prolonged staff absence has reduced the number of meetings, and an informal choir is gathered for special events.

32. Aspects of pupils' personal development were a strength of the school in the last inspection report. Overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development remains very good now.
33. Spiritual development is very good. Assemblies make a particularly strong contribution to personal development. Collective worship is a great strength of the school and offers many example of good practice. Opportunities for pupils to reflect and pray are very well thought out, and sometimes excellent, with a definite sense of reverence and special occasion. Such high quality was seen in an assembly that involved pupils' singing different arrangements of the Lord's Prayer. Their musical expression and their feeling for what they sang were first-rate, creating a moving atmosphere. Some classes say a grace before going to lunch, and one leaves the classroom with a prayer of thanks at the end of the day. Aspects of spirituality are very well developed in subjects across the curriculum. Pupils appraise music in lessons and sometimes reflect on the 'emotional pictures' brought into their minds. In English, they consider myths, as a way of explaining what is not really understood. Religious education provides opportunities to increase understanding of beliefs and to respect the values of others, as when pupils learn about the Hindus' single supreme deity, who has many names, and is found everywhere. In science lessons, pupils are often allowed time to be surprised and to express their amazement at what they find out when such situations arise.
34. Parents agree that the school is good at teaching right from wrong. All adults in the school try hard to promote attitudes of caring, tolerance, loyalty and honesty, both between pupils and themselves, and from one pupil to another. Class rules are provided to help to encourage correct attitudes and values. Most pupils understand what is expected of them and a system of awards exists to promote good responses and behaviour, such as helping others. Teachers have high expectations of what constitutes acceptable conduct, and are usually quick to comment on anything that is unacceptable, whilst praising what is good.
35. Opportunities for pupils' social development are very good. The last report found good levels of encouragement to work and play co-operatively. These features still exist. Older pupils prepare presentations for the younger children, and read to them. They are encouraged to be 'buddies' to help others. A few parents expressed concern over the possibility of lost learning time when pupils advise or remind others about poor behaviour. However, inspectors found no evidence of this during the inspection. On the contrary, pupils benefited from the opportunity to show responsibility and initiative. Opportunities are provided for participation in group work across a range of subjects, such as history, geography, music, information and communication technology and physical education, and in activities such as concerts and drama. Teachers are good role models and they encourage a regard for others. Pupils receive chances to perform helpful tasks around the school. Visits off the site add to the development of sociability and the school's involvement in charitable fundraising helps to develop sympathy and responsibility towards those less fortunate than themselves.
36. Cultural provision is good. Pupils give concerts in a range of locations, including the local church, the school itself and a small chapel in a neighbouring village, and gain insights into their local heritage, learning about the history of Barnsley. Art lessons provide information about famous artists, and some classes are currently studying the French impressionists. Music, history, geography and religious education lessons also contain beneficial contributions towards pupils' understanding of their cultural background, as do visits to places of interest. They watch plays and take part in drama and dance activities. Multi-cultural education is promoted in the reading books that pupils use and by visits to temples and mosques.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. Many aspects of care are satisfactory, and some are good. However, weaknesses in the monitoring and assessment of pupils with special educational needs, and planning to meet the needs of higher attaining pupils especially in science, means that some pupils are not having full access to a curriculum that meets their individual needs.
38. The school has satisfactory procedures in place to ensure pupils' welfare health and safety, and uses appropriate agencies to support the needs of individual pupils. The head and nursery teacher are the two named people responsible for child protection with the majority of staff being aware of relevant procedures.

The school's child protection policy has just been reviewed to bring it into line with recent legislation. All pupils are well known to staff, and pupils feel confident to approach any adult if they have worries or concerns. Clear procedures are followed to report and record accidents. The school currently has no formally written risk assessment in place, although informal reviews are carried out. The school provides a safe and very caring environment in which pupils and staff can work.

39. The school has very good procedures to monitor attendance and parents are very clear about what action the school expects of them when their child is absent from school. Pupils' academic and personal needs are met well, because staff know individual pupils in their classes well and quickly recognise changes in behaviour, performance or attitude. These are linked into the school's assessment procedures and thorough records are kept of pupils' progress in all areas of their development, regardless of needs or attainment. Documents are regularly updated and provide a complete record of pupils' personal and academic achievements over time. Assemblies that highlight and share pupils' achievements publicly are held weekly, with certificates being awarded in recognition of good performance. For younger pupils, the *Oak Tree* is particularly effective. A leaf bearing their name is added to it, following their recognition in assembly. The *Wall of Achievement* is a similar idea for older pupils. In this case, bricks made from copies of certificates are added as a constant reminder of good work and deeds. Many pupils took the opportunity to point out these features to inspectors, speaking well of their own, and of their friends' successes too. Parents also commented about the effectiveness of this provision in improving pupils' attitudes to their work and learning. Pupils whose special educational needs have been identified are well provided for through their individual education plans.
40. The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Praise and rewards are generally applied well, and pupils are proud when their efforts are recognised. When asked, they agreed that anti-social behaviour, such as bullying, is rare. Certainly none was seen during the inspection. Pupils stated that on rare occasions when instances of name-calling or oppressive behaviour towards others have occurred, they were dealt with quickly and appropriately.
41. The school has clearly ensured that pupils' achievements are recognised and recorded in a systematic way. Overall it has built on many of the good practices that were in place during the previous inspection and has significantly improved on monitoring and recording pupils' personal development

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. A good majority of parents who returned questionnaires and attended the meeting before the inspection have positive views about the school. Over 80 per cent of the opinions that were recorded about the school were positive, including many that strongly agreed with the statements that were put. Only 13 per cent were negative. Most parents appreciate the partnership that they have with the school and are generally pleased with their children's progress. They feel welcome and find the staff approachable. However, responses to questionnaires indicate that some parents believe that the school does not give pupils the right amount of work to bring home, and does not give sufficient information about their children's progress. A similar proportion feels that the school does not work closely enough with them. About a quarter of respondents feel that it fails to provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons. The inspection team found that good uses of homework are made in most classes, although a lot of it is based around numeracy lessons, which leads to an imbalance of its content. The school provides information about pupils' progress at suitable times during the school year, and although activities at lunchtime and after school are not extensive, they are similar to those in many primary schools. Parents are offered several planned occasions when they can come into school to hear about their children's learning or to celebrate achievements.
43. Parents receive regular information through newsletters and the recent introduction of the *Oakhill Gazette* is generally appreciated. The prospectus sent to newcomers contains all the statutory information required. However, information about the curriculum and specific subject areas that are to be taught in class is inconsistent and sometimes dependent on verbal communication through pupils. The school has held curricular evenings, such as 'Numeracy Night', to help encourage and inform parents about methods and strategies to help their children.

The annual written reports given at the end of the academic year inform parents of areas that their children have studied over the year and give areas for development that are shared and recognised with the children. This practice enables parents to help their children move forward. Reports inform about both academic and personal development. Consultation evenings between parents and teachers are held at different times in the year and these provide opportunities to discuss the progress that children make. The pattern of meetings has changed recently, but still conforms to more than is provided in some schools and exceeds statutory requirements. Parents of children with identified special educational needs are regularly informed about their children's learning. Those with statements of need are invited to all statutory reviews of need as required by the relevant code of practice. However, in some other respects, information for parents does not meet statutory requirements as laid down by the Department for Education and Employment. For example, governors did not hold a general meeting with parents for over a year, and their last annual report did not contain all information that it should. Important omissions included: information about the election of parent governors; progress made since the previous inspection; information about special educational needs; and, a full budget statement.

44. A small number of parents regularly help in classrooms, and the school values their contributions. They are well briefed and fully integrated into the classrooms. Parents are invited to school productions that they appreciate and enjoy. However, currently no parent teacher association or similarly constituted body systematically raises funds to support the school. Nevertheless, the school is well supported by its parents. The new headteacher and senior managers are aware that there are features in need of review to ensure that all parents feel equally involved in their children's learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45. At the time of the last inspection, the school had just completed an amalgamation that had involved two moves for its junior-aged pupils and one for its infants in order to bring two previous schools together. It was recovering well from the upheaval, owing to skilful leadership from the headteacher of that time in particular. Although leadership and management were judged to be very good, some weaknesses were reported. For example, the monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school was at an early stage of development, so that inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in classes for seven to eleven year olds were not being fully addressed. Furthermore, although much of the practice of co-ordinators of the different subjects was good, systems to enable them to build on their work and to check progress were not good enough and a planned review and development of schemes of work had not yet taken place. Changes in senior staff have occurred since the last inspection. These included two periods when the deputy head acted as headteacher, and the appointment of a new headteacher, who started at the school in the term of the inspection. The extended absence of the English co-ordinator, owing to illness, is of concern for the future development of the subject. It is of great credit to the deputy head and other senior managers that the school continued to run smoothly and to improve in several respects during this time, and that action taken to meet educational targets was successful in moving pupils' overall attainment forward. Since the last inspection, teaching has improved considerably, such that the unsatisfactory element that was found in 1997 has gone. The school has introduced more systematic planning in nearly all subjects. This planning is based on nationally recommended initiatives, including the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies in English and mathematics, and the suggested schemes of work of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority in other subjects.
46. The new headteacher has made a very good start. She has quickly established a good working relationship with members of staff and has prioritised appropriate areas for development well, and is thus ensuring the school's future educational direction. The staff's commitment to succeed is strong. Together with her staff, the new headteacher has identified staffing weaknesses that prevent her deputy and the special educational needs co-ordinator from carrying out their roles of monitoring and evaluating the work of the school as effectively as they might. Important needs have also been identified in resources. These range from large play equipment and information and communication technology requirements in the nursery, to more books, artefacts and computer software in subjects such as religious education, geography and history.

Lack of available opportunities for the co-ordinator of special educational needs to work alongside other staff in their classrooms is leading to weaknesses in the identification of pupils' needs. This shortcoming concerns, especially, those pupils with lower stages of need. Similar lack of opportunities prevents the deputy head from fully assisting the headteacher in monitoring teaching and the curriculum. However, both the deputy head and special needs co-ordinator are knowledgeable, hard working and supportive in what they do, and overall the school's aims and values are soundly reflected in its work.

47. The main reason for deficiencies is that the governors' use of financial resources to support strengths and weaknesses of the school has been poor. A large surplus of funds has built up since the amalgamation and has not been employed in addressing these important needs. To some extent, statutory requirements are not met. For example, communication of the school's financial statement in the governor's annual report is brief and other information is also omitted. Nevertheless, specific grants such as the government's standards fund are well used to support staff training and the quality of day-to-day accounting is good within the school. Senior staff are aware of the need to check prices across different catalogues before orders are placed. Governors are aware that advice and competitive quotations should be sought from contractors before capital expenditure is committed. In these ways, the school is beginning to apply principles of achieving best value. The use of new technology is strong both in management of data, accounting for expenditure and in uses that support teaching and what is taught. Strategies for performance management and development of future staff needs are sound. Measures for the induction of newly qualified teachers are good and the school co-operates well with colleges and institutes of higher education in the training of student teachers and other staff.

48. Overall, the provision for staffing, monitoring and learning resources is satisfactory. The match of teachers' qualifications to the demands of the curriculum is good, and staff are also available to provide additional literacy support and a programme of reading recovery. However, a relative shortage of non-teaching classroom assistance results in a lack of support for pupils with lower stages of special need in some classes, including those with emotional and behavioural difficulty. Accommodation is generally good. Rooms are clean, light and airy and recent changes such as the swap of the library and computer suite have enhanced provision well. The grounds are secure and spacious. However, the area for children under five lacks large permanent climbing frames to support physical development and insufficient shade restricts the use of a hard play area for five to seven year olds. Learning resources are generally sound. Computers are very well used, including older BBC models. Although much equipment for information and communication technology is recent, the school is aware that it cannot be complacent. The maintenance of its high standards of attainment in the subject is at least partly dependent on the quality of its resources. For example, the need for new equipment has already been identified in the nursery. Minor weaknesses were found in a few other subjects. For example, in religious education, the lack of a set of Bibles in simple modern English made it harder for pupils to check references in a lesson in Year 3.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

49. The previous inspection identified that not enough was done to ensure that higher attaining pupils achieved as well as they might. Since then, the National Numeracy Project has been introduced and much of the school's work in mathematics is now taught in classes for pupils of similar prior attainment. In literacy lessons, different work is often provided for different groups and several initiatives to address the needs of pupils with differing levels of attainment have been introduced. However, a lot of this good practice has been applied too recently to have a full impact on what is achieved. It should be continued rigorously.

The headteacher, staff and governors should:

1. In National Curriculum tests, raise attainment in comparison with similar schools, in reading amongst seven year olds and English amongst eleven year olds, by:
 - i. continuing recently introduced initiatives that support the reading of pupils aged five to seven (see paragraphs 29 and 78);
 - ii. in the nursery, concentrating more fully on teaching the sounds of letters of the alphabet (see paragraphs 16 and 59);
 - iii. assessing and meeting the needs of pupils with different prior attainments more effectively (see paragraphs 10 and 83);
 - iv. teaching handwriting skills more rigorously through the school, and ensuring that it is neatly joined whenever appropriate (see paragraphs 5, 18 and 80);
 - v. increasing opportunities to reinforce literacy across the curriculum, emphasising spelling and vocabulary (paragraphs 5, 48, 81, 115 and 137).
2. In physical education, raise attainment to expected levels by the time pupils leave the school, by:
 - i. building more systematically on what is achieved in classes for younger age groups, as pupils move through the school (see paragraphs 27 and 132);
 - ii. monitoring to check whether sufficient time is allocated to teach effectively all elements of the subject that are required in the National Curriculum (see paragraphs 27, 132 and 135).
3. Improve the use of financial resources to delegate responsibilities of monitoring and evaluating what the school provides more effectively, by:
 - i. reviewing the amount of funding that the Finance Committee needs to hold in reserve (see paragraph 47);
 - ii. establishing priorities for matching expenditure more closely to income, for example, in the light of the present lack of time available to senior staff, such as the deputy head and special educational needs co-ordinator to carry out important duties of monitoring and evaluating the work of the school (see paragraphs 46 and 47).
4. Improve the identification and support of pupils with special educational needs, by:
 - i. providing the special educational needs co-ordinator with better opportunities to assess and monitor pupils' needs (see paragraphs 10, 46 and 99);
 - ii. ensuring that all pupils with special educational needs, and especially those with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, are first identified, and then given support that better matches their needs (see paragraphs 10, 11, 24, 48 and 91);
 - iii. providing the special educational needs co-ordinator with better opportunities to work alongside colleagues in preparing individual education plans, targets and adapted work to meet pupils' needs (see paragraphs 10, 11, 46 and 113);
 - iv. reviewing the amount of time that is available from classroom support assistants to establish whether it is enough to meet the needs of pupils at the school (see paragraphs 10, 11, 20, 48, 83 and 91).

OTHER LESS IMPORTANT FEATURES THAT GOVERNORS MIGHT WISH TO INCLUDE IN THEIR ACTION PLAN

1. Ensure that statutory responsibilities of the governing body are fully understood and met (see paragraphs 43 and 47).
2. Complete the development of the under fives outside area as soon as possible, including the provision of apparatus for climbing, balancing and similar activity (see paragraphs 27 and 71).
3. Improve the marking of pupils' work by offering more directive comments about what pupils should do next (see paragraphs 17 and 85).
4. Review the balance of work and subjects that pupils take home to ascertain whether better consistency could be achieved (see paragraph 42).
5. Improve provision for higher attainers, especially in science (see paragraphs 10, 20, 25, 37 and 99).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	67
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	30	40	28	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	282
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		19

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	40

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

		Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year		2000	27	30	57
National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	26	24	
	Girls	29	28	30	
	Total	55	54	54	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (92)	95 (96)	95 (90)	
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)	
Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	24	24	
	Girls	28	29	29	
	Total	54	53	53	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (92)	93 (92)	93 (100)	
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)	

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

		Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year		2000	16	18	34
National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	12	15	
	Girls	15	13	16	
	Total	27	25	31	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (73)	74 (80)	91 (80)	
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)	
Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	13	15	
	Girls	13	15	17	
	Total	23	28	32	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68 (80)	82 (83)	94 (83)	
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)	

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	247
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.5
Average class size	28.2

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	107

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	25

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	511,899
Total expenditure	485,830
Expenditure per pupil	1,578
Balance brought forward from previous year	65,171
Balance carried forward to next year	91,240

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

248

Number of questionnaires returned

110

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	43	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	41	47	7	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	50	6	3	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	43	18	6	6
The teaching is good.	47	47	3	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	50	17	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	38	6	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	45	2	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	32	41	20	4	3
The school is well led and managed.	35	44	8	2	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	41	43	9	1	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	39	16	6	20

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Most parents have a positive opinion of the school, and inspectors broadly agree with their views. Some parents feel that the right amount of homework is not set. Inspectors did find inconsistencies in this respect. For example, what was set during the inspection often featured work connected with numeracy. On occasions, pupils were asked to complete what had been started in class. As a result, amounts to be done could vary from none at all, for those whose pace of working was rapid during the lesson, to a lot in the case of some other pupils. A similar proportion of parents feels that the school does not provide sufficient information or work closely enough with them. Inspectors found, however, that teachers work hard to provide information and that the school is generally open and friendly when enquiries or

offers of help are made. The school's range of activities outside lessons is not untypical of primary schools nationally.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

52. At the time of the inspection there were 26 children attending the nursery in the mornings and a similar number in the afternoons. Their ages range from three years and six months to four years and ten months. Children transfer to the mixed-age reception and Year 1 classes in the term when they reach five. Currently ten children are following the curriculum for the Foundation Stage in each of these classes. In consultation with parents, staff in the nursery carry out an assessment of children's attainment on entry and use the basic results to help inform their future planning. Statutory baseline assessments are administered within six weeks of children entering the reception classes. These results provide a valuable source of information about children's starting points. Standards of attainment on entry are similar to those usually found nationally, although the baseline tests often suggest a higher standard. Overall achievement of children during the Foundation Stage is generally sound.
53. The internal accommodation in the nursery is good and resources are good. A secure outdoor area is gradually being made more attractive. This improvement is based on the construction of a small paved courtyard. The available space is used well and the environment is stimulating, making good use of displays of children's work. Children are introduced to the routines and expectations of the school in a warm and sensitive manner.
54. The quality of teaching in the nursery is good and sometimes it is very good. The teacher and nursery nurse work well together and provide experiences and activities that are appropriate for children working towards the early learning goals of the Foundation Stage (the nationally recommended scheme of work for children under five). Teaching is most effective when there is a definite focus for the activity in which children are engaged, such as during a dance lesson in the hall or when the children are gathered together for a story. The fact that there are only two members of staff working in the nursery restricts opportunities for children to be gathered together in small groups. As a result, it is difficult to focus on play and activity that explicitly addresses the acquisition of, for example, the sounds of letters or ordinal numbers. However, children are managed well and both the teacher and nursery nurse are particularly effective in establishing good relationships amongst the children. For this reason, behaviour and personal and social development are strong. Another contributory factor in this is the good links with children's homes that are fostered. Arrangements are made for children to take books home to share, and parents are involved in fund-raising activities specific to the nursery. Furthermore, the teacher provides useful guidance notes on helping children to learn at home, further enhancing their development.
55. The quality of teaching and learning in the reception classes ranges from satisfactory to very good. The best learning opportunities take place when all reception aged children from the two mixed-age classes are taught together. All mathematics lessons, some language and literacy lessons, music and physical education are taught in these more cohesive groups. The fact that reception children are in mixed-age classes sometimes makes long and medium-term lesson planning unnecessarily complex. It also restricts opportunities to provide work that focuses specifically on their needs. Accommodation is good and space is well used to provide stimulating areas for role-play. Attractive displays enhance the learning environment.

Personal, social and emotional development

56. The personal and social development of nearly all children meets expectations by the time that they are five and some children are on course to exceed the early learning goals in this area. Most children are reasonably confident when they enter the nursery, demonstrating confidence with speaking and listening skills that are at least typical of children of their age. They form good relationships with other children and with adults. They listen to instructions and to each other and co-operate well in groups. Their attention to tasks is well sustained and they treat property

appropriately. Good opportunities for role-play, such as a 'hospital corner' or 'café', enable children to use their imaginations and to extend their social skills. Children in the Foundation Stage enjoy their work and are keen to learn.

57. All adults in the nursery and reception classes focus strongly on children's personal development, helping them to grow in confidence and develop good attitudes to work. Their knowledge of this area of learning is good and contributes to generally good teaching.

Communication, language and literacy

58. Children make satisfactory progress towards the achievement of the early learning goals in this area of learning. Most children who enter the reception classes in September and in January are likely to reach the goals by the age of five. However, some of the youngest intake may not do so because their early experiences are more limited.
59. Children in the nursery learn to recognise their names, which are written on card as they register for the session. They were fully absorbed in the teacher's re-telling of the story of *Kipper and the Toy Box*, demonstrating good concentration and listening skills. They join in rhymes and action songs with enjoyment and have a growing repertoire. Most children speak with confidence, clarity and a good sense of the need of the listener to hear. Initial letter sounds are taught as relevant situations occur. Nevertheless, the knowledge gained is insufficiently systematic, owing to the difficulty of gathering small groups together to consolidate it with memory games and/or play with, for example, letter cards or tiles.
60. Provision for reading development is good in the reception classes. Children share big books during literacy hours, reading together in groups and engaging in individual reading at home and at school. They have a growing number of words that they recognise in text, although sometimes, in the inspected lessons, opportunities were missed to emphasise the sounds that different letters make. However, all children show enthusiasm for books and higher attainers read simple texts with confidence and understanding. Children read regularly to their teacher and to adult helpers; contact with home is well maintained through the exchange of information in home/school reading records. Most children are able to write simple words and a few can write phrases or sentences using their knowledge of word lists.
61. Teaching of communication, language and literacy is good. In the nursery, plenty of conversation is used across a wide range of experiences and activity. The teacher and nursery nurse work together well as a team, with good understanding of children of this age. However, as only two adults are present for much of the time, it is sometimes difficult for them to work with small focused groups, which limits the use of activities to teach the sounds of letters. In the reception, further good teaching employs literacy hours well. As a result, children learn to appreciate stories, concentrating on what is read.

Mathematical development

62. Most children are on course to reach the early learning goals for mathematics, with the possible exception of a few younger children who enter the reception classes at Easter.
63. In the nursery, children count forward and back and recognise numerals to ten. Their awareness and understanding of number is learned during brief focused sessions and also incidentally. The teacher is adept at using opportunities in lessons such as dance to develop mathematical ideas and she uses mathematical language well.
64. Reception children are taught together daily, using the National Numeracy Strategy framework. In a very good lesson, all children were actively engaged in counting activities within 20, with particular emphasis on the number five. The brisk pace and well-chosen tasks resulted in all children making gains in their learning. Children enjoyed choosing items to put in a 'picnic basket' while the teacher worked alongside them, constantly extending and reinforcing their mathematical ideas.
65. Teaching of mathematical development is good. In the nursery, both the teacher and the nursery nurse have good knowledge of this area of learning. Opportunities to talk about shapes in the environment, to count, and to consolidate ideas about number are frequently followed up. In the reception, teaching is also generally good. It is based on good planning and lessons that follow a

similar pattern to that of numeracy hours further up the school. This style of teaching therefore supports learning well, as it prepares children for what they will meet in future lessons.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 66. Children are provided with a variety of experiences, in both the nursery and reception classes, which help to extend their knowledge about the world. Most of them are likely to achieve the early learning goals in this area.
- 67. Every day, children in all the Foundation Stage classes discuss and complete a weather chart. In the nursery, well-chosen stories and a range of different activities help to develop understanding of the world. They use sand and water; play in the 'hospital'; use construction kits; make pictures and models; and manipulate the mouse and keyboard on the computer.
- 68. In the reception classes, Monet's garden and his paintings have inspired a wide range of artistic work, including pictures generated on the computer. Children have learned about life at an earlier time and in a different country.
- 69. Adults responsible for teaching in all age groups under five have good knowledge of this area of learning. As a result, activities are well planned and set up to encourage pupils' learning well.

Physical development

- 70. Provision for children's physical development is good; most children will achieve the early learning goals and a significant proportion may exceed them.
- 71. All children in the nursery have daily opportunities for physical activities such as running, jumping and balancing, unless the weather is poor and they are unable to go outside. A variety of wheeled steerable toys and small portable climbing equipment are available for children's use in the large secure outdoor area. This area is still being developed and currently lacks larger fixed frames for children to climb through, over, under, and around. In a very good dance lesson children responded well to music and to instructions, showing awareness of space and of each other and that they are able to move with control and co-ordination. In walking to the hall, children confidently negotiated three flights of stairs and a sloping corridor, keeping sensibly in line. In using small tools and instruments, including paint brushes, pencils, scissors, crayons and others, children learn to use their hands and fingers accurately, and develop co-ordination of these fine movements with their eyes.
- 72. Children in reception classes have physical education lessons in the hall on three occasions during the week. During a lesson using a wide variety of large apparatus children showed that they could use pulling and sliding movements as they climbed through and under the equipment. They confidently climbed ladders and parallel poles, demonstrating awareness of others and a degree of co-ordination greater than expected for their age.
- 73. Teaching of this area of learning is good. Teachers understand children's requirements well and plan activities that address the needs of children in both nursery and reception age groups. Management of the children is usually very good, which ensures that they are safe when using apparatus and cutting tools alike.

Creative development

- 74. In both the nursery and reception classes, the children have opportunities through art, music and daily activities to develop their creative abilities. As a result, most children are expected to achieve the early learning goals in this area; some are currently on course to exceed them, and only a few are below standards that are typically seen.

75. Children in the nursery explore colour and texture. They paint segments of wheels in different colours; create pictures of their class gold fish; paint in black and white; make paper and textile collages; and make pictures with coloured sand. Their widening experiences promote development of this aspect well. They enjoy singing simple songs from memory and respond accurately to changes in tempo in movement and dance.
76. The artist, Monet, has been the focus for much work across the curriculum in recent lessons in the mixed reception and Year 1 classes. Children have used a computer program to produce good garden designs and have also painted pictures of water-lilies, adding collage work. They have also experienced the use of clay to make tiles with attractive flower designs on the surface. During a dance lesson children used their arms and then their whole bodies with good control in response to light, lilting music.
77. Teaching is good in classes for all under five age groups. Teachers plan a wide variety of artistic and musical activities, including listening to and making music, dance and artwork, demonstrating high expectations of what children can achieve. Resources and equipment are used well to promote learning.

ENGLISH

78. Results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests of seven year olds show that the pupils are attaining broadly in line with national averages. However, the number of pupils attaining higher than expected levels is below the national average in both reading and writing. When compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, attainment is below average in reading. Results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests for eleven year olds show that fewer pupils achieve higher than expected levels for their age, although the number achieving the expected level is above the national average. The main explanation for this is that a significant number of higher attainers leave the school in Years 5 and 6, before taking the tests at eleven. This factor affects statistical measures of attainment that give extra weight to results at higher than expected levels. It makes it harder for the school to match the results of similar schools. The school has introduced initiatives that help improve standards as pupils move through the school. These projects include a programme of reading recovery and additional literacy support. The school is also part of another scheme, piloting an idea called *Reading Intervention*. This initiative aims to help pupils in younger age groups. It began at the beginning of the present term and teachers' records show that the selected pupils are already making good progress. All these initiatives are improving standards.
79. By the age of seven, pupils develop satisfactory speaking and listening skills. Most pupils listen attentively and talk with some confidence. By the age of eleven, pupils have good listening skills and many are confident speakers, who state their views logically and express them clearly. For example, they talked enthusiastically about favourite pastimes, including books and authors. They demonstrated that their listening skills were good by making relevant responses to each other and to their teachers' questions.
80. Overall, pupils' attainment in reading is within national expectations and the majority makes at least satisfactory progress. From seven years old, pupils generally read with increasing accuracy, talking about what they have read and giving reasons for their choices of book. As they progress, texts become more complicated. By the age of eleven, higher attaining pupils generally read well. They talk about their enjoyment of reading and of writing poetry that is similar to what they have read. Good teaching of poetry is a strong contributory feature of their enjoyment. Pupils of all abilities are positive about reading and enjoy any opportunities to read and talk about books. Higher attaining pupils read with fluency and interest from books they have chosen and have satisfactory library skills. They know how to use the contents page to locate information in non-fiction books and how to use the index. Year 6 pupils use the Internet to locate information for topics in history and geography. However, younger pupils' knowledge of the uses of a library is weak. Few when asked could explain how to find books on a particular subject. Pupils were observed in lessons reading aloud in groups with confidence. Older pupils' knowledge of authors is satisfactory because they are introduced to a wide range of authors and styles in the literacy hour. This range of texts contributes to pupils' cultural development but pupils' personal choice is often limited to the same author and subject. Teachers use the first session of the literacy hour well to show pupils how to respond to

text. This feature was demonstrated during a Year 3 lesson where the class was looking at fables. Furthermore, Year 1 pupils responded enthusiastically to the story *The Runaway Pizza*. Seven year olds' attainment in writing is average. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to develop narrative styles of their own. They usually use capital letters and full stops correctly. Some are able to use speech marks in their stories. However, some lower attaining pupils are still struggling with letter formation and use only a limited vocabulary in what they write. Pupils of average ability in Year 2 have reasonably well-formed and neat handwriting, but very few join their letters.

By eleven, pupils write in many forms and for different audiences and their attainment is broadly in line with national averages. Looking at pupils' work through the school shows that they mostly make satisfactory progress in their use of vocabulary, dialogue and punctuation. Presentation of work is satisfactory. It is set out sensibly and is usually neat, although many pupils are slow to develop joined handwriting, preferring to print each letter separately. The school has recently introduced a new handwriting scheme to address this weakness.

81. The school has identified the need for more specific teaching of writing skills and opportunities for pupils to apply these skills in more extended work of their own. Planning for this is to be reviewed. During the inspection older pupils were observed engaged in planning their own arguments for and against animal rights, using planning sheets to help them. Literacy lessons are well planned. However, skills that pupils have acquired during their literacy lessons are not used consistently in other areas of the curriculum. For example, in religious education, the opportunity to write at length about beliefs and feelings of others is sometimes missed, because worksheets and pictures alone are sometimes preferred for the recording of work. In history, geography and science, opportunities to record factual information and to discuss flexible uses of specific vocabulary are not consistently followed up. Sometimes, it is done well, as when younger pupils received good opportunities to practise their writing skills, recording stories about Jesus for displays, and when older pupils wrote about life in Victorian times. However, on other occasions, specific vocabulary is drawn to pupils' attention and meaning is explained, whereas patterns in spelling or usage of such words in other contexts are left unexplored.
82. Pupils respond to their lessons enthusiastically. They listen well during whole-class learning. Pupils in groups and those working on their own concentrate appropriately and show good collaboration skills when working together.
83. Progress made by pupils with a statement of special educational needs is good. Work is planned for them and experienced teachers and support staff give them additional provision. Pupils at a lower stage of special needs achieve less in lessons when there is no additional classroom support. Sometimes work for higher attaining pupils is not well thought out, as, for example, when the same set of tasks is available to all pupils. Whether or not they progress to more challenging activities then depends on their pace of working, rather than their level of prior attainment.
84. The quality of teaching is always good and sometimes very good. One excellent lesson was observed with the older pupils. In this lesson the teacher had taken poems by Walter de la Mare as the subject for discussions about 'theme' and 'atmosphere'. After reading the poem, *Someone*, the whole class set about writing a second verse together focusing on vocabulary and the rhyme and rhythm. The last two lines were left for the pupils to add their own individual ideas the following day. The poem was drafted and re-drafted with the teacher acting as scribe. The finished poem was a result of the class teacher asking challenging and carefully thought-out questions, which encouraged pupils to make thoughtful responses.

*But someone must know who's been
Knocking on my door
I tiptoed up the footpath
To the moor-moor-moor.
I listened. I heard.
I stared all around
I spied something moving
But there wasn't a sound.
Only the creaking of the gate
Scratch-scratching on the wall
Only from the rocks*

*The wolf's howling call
Only the owl hooting
Whilst the snowflakes fall
So*

85. Planning through the school is effective with clear aims; learning objectives are clear and the pupils know what is expected of them and what they will learn by the end of the lesson. Lessons are well structured and teachers have well-established routines for presenting the phonic work at the beginning of the literacy hour lessons. Teachers use a range of appropriate teaching strategies to meet the needs of the pupils and achieve the lesson objectives.

In some lessons time is extended for the individual group work to enable pupils to concentrate on extended pieces of writing. The good teaching throughout the school had lively interaction, which held the pupils' interest and encouraged them to take an active part in the learning. In the majority of lessons the conclusion is generally used well to check pupils' understanding and to clarify any misunderstanding. Day-to-day marking lacks consistency and rarely identifies for pupils what they need to do next to improve their work. This is particularly evident in pupils' pieces of writing. Relationships between pupils and teachers are good. Recent changes introduced by the literacy co-ordinators have enabled teachers to improve teaching considerably, but this has not yet had time to have its full impact on standards.

86. Resources for the subject are satisfactory. A range of fiction books is kept in each classroom and non-fiction books are housed in the library, which is an attractive, bright and cheerful room. Books are shelved according to the Dewey system. Leadership of the subject is a concern, as the overall co-ordinator is currently on extended sick leave. The literacy hour has been successfully implemented but further development of the subject is difficult. The co-ordinator for classes aged five to seven is enthusiastic and knowledgeable.

MATHEMATICS

87. Attainment at ages seven and eleven years in the National Curriculum tests for 2000 was average, both in comparison with all schools nationally and with similar schools. The proportion of seven year olds who achieved at levels higher than that expected was less than the national average, while that for pupils aged eleven was broadly average. This is a similar position to that found at the time of the last inspection, although there has been improvement in the proportion of pupils achieving at the higher level at age eleven. Over time, steady progress has been maintained in line with the improvement in standards that have been made nationally. Effective teaching in groups matched to pupils' prior attainment is leading to continuing improvement in the progress that they make and to the standards that they achieve. Very good leadership and management of the subject have ensured that the National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully implemented, not only in mathematics but also across the curriculum in subjects such as design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology and science. All teachers are confident in mathematics and, as a result, pupils show good understanding and are keen to learn more.

88. The teachers of younger age groups up to seven prepare their lessons well on the basis of what pupils already know and understand. Their lessons follow the pattern of the National Numeracy Strategy with plenty of pace and variety. The mental mathematics sessions at the beginning of each lesson are a particular strength and parents at the pre-inspection meeting felt that this was the case. Overall, good teaching, combined with mathematics classes where the pupils are grouped according to what they have already learned, is beginning to increase the pace of learning and raise the proportion of seven year olds who attain above average standards. Seven year olds competently count up to, and from, 1000 in 100s. They confidently estimate numbers of squares and dots when they are flashed onto an overhead projector. In one lesson the pace and excitement created by very good teaching was such that a buzz of excitement arose when each number was flashed up for a fraction of a second. In such lessons the rate of learning is always high because pupils are so keen to learn. Teachers use a wide range of different ways to present information. For example, seven year olds were helped through the use of a computer program to consolidate their knowledge of the names of a set of three-dimensional shapes. In this lesson pupils confidently used mathematical language and were able to identify the vertices, edges and faces of a cone, cube, cuboid, cylinder, square and triangular pyramid. Planning and assessment records confirm that the full National Curriculum is taught and that the range of opportunities to use and apply mathematics across the curriculum is good.

89. Teachers of pupils over seven years old plan lessons well, using information about what pupils have previously learned and understood. This information is used effectively to group pupils of similar attainment together in order to ensure teaching that will enable them to learn as much as possible. Because of the complex way in which the school is organised some mathematics classes include pupils from three different year groups, presenting a considerable challenge for the teachers – a challenge that they meet well through the use of individual targets for pupils, ensuring that whatever their age and prior levels of attainment most pupils, from the highest attainers to those with learning difficulties, make satisfactory progress.

Inspection evidence suggests that the proportion of pupils achieving at a level above that expected in the national tests is rising. However, this has been hard for the school to achieve in the past few years, as a small but steady move away from the area has been occurring when pupils enter Years 5 and 6. Records show that most pupils involved in this mobility have been on course to reach higher levels. Booster classes (groups for more intensive teaching of pupils who might otherwise just miss attaining at the expected level) are provided to help pupils learn more effectively. The National Numeracy Strategy is taught well and offers pupils challenging and varied lessons that maintain positive attitudes to learning and satisfactory progress across the age range.

90. Pupils in Year 6 have positive attitudes to mathematics whether they find the subject easy or difficult. They enjoy mental mathematics sessions that begin every lesson and, because they are grouped with pupils who have similar understanding, they are both challenged and experience success. With few exceptions they work very hard and present their work neatly. Understanding of place value is well developed and many pupils confidently work with numbers up to 10,000 and above. For example, in the class where pupils of high prior attainment were working, they enjoyed a mental mathematics session where they were accurately solving calculations such as $\frac{1}{10^{\text{th}}}$ of 95 and understood that this was the same as 95 divided by 10. They had no difficulty in adding and subtracting numbers such as 4,200 and 3,700. Their understanding of fractions was particularly good and many understood that a fraction such as $\frac{2}{5}$ actually means the ratio of 2 to 5. Even pupils of lower attainment confidently discussed different methods of adding numbers such as 276 and 159. Teachers' planning and assessment records confirm that all aspects of the National Curriculum are being taught and that pupils have many opportunities to use and apply mathematics across the curriculum. There are particular strengths in the way that data handling (the collection, use and interpretation of information that pupils gather for themselves) is developed and supported with the use of information and communication technology.
91. What is provided for pupils with identified special educational needs through to those with higher levels of prior attainment is relevant to need. However, a small number of pupils with difficult attitudes and behaviour are present in one or two classes, and these pupils have not undergone formal assessment of their special needs. As a result, neither pupils nor teachers are receiving extra classroom assistance or other formal support to reduce any loss of time that challenging behaviour causes. Levels of additional support from classroom assistants are, anyway, low. However, general behaviour in lessons is nearly always good or very good. A particular strength is the way that pupils of all ages work together and listen sensibly to the contributions of others during mathematical discussions.
92. Teaching across the school is good. It was good, and sometimes very good, in half of the observed lessons, and in the remainder, it was satisfactory. The quality of planning, based on very good assessment procedures, is strong. The effective use of target setting, the range of work covered, knowledgeable teachers, and high expectations are further contributory features of the good teaching that was found. It leads to positive attitudes, shown by virtually all pupils, and in turn ensures that the pace of pupils' learning is improving from what are sound rates. As benefits from the grouping of pupils into classes related to prior attainment, and the effects of changes in the leadership of mathematics begin to have an impact, standards are set to rise further. Teachers' marking of work is conscientiously kept up to date, but written comments to pupils about how they might improve are not made frequently. This weakness is to some extent offset by individual targets that teachers set for their pupils. However, it would be helpful to pupils if these targets were shared with them in simple language.

93. The mathematics co-ordinator is an advanced skills mathematics teacher (a teacher who has been identified as possessing sufficiently strong knowledge of the subject to advise others in the area about best practice), and she is providing very good leadership. She prepared the teaching and support staff well for the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, and the school contributed suggestions about the project prior to its national introduction. Staff at the school are currently undergoing a further five days of numeracy training so that they are fully up to date. Five teachers have already undergone this training and a further three will undertake it shortly. The co-ordinator has organised and prepared the subject well. Resources are sound and teachers know how to make the best use of what is available.
94. Homework tasks are very good. Most eleven year olds are receiving a considerable amount that is designed to consolidate work done in class. A sheet upon which teachers and pupils' parents or carers can make comments in a genuine partnership is another good feature.

SCIENCE

95. At the time of the last inspection, attainment was in line with national expectations at the ages of both seven and eleven, although the percentages that reached higher than expected levels were well below average. The school lacked a policy and scheme of work that applied through the age groups. Standards currently are broadly in line with national averages. However, current national averages are much higher than at the time of the last inspection. Far more pupils are therefore attaining at expected levels now than in 1997. Planning has also been improved by introducing national recommendations of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority as a scheme of work. Furthermore, the co-ordinator has put a lot of development into place, including links with the *Zeneca Project*, which have emphasised learning of basic skills in experimental and observational elements of the subject. As a result, findings in the inspection indicated that pupils through the school understand fair testing and observe phenomena carefully for their ages.
96. The results of National Curriculum tests reflect the inspection findings. These tests indicate that standards have risen in line with national improvements, such that in 2000, the vast majority of eleven year olds attained the expected level or better, whereas in 1996, only just over half did so. However, fewer pupils than the national average gained a higher than expected level for their age. At seven years old, no national tests are available, but based on statutory teachers' assessments, attainment in 2000 was just below the national average. However, data that compare the results of eleven year olds in 2000 with their results in 1996, when they were seven, indicate that overall progress is satisfactory.
97. Inspection evidence demonstrates that seven year olds show interest in living things and use careful observation to record the main parts of plants by drawing and labelling them. They recall what they have studied and higher attaining pupils explain the functions of petals, roots and stems. Their understanding of materials and some of their properties includes features such as 'transparent' and 'opaque', and they know how to complete a simple electrical circuit to make a bulb light up. A scrutiny of pupils' work provided evidence that eleven year olds understand many important features of fair testing and the need to carry out investigations in a systematic way. Standards reached in work on living things, materials and physical processes, especially in connection with forces, match national expectations. In a lesson in Year 6, pupils' ideas about viruses, bacteria, moulds and fungi included the use of good scientific language, such as 'micro-organisms'. Pupils understood that living things could be far too small to see without the aid of instruments such as a microscope. Elements of attainment above that expected for their age were emerging. For example, pupils were beginning to make comparisons between different types of micro-organisms to categorise them into groups. Good teaching through the school, based on improvements in teachers' knowledge and confidence, is a strong contributory feature to better achievement in the subject. During the inspection, pupils in Year 3, for example, were seen refining ideas and skills about magnetism that they acquired lower down the school. In a mixed Year 1 and 2 class, they learned to separate metal from non-magnetic materials such as card and plastic. In Year 3, they demonstrated understanding that some metals, such as brass, are not magnetic, whereas steel and iron were attracted by magnets.

98. Pupils' attitudes to science are good. Pupils in Year 5, for example, were very absorbed by anomalies that they found when testing sound. A group found that a thick elastic band made a higher note than a thinner one when it was stretched across the bridge of a sound box. This finding was clearly not what they expected. Their fascination with it also provided an example of the very good opportunities for personal development that the school provides. In a summary of findings, the teacher drew attention to the importance of such matters to scientific investigation and praised these pupils for their work in seeking an explanation. In fact the thicker band was shorter and it was therefore tighter when it was stretched. Behaviour in the inspected lessons was nearly always good. However, a small group in Year 6 required all their teacher's skills of behaviour management to ensure that the lesson maintained a satisfactory pace.
99. The overall quality of teaching is good. Lessons involving pupils of all ages were observed. No unsatisfactory teaching occurred, and three-fifths were good, including one very good lesson in a mixed-age class in Years 4 and 5. This very good teaching occurred because well-chosen tasks inspired pupils' interest. The teacher concentrated on pupils' thinking, feeding them with good, probing questions in response to what they did. These skilful methods helped them to extend their own findings. In this way, the teacher ensured that they acquired knowledge at just the right pace for them to absorb its implications securely.

In all other lessons, planning was at least sound, and led to thorough teaching of what is required in the relevant part of the National Curriculum. Pupils with statements of special educational needs are well supported. Teachers and classroom assistants know these pupils well and offer help and encouragement to ensure that their access to an appropriate curriculum is maintained. However, lower attaining pupils, with lesser needs, and others with previously higher attainment are not as consistently supported with work that is well adapted to their learning requirements. One important factor is that the special needs co-ordinator has no available time away from her responsibilities as a class teacher. It is therefore difficult to check pupils' needs and to work alongside colleagues through the school to ensure that needs are identified accurately. This weakness means that her expertise in the area is not used to best effect.

100. The co-ordination of science is good. The co-ordinator has achieved much in raising teachers' confidence in the use of investigative and experimental approaches. The *Zeneca Project* has been a useful factor in this. However, opportunities to work alongside colleagues to establish where best practice can be found are restricted. This limitation makes it harder to spread, by example, the many good features that exist. Assessment of pupils' progress and the uses of assessments to set targets and improve planning have been identified for further development and have improved and are continuing to improve steadily since the last inspection.

ART AND DESIGN

101. Insufficient evidence was available for a complete judgement to be made about the standards achieved by eleven year olds. In lessons that were seen, pupils' observational drawing was below expectations in the National Curriculum. However, pupils' evaluation of their work, and their appraisal of art was in line with what is normally expected. Displays of work by five to seven year olds indicated that the standards pupils achieve by the age of seven are broadly in line with national expectations.
102. In one lesson pupils used pencils to make observational drawings of musical instruments, and in another, artefacts from Victorian times were drawn. Whilst several pupils took great care with their work, the results indicated that drawing techniques are not well understood. This finding suggests that skills are not built up sufficiently rigorously on what has been previously acquired.
103. Displays of work by younger pupils indicate that a broad range of artistic experiences are provided for this age group. For example, pupils used textiles to create sunflowers that were inspired by Van Gogh's paintings. Brightly-coloured felt was used to produce a patchwork. In addition to colour mixing, pupils have experimented with colour to paint cold winter scenes, and used paper collage to add lilies to paintings inspired by Monet's garden. Clay tiles depicting flowers and other plants showed a quite sophisticated use of sculpting techniques.

104. Throughout the school the work of famous artists is used well to extend knowledge and to stimulate starting points for pupils' own skills and ideas. The works of Monet and Van Gogh were evident in classes for younger pupils and in Year 5, for example, pupils were using the work of Klee and Kandinsky to look at different styles and techniques.
105. The quality of teaching ranged from very good to satisfactory. Plans for specific lessons are detailed and effective. Cross-curricular links are used well; for example, observational drawing in Year 6 was related to a study of Victorian history, while pupils in a mixed Year 4 and 5 class drew musical instruments, after studying 'sound' in science. This approach helps pupils to acquire knowledge by reducing unnecessary barriers between the content of subjects. However, its drawback is that sometimes skills are not presented in a progressive sequence. The main weakness is that, as a result, it cannot be guaranteed that skills are consolidated without unnecessary repetition or that sometimes pupils miss something. Nevertheless, a balanced teaching of the National Curriculum is occurring overall.
106. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable about the subject and is able to provide helpful advice to colleagues. She is beginning to develop a portfolio that contains examples of pupils' work at different levels of attainment. These examples will help to monitor standards and to provide checks for other staff to build up a clear picture of what can be achieved by pupils of different ages as they move through the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

107. There was insufficient evidence for overall judgements to be made about standards in the subject, or the quality of teaching. Insufficient examples of pupils' work were available and it was possible to observe only two lessons. However, in these lessons, involving pupils in Years 4 and 5, standards of attainment were in line with national expectations for the age.
108. Throughout the school, design and technology is often incorporated within topics. Lesson plans are detailed and take into account the programmes of study that are in the National Curriculum. Some units of work are derived from nationally published schemes; in particular, pupils in Years 3 to 6 follow two specific units of work each year. Some pupils miss parts of this provision when they have swimming lessons. Owing to the complex organisation into classes in some year groups, coupled with the lack of a rigorous whole-school assessment, it cannot be guaranteed that unnecessary repetitions, and conversely omissions, of skills and knowledge do not occur. Steady progression in the development of skills that builds rigorously on what has gone before was also difficult to establish from the limited evidence that was available in the inspection.
109. In most classes for five to seven year olds, knowledge and skills in design and technology are taught within a carousel of activities (a method of setting up several different activities in a classroom at the same time. Pupils then move around from one activity to the next, until they have experienced all the required learning). The observed lessons involved pupils aged nine and ten. In one of the lessons, pupils were evaluating biscuits for appearance, shape, taste and quality of packaging, to help with planning and design of their own products. In the other lesson pupils were trying to find the best methods of joining materials in order to construct containers later on. Both of these lessons incorporated important elements of the programme of study in the National Curriculum. The teaching was knowledgeable and proceeded at a good pace. As a result, pupils acquired skills well.
110. The subject is led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who is aware of what is taking place in the subject through her scrutiny of teachers' planning. She is well aware of weaknesses in the subject and has good ideas for correcting them. She does not have responsibility for ordering resources or managing a budget, but the new headteacher has plans for proper delegation of this responsibility.

GEOGRAPHY

111. At the last inspection attainment by pupils at the age of seven was judged to be above the national average. The school has maintained these standards. By the age of seven, pupils have good understanding of whereabouts they live in England. They know about postcodes and how

they are used to help the postman deliver letters. They know that London is the capital city of England and that Paris is the capital of France. They have good knowledge of other parts of the world where the climate is hot. They talk enthusiastically and with good knowledge about countries abroad and what is different and similar about ways of life in, for example, France and Australia. They have good reasons for methods of transport that they would choose to go to other parts of the world. They demonstrate reasonable understanding of the times to travel to these places and that they are much further away than places that they have heard about in Yorkshire.

112. By the age of eleven, pupils have maintained their level of attainment at above what is normally expected. Progress from the age of seven is generally sound, and some pupils make progress at a fast rate. They have good knowledge of their locality and of how patterns of employment have changed since the closure of the mines. Skills in the use of maps are well taught and pupils acquire the appropriate vocabulary for describing geographical features. They have a good understanding of the differences and similarities between rural and urban areas. They know that where people live influences the choice of their work and pastimes. They also have good understanding of how landscapes, climate and weather affect these choices.
113. Owing to what was timetabled, it was not possible to see geography taught in classes for five to seven year olds. However, talking to the pupils showed that they have great enthusiasm for the subject and that they learnt skills effectively. They were also taught basic knowledge in such a way that they recalled it well.

Older pupils were responsive in their lessons and showed that they work with thought and care. In one class, however, the teacher struggled to manage the behaviour of a small group of pupils. Although she succeeded in maintaining the pace of the lesson at a satisfactory rate, it was clear that better identification and support of these pupils' needs would have resulted in even better learning. Based on what is attained, and the effectiveness of learning over time, the quality of teaching overall is good. Planning for individual lessons is good and results in a good balance between the direct teaching of information and allowing pupils to discover facts for themselves. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and are confident. They use a variety of teaching strategies including brainstorm (sitting in a group and using each other's ideas to create more new ones), investigations, teachers' direct explanations and group work. Pupils whose special educational needs have been identified, including those with statements of need, are supported well. Their teachers and classroom assistants know them well and adapt work accordingly so that their learning takes place at appropriate levels. However, not all pupils have their special needs identified effectively. The co-ordinator has written a holding statement for the subject, while she puts together new planning for the year, which will eventually form the basis for a new scheme of work.

114. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable about the subject and has a good vision for its future improvement. She gains information about what is happening in the subject by looking at teachers' planning and sampling work from each class. However, overall leadership is currently restricted, because she has no time away from her own class-teaching responsibilities to monitor what is taught and how, by working alongside colleagues while they teach.

HISTORY

115. Attainment is above average at the ages of seven and eleven. Orally in lessons, and in conversation with an inspector, older pupils demonstrated good knowledge and skills, demonstrating considerable depth of knowledge of historical eras that they have studied. This finding is an improvement on the position found at the time of the last inspection, when attainment at both ages was judged to be average. However, opportunities to reinforce skills acquired in literacy hours, recording what pupils know in extended factual writing, are sometimes missed. As a result, written work is sometimes brief, and fails to do justice to pupils' actual understanding. Although, during the inspection, no history was being taught to pupils aged six and seven, evidence such as planning and discussion with staff and pupils suggests that teaching and learning are effective. In discussion, seven year olds spoke confidently about Guy Fawkes, and recounted how and why he had tried to blow up the Houses of Parliament. Although they were uncertain of the actual century or date, suggesting about 1884, they commented that it happened a long time ago. Their factual knowledge was good. For example, they knew that Guy Fawkes was alive when James I was King of England. Furthermore, pupils

were very clear that computers and battery toys had not been invented, few books existed, and that people dressed differently. They also knew that our queen is Elizabeth II and that Queen Elizabeth I lived just before the time of the gunpowder plot. Pupils also knew that 'Bonfire Night' is when we remember the story of Guy Fawkes. They spoke sensibly about World War I and were aware that we buy poppies today, "...because soldiers fought and died in a poppy field." By the age of seven, pupils have studied a range of topics relating to Hannibal and ancient Rome, personal history, Claude Monet, homes, childhood, transport and farming.

116. Teaching of seven to eleven year olds is good. In the small number of lessons observed, teaching was satisfactory in two lessons and very good in one. However, even in the lessons that were judged satisfactory it was clear from the quality of questions and answers that pupils' knowledge was above average, even though their written work was sometimes only average. Nine and ten year olds firmly understood the nature of Viking society, easily distinguishing between fact and stereotypes, such as the horned helmets with which Vikings are so often portrayed. Their discussion of Viking funerals was wide-ranging and included beliefs before Christianity, and of Christians and Jews, as well as the nature of ghosts and Viking superstition. The writing that followed was of average quality in terms of literacy skills. However, it demonstrated that pupils were able to think themselves into the position of different members of Viking society. The teacher led the discussion skilfully. It was both challenging and enjoyable and was an indication that good teaching is making a strong contribution to pupils' learning at all levels of prior attainment. Bearing in mind pupils' starting points, this quality of work represents good overall achievement.

By the age of eleven, pupils are used to examining original evidence and they are able to distinguish between first-hand evidence, reported facts, reliable evidence, propaganda and opinion. They have well-developed concepts of time and are able to compare the experiences of people living in the past with their own in the present. For example, eleven year olds enjoyed comparing Victorian schools with their own and discussing how attitudes towards discipline and how children are treated have changed. Interestingly, better-behaved pupils in the class argued that the cane was a good idea, whereas those who claimed to be more likely to receive it, took the opposite view. In this lesson, it was evident that many pupils are confident historians for their age. They have developed some good historical understanding.

117. With the exception of a small number of pupils, behaviour is good or better. Positive attitudes are reflected in good progress. Pupils listen to each other's contributions and are supportive even when fellow pupils make mistakes.
118. During the past couple of years, while literacy and numeracy hours have been introduced, fewer topics than usual have been studied. However, what has been taught has clearly been covered in greater depth than is required, leading to the high standards that have been found. Teachers' planning is detailed. A record of topics that are taught is kept, but no detailed assessment is used. Nevertheless, teachers' knowledge and enthusiasm is reflected in positive outcomes in terms of progress and the good levels of knowledge acquired. Not all pupils with special educational needs have been formally identified, and levels of classroom support are very limited. Teachers know their pupils well, however, and endeavour to ensure that they all achieve as well as possible from their prior levels of attainment. However, while work is marked promptly, very little comment is included to help pupils and teachers with ideas about what to improve next. History topics often involve finding information at home or taking work home to complete. Although this is sometimes appropriate, on other occasions it leads to inconsistency in the amount that pupils do. Those who work at a good pace in lessons have little to complete, whereas other pupils may have a lot more. Parents raised this issue in their pre-inspection meeting, and this evidence suggests that in this respect they are correct.
119. The co-ordinators are providing sound leadership. They have only recently taken up this responsibility and have already conducted an audit of resources and identified some weaknesses in what is available, for example, a lack of breadth in the topics covered, especially for six and seven year olds. The complex class structure with its mixed-age classes is also making equality of access to the curriculum difficult to manage for some individuals. For example, a few pupils miss out on the opportunity to learn about the Ancient Greeks between the ages of eight and nine. The availability of resources is unsatisfactory in some important respects. For example, the school's stock of history books is insufficient in range and number. Other resources such as artefacts and the range of computer programs are also lacking. What

is available in information and communication technology is used well. However, the effect of shortages in what the school owns are lessened by the use of borrowed items that are available from the local teachers' centre.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

120. The last inspection judged attainment to be generally good. Improvement has occurred since then, and by the age of seven, the standard of work is well above that normally expected. Progress continues to be good throughout the junior classes, with the exception of sensor and control work, where there are insufficient opportunities to experience activities that result in a higher level of understanding. This factor is the main reason why overall attainment by the age of eleven is judged as above expectations, when achievement in other elements of the subject is often well above average. During the inspection, for example, there were examples of very good work in graphics, desktop publishing and the use of spreadsheets.
121. By the age of seven, pupils can handle data and produce simple graphs. They write and correct text and create pictures in the style of Monet, using a program entitled *Splosh* to good effect. Good organisation by teachers and a spirit of partnership have ensured that pupils benefit from an extra-curricular parent and child project. This project offers very good one-to-one help that has greatly increased computing skills. Skills are systematically taught and most pupils are adept on the keyboard and with the mouse. Many have begun to understand how to follow menus through a web-site.

Pupils are aware that some computers are capable of a dialogue with users, and that different outcomes arise from responses within such dialogue. They are competent in combining text, graphics and sound, and higher attainers are particularly confident in their knowledge of how to control the system. Their competence stems from the expertise and good planning of their teachers, which ensures that all learn basic skills at early ages. For example, younger pupils in classes for five- to seven year olds have used e-mail to communicate with another school, playing a version of the game *Consequences*, based on story telling.

122. Pupils continue to develop knowledge and understanding well, from the age of seven upwards. By eleven, standards are above those expected and in some aspects of the subject remain well above. Pupils in Year 3 developed a branching database to help them classify raw materials, benefiting from a clear demonstration of software on an interactive whiteboard (a large screen that is capable of controlling programs). Other pupils combined text and pictures from a graphic program to give clear instructions for making a cup of tea. A Year 4 class looked at abstract works of art by Kandinsky and then used buttons on a toolbar to flip, rotate, cut and reposition shapes to experiment with their own pictures. Teachers' good subject knowledge passed on to pupils through direct teaching, interspersed with frequent opportunities to practise, means that skills are acquired quickly. As a result, pupils achieve good outcomes and their motivation is sustained. Year 5 pupils clearly explained both advantages and limitations of seeking information from the Internet. Year 6 pupils used text and graphics imaginatively to produce a *Powerpoint* presentation on Monet. This task was set with an audience of younger pupils in mind. The result was particularly apt, showing due regard to the need for language that could be understood readily by five, six and seven year olds. Pupils are eager to explain what they know about how computers work. They are particularly good at explaining the importance of the microchips. This good quality of learning is based firmly on good teaching, which helps pupils to remember what they have experienced. Older juniors use programs such as *Excel* and know about changing variables and formulae.
123. Many examples of good uses of computers to support learning across the curriculum were evident. Six and seven year olds reinforced their knowledge of Bible stories. Other younger pupils matched numbers to dots and objects during a numeracy session. Combinations of word processing and graphical display were used in history to publish ideas about Viking settlements. A database was created to hold information about the changing length of a shadow over a period of time. Pupils searched the Internet for a variety of information, such as data about sunrise and sunset. Many other similar examples were found on display or in samples of work. Pupils of all ages through the school collaborate well, co-operating in pairs or groups when researching and presenting information. An example was seen in a study on the history and

geography of Barnsley. A Christmas Concert in the local church was enhanced as a result of computer-generated nativity scenes that were projected onto screens and walls.

124. Pupils throughout the school, including those with special needs, respond positively to the co-ordinator's excellent vision and strong commitment to extending the boundaries of information and communication technology. This response is well placed, as the aim has already produced a wide range of well-planned and engrossing activities. This knowledgeable and well-conceived approach has also inspired members of staff to broaden their knowledge and use of the subject, producing high quality teaching through the school. Management of the subject is very good and contributes very strongly to pupils' high levels of achievement.
125. Teaching was good or better in three-quarters of the observed lessons and never dropped below satisfactory. Teachers have very good knowledge of the subject and carefully prepare lessons so that pupils learn steadily. Teachers are clear about what pupils are expected to know by the end of their lessons. Software and other resources, such as copies of Monet's paintings, and portraits from the court of Elizabeth I, are used well to make learning clearer. Teachers are particularly good at using questions to test understanding and then using pupils' answers to highlight and extend key learning. Strengths and weaknesses of programs and software are pointed out and discussed. This approach helps pupils to understand that computers are not infallible, but are tools that they must learn to control. A teacher of a class in Year 5 used a pupil to demonstrate skills of in-filling. It worked well because others became aware of pitfalls that this pupil was able to describe. Teachers use interactive whiteboards well to demonstrate important points of the lesson and to ensure that pupils take an active role.

Planning is very good. It focuses on the new 2000 National Curriculum and is structured to ensure that pupils learn in a systematic fashion. For example, there is a commendable emphasis on comparing different approaches to collecting and displaying information. Teachers make very good use of the Internet to access ideas and plans from educational websites, ensuring up-to-date and relevant learning opportunities.

126. Further evidence of visionary leadership is found in the high quality weekly training that is offered and teachers' willingness to update their skills continually. Confident and competent teachers provide good role models for the pupils, who achieve well in such an environment. Sound evaluation results in appropriate developmental targets being identified and set. For example, it has been decided to acquire software that allows more advanced work on sensors and control technology. The school has been very successful in raising funds and resources from within the community, including industry. Work has begun on establishing a manageable system of assessing progress. However, pupils are not involved sufficiently in self-assessment.

MUSIC

127. At the time of the last inspection, standards in music were in line with expectations at the ages of seven and eleven. Pupils were introduced to a wide range of composers and styles of music. Standards have improved and are above what is normally expected for both age groups. Older pupils sing particularly well with considerable confidence and good variations of tone and volume in their voices, matching the mood of the words and tunes that they sing. Taped evidence of a Christmas performance demonstrated that older pupils perform solo items, duets and part-singing well. Instrumentalists contributed strongly to the concert, performing in a woodwind ensemble. The school's recorder players performed the introductory verse of *Once in Royal David's City*, playing at a steady, natural pace, with good fingering and breath control. Younger pupils sing accurately with a good regard for pitch, pulse and rhythm. Music played a strong part in an assembly for younger pupils. A teacher played the piano, providing a good role model with sympathetic accompaniments for their singing. The piano was also used to provide atmosphere for pupils to reflect on how the music made them think and feel.
128. Lessons through the school provide further evidence that pupils achieve well. In Year 2, a very good lesson enabled them to understand how signs and symbols can control what to play. The teacher held up cards with different lines and shapes on them. Pupils responded by varying the pitch of their voices according to what was on the cards. For example, they quickly learnt that a wavy line might mean that they should sing higher and lower, and higher and lower again, and as many times as the waves on the card denoted. They also listened with interest to an excerpt

from *The Nutcracker*, offering good ideas about what the music meant to them. Pupils in Year 4 used very good musical terminology, in explaining differences between the 'texture' of Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata*, and a piano concerto. After hearing the sonata, they were told that the concerto, also by Beethoven, had a much richer and 'thicker' texture, and were asked to predict what this might mean. They correctly identified that more instruments would be involved – not just a piano alone. The teacher's careful planning and questioning thus produced good learning for the pupils.

129. Pupils enjoyed the music lessons that were seen. They nearly always tried hard to follow and understand the ideas that were taught, listening and engaging well with tasks. Their behaviour was generally good and they co-operated well with each other in groups when practising or performing. On one occasion, over-exuberance led to some wastage of time. However, pupils listened to their teachers' summary well and were clearly sorry about their earlier noisiness.
130. All the teaching that was observed was at least satisfactory and included examples of good and very good teaching. Very good lessons occurred in Years 2 and 4. These lessons were based on good planning that contained very clear ideas about what children were expected to know and understand by the time that the lesson ended. Teachers used a variety of good methods, which captured children's imagination, gripping their attention and thus helping them to learn easily. In the Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils listened to and appraised taped music; played a name game, *Hickerty-Tickerty*, which included the singing of solo phrases; used percussion instruments; and chanted parts of *We're going on a bear hunt* rhythmically. The Year 4 lesson contained a similar rich variety of approaches.

A particularly strong feature of both these lessons was the way that teachers kept probing pupils' thinking, encouraging them to explain their ideas and reasons for the answers and decisions that they made. Even the satisfactory teaching contained several of these features, including a variety of methods, such as the use of electronic keyboards. Pupils were also provided with opportunities to experiment for themselves. However, the pace of this lesson was slowed because several pupils wasted time when the instruments were given to them, failing to concentrate on the task that had been set. Nevertheless, sound learning occurred during a good summary at the end of this lesson. A strong contributory feature to the good teaching is the use that is made of musical knowledge or instrumental expertise on the staff. Teachers with this type of skill are involved strongly in providing lessons through the school.

131. The subject is well co-ordinated. Resources are used well and kept under good conditions. Extra-curricular activity, including concerts, a recorder group and an informal choir that is convened before special occasions, make good contributions to the standards that are achieved.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

132. The standards achieved by eleven year olds are below those expected nationally. This is largely because too little time is spent on physical education for pupils to make enough progress in some elements of the subject. However, pupils attain standards that are at least average by the time they are seven. The amount of time allocated for physical education is lower than in most schools. Until they are seven, pupils have two or three lessons a week, involving gymnastics, dance and small games skills. Older pupils have swimming lessons in Year 3 and have only one weekly lesson in the hall. This time is used alternately for gymnastics, dance or small games. Athletics activities take place outside in the summer term. However, during the autumn and spring terms pupils have fewer games lessons outside because the weather is less reliable. As a result of these arrangements, systematic development of skills is slow.
133. In the four lessons seen during the inspection, the overall quality of teaching was good, ranging from very good to satisfactory. In the best lessons teachers managed pupils well and demonstrated high expectations of behaviour and performance. Lessons are well planned. In the classes for younger pupils, activities build progressively on previous achievements in the reception and Year 1, so that by seven, attainment broadly matches national expectations. Teachers often use pupils with more advanced skills to demonstrate for others what good techniques look like. In a lesson in Year 4, which included balancing in pairs, pupils sensitively evaluated each other's work. Comments were perceptive and helped others to develop better practice. It was a slower pace that separated the satisfactory teaching from what was adjudged

good and very good. Inappropriate comments of a few pupils meant that time was lost in dealing with behaviour, leading to a slower rate of progress than might otherwise have occurred.

134. Swimming lessons take place in Year 3. Many pupils start as complete non-swimmers and these attend for thirty sessions of thirty minutes. The majority of pupils obtain the local authority's curriculum award and around two-thirds attain higher awards. Less confident pupils continue to be taken swimming until they attain the minimum safety standard of 25 metres. These arrangements restrict pupils' opportunities for high attainment beyond Year 3, although from September, all pupils will attend until they complete the Barnsley Curriculum Award.
135. The school does not have an overall plan for physical education that lays down an appropriate allocation of time to the various elements of the subject. Planning for some aspects of physical education is thorough, particularly when teachers choose to make use of units from a nationally recognised published scheme. However, the co-ordinator has had little available time to evaluate either the quality of teaching or what is taught. Football and netball clubs are held after school and teams enter local competitions. At the time of the inspection, a football team had recently qualified for the later stages of one of these competitions. Good use has been made of commercial initiatives such as *Top Play* and *Top Sport*. As a result, resources and equipment have been enhanced to good levels.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

136. By the age of seven, standards of attainment are above those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. At the time of the last inspection, attainment was broadly in line. An improvement has thus occurred. Although older pupils are now making good progress in well-planned lessons that conform to the new agreed syllabus, improvements in what is taught are too recent to make a full impact on attainment. Some past work has not been reinforced in depth by later learning. As a result, attainment is currently satisfactory at the age of eleven (as it was in the last inspection), rather than above average as it is lower down the school. However, the school is well placed to improve standards overall. Religious education lessons contribute strongly to pupils' personal development.
137. Younger pupils develop a good awareness of stories about Jesus. They learn about why Jesus chose the twelve disciples and relate this to their understanding of friendship and trust. In this lesson, they extended their literacy skills by writing sentences about this, helped by the good examples that the teacher had given them. However, work seen across the subject as a whole suggested that this good practice is inconsistent. Another commendable feature of the lesson was the link with the theme of the assembly, resulting in the good reinforcement of learning. A Year 1 teacher carefully chose a simple version of the *Parable of the Sower*, which she read well, with good intonation and expression. Pupils maintained interest and the teacher effectively used questions and answers to check that they had followed the story. They had learnt well and were able to recall, in detail, the sequence of events. Good use of resources such as trays full of sand and grit engaged the pupils' interest and promoted understanding. Clear explanations that Jesus's stories often have a deeper meaning allowed pupils to consider other aspects of the parable. Scrutiny of books shows that many of these younger pupils, up to seven years old, already know about the main Christian events and have begun to use religious language such as 'Advent' and 'nativity' appropriately. They can explain that Jesus is special, as He is the Son of God. They have knowledge of Old Testament stories such as Noah's Ark and understand that Hindus celebrate Diwali with prayer, using special lamps.
138. Good teaching and learning was also seen in some classes for older pupils. A carefully planned lesson introduced pupils in a Year 3 class to the idea that the Bible is a library. The teacher's good subject knowledge ensured that pupils had acquired background knowledge well. For example, they understood that the New Testament was probably written in Greek, whereas the Old Testament was in ancient Hebrew. A strong feature of the teaching was its clear explanations that enabled pupils to learn and acquire the content of the lesson and to understand the tasks to be completed. By the end of the lesson they had acquired a good understanding of how the Bible is organised into separate books and its importance to

Christians as a sacred text. A Year 5 class experienced a well-planned and well-taught lesson about Hindu worship. They were engaged by the very good uses of artefacts and role-play to highlight the importance of ritual in prayer. The teacher set high standards of behaviour, participation and respect for Hindu practice. Pupils responded well, valuing the beliefs of others. There was no time for behaviour to stray off the tasks, and therefore pupils acquired new knowledge quickly. Good progress is made in these lessons. Much of the work is covered through discussion, which enables all pupils to take an active part, including those with special educational needs.

139. There was no unsatisfactory learning, as the quality of pupils' acquisition of skills and understanding was closely linked to the quality of the teaching, which was good. More than three-quarters of lessons were good or very good. Teachers are planning well, directly linking lessons to the programmes of study and activities set out in the new locally agreed syllabus. What separated satisfactory teaching from what was good or better was that planning was less precise and therefore methods were not as appropriate to the ages of pupils. For example, in one lesson, a long time was spent in reading a story to older pupils who could have read it for themselves, thus contributing to their opportunities to practise literacy skills.
140. Although the teaching of religious education was generally good in classes for seven to eleven year olds, and often resulted in perceptive ideas from pupils, the quality of work in books was only in line with the descriptions of standards in the agreed syllabus. This was because written work lacked the depth and detail that pupils achieved orally. In this sense, uses of literacy skills were not strongly evident in the subject. Opportunities for expressive writing at length about feelings and beliefs are not developed consistently.