

## INSPECTION REPORT

**THRYBERGH PRIMARY SCHOOL**

ROTHERHAM

LEA area: Rotherham

Unique reference number: 130920

Headteacher: Mrs.J.Horsman

Reporting inspector: Mrs. J. Ikin  
3340

Dates of inspection: 24<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> September 2001

Inspection number: 23000901

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Type of school:              | Nursery and primary                            |
| School category:             | Community                                      |
| Age range of pupils:         | 3 – 11   |
| Gender of pupils:            | Mixed  |
| School address:              | Oldgate Lane,<br>Thrybergh,<br>Rotherham       |
| Postcode:                    | S65 4JG  |
| Telephone number:            | 01709 850732                                   |
| Fax number:                  | 01709 855385                                   |
| Appropriate authority:       | The governing body                             |
| Name of chair of governors:  | A.V. Scholes                                   |
| Date of previous inspection: | 4 <sup>th</sup> – 5 <sup>th</sup> October 1999 |

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members |                      |                      | Subject responsibilities   | Aspect responsibilities  |
|--------------|----------------------|----------------------|--|--|
| 3349         | Mrs. J. Ikin         | Registered inspector | Children in the Foundation Stage<br>Equal opportunities<br>Information and communication technology<br>Music | How high are standards?<br>a) The school's results and achievements<br>How well are pupils taught?<br>What the school should do to improve further |
| 13874        | Mrs. J. Chesterfield | Lay inspector        |  | How well does the school care for its pupils?<br>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?  |
| 20010        | Mr. J. Sangster      | Team inspector       | Science<br>Design and technology<br>Physical education<br>Religious education                                | How high are standards?<br>b) Pupils' attitudes values and personal development  |
| 22778        | Mrs. A. Shannon      | Team inspector       | English<br>Art<br>Special educational needs  |  |
| 31029        | Mr. P. Thrussel      | Team inspector       | Mathematics<br>History<br>Geography  | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?   |

The inspection contractor was:

WES World-Wide Education Service  
Canada House  
272 Field End Road  
Eastcote  
Middlesex  
HA4 9NA

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

## REPORT CONTENTS

|   | Page      |
|---|-----------|
| <b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>  | <b>6</b>  |
| Information about the school  |           |
| How good the school is  |           |
| What the school does well   |           |
| What could be improved  |           |
| How the school has improved since its last inspection   |           |
| Standards   |           |
| Pupils' attitudes and values  |           |
| Teaching and learning   |           |
| Other aspects of the school   |           |
| How well the school is led and managed  |           |
| Parents' and carers' views of the school  |           |
| <br>  |           |
| <b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>   |           |
| <b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>  | <b>11</b> |
| The school's results and pupils' achievements   |           |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development  |           |
| <b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>  | <b>15</b> |
| <b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>                         | <b>18</b> |
| <b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>  | <b>20</b> |
| <b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>                                     | <b>22</b> |
| <b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>  | <b>23</b> |
| <b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>  | <b>25</b> |
| <br>  |           |
| <b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>   | <b>26</b> |
| <br>  |           |
| <b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b> | <b>30</b> |

## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Thrybergh Primary School serves a former mining community to the east of Rotherham. The majority of the housing in the area is owned by the local authority. There are 251 pupils, comprising 138 boys and 113 girls aged from four to eleven, in the main school and 50 part time pupils aged three and four in the nursery. Almost half the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is more than twice the national average. One hundred and six pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs, which is very high when compared to schools nationally. The additional needs of pupils include moderate and severe learning difficulties, speech and language difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties and autism. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. On entry to the nursery many of the children who go on to enter the school have very poor language and personal and social skills and their physical development is poor. The school belongs to an Education Action Zone (EAZ) and as such takes advantage of a number of local and national initiatives.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is an improving school, which has many good features. The good leadership combined with good teaching throughout the school leads to pupils making good progress in relation to their starting points on entry. Pupils have good attitudes to school and behave well. These qualities alongside the very good systems to monitor its performance mean that this school provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The good teaching throughout the school leads to pupils making good progress in relation to their starting points on entry.
- The very good leadership of the school effectively ensures a clear educational direction and a strong team commitment to improving standards.
- The school has very good systems for monitoring pupils' progress, which are used well to raise standards from year to year.
- The very good relationships that teachers have with their pupils ensure that pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. This means they make the best use of their time in school.
- The very good provision that the school makes for children in the nursery and reception ensures that they develop positive attitudes and good habits of learning from an early stage.

#### **What could be improved**

- Standards of speaking and listening are poor and this limits pupils' ability to understand their work and express their ideas in English and other areas of the curriculum.
- Attendance and punctuality are poor and this means that pupils miss important work throughout the year.
- The curriculum needs to be extended in order to help pupils develop: skills of independent learning; thinking and enquiry skills; and an understanding about a wider range of cultures in society.
- The use of time over the school day needs to be more flexibly organised so that subjects can be taught at different times of the day and more efficient use is made of the resources available.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was previously inspected in October 1999 when it was judged to be providing its pupils with an acceptable standard of education. Since then its improvement has been good. It has continued to improve standards generally and retained its emphasis on literacy and numeracy. However, it now needs to place similar emphasis on speaking and listening to reinforce these basic skills. The standards being achieved by pupils in Years 1 and 2 and by boys have also improved, although the school recognises that more needs to be done and is continuing its efforts in these areas. There have been very good improvements in the quality of teaching. Teaching is now good and no unsatisfactory lessons were seen during the inspection. The school's monitoring and evaluation systems are very good and are used well to help raise standards. Governors carry out their roles and responsibilities well, and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and a clear view of their long-term role. The advice, support and training given by the local education authority have had a significant impact on the improvements that the school has made.

## STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | compared with |      |      |                 |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
|                 | all schools   |      |      | similar schools |
|                 | 1998          | 1999 | 2000 | 2000            |
| English         | E             | E    | D    | A               |
| Mathematics     | E             | E    | E    | C               |
| Science         | E*            | E*   | D    | C               |

| Key                |   |
|--------------------|---|
| well above average | A |
| above average      | B |
| average            | C |
| below average      | D |
| well below average | E |

The table shows the school's 2000 results in English and science were below the national average. In mathematics they were well below the national average. When compared to similar schools, results were well above average for English and broadly in line with the average in mathematics and science. Results in end of Year 2 tests were well below the national average for reading and writing and below the average of similar schools. Since 1998 results have risen at both key stages, with a greater improvement in 2000. The school's results for science, which were in the bottom five per cent in 1999, are now average when compared to similar schools. Indications for 2001 show that the 2000 levels have been maintained. The school met its 2001 targets, and the provisional 2002 targets show that the school is planning for further steady improvement in standards.

Inspection findings show that from mainly very low starting points on entry to the school, pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science, and about two-thirds of pupils attain standards that are in line with those expected for their age at seven and eleven. The literacy and numeracy strategies are well embedded and are making an important contribution to raising standards at the school. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are well below the levels expected for their age, however, and this prevents many pupils from having full access to the curriculum and attaining higher standards in English and other subjects of the curriculum.

By the end of Years 2 and 6, the standards that pupils attain in art and singing are above national expectations. Although standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are judged to be just below those expected by the end of Years 2 and 6, the school's new computer suite, together with very good staff training, is already having an impact, and it is anticipated that standards will rise by the end of the school year. Standards in other subjects of the National Curriculum are broadly in line those expected for pupils at age seven and eleven.

### PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect                                 | Comment   |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school                | Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, are interested in learning and work hard.  |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms    | Behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school.   |
| Personal development and relationships | Good. Pupils form very good relationships with their teachers and with each other. They respond well to the opportunities they are given to take responsibility and are polite, helpful and friendly. |
| Attendance                             | There are very low standards of attendance and punctuality across the school. This slows down the progress that pupils make because they miss important work throughout the year.                     |

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils in: | Nursery and Reception | Years 1 – 2 | Years 3 – 6 |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Quality of teaching    | Very 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 quality of teaching in English, mathematics and science is good throughout the school. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught effectively and national strategies have been implemented well. The very good teaching in nursery and reception enables children to make a good start in school. In the best lessons teachers have a very good subject knowledge and use a range of lively teaching strategies to engage the children's interest and involve them in learning. The use of the interactive whiteboard was particularly effective in this regard. In most lessons there was pace and challenge and well-designed learning tasks to match the learning needs of all pupils. Good planning includes clear learning objectives which are shared with the pupils to help them understand the purpose of lessons. In the best lessons, teachers ask skilful questions to help pupils develop their ideas. Teaching now includes a range of practical and visual methods which are proving effective in raising the attainment of boys. More emphasis needs to be placed on helping pupils to develop their skills in speaking and listening. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use their initiative in the course of their learning and there is also scope to develop pupils' skills of enquiry through critical thinking, problem solving and investigation.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect   | Comment  |
|--|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum  | The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is very good. It is satisfactory for Years 1 to 6 where the school provides a broad curriculum with appropriate emphases on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Insufficient emphasis is placed on the development of speaking and listening skills and on pupils' understanding of the wide range of cultures within society. Timetabling arrangements allow little flexibility in the way that subjects are taught. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs  | Good. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well so that their needs are met. Teachers plan suitably matched work, which directly addresses pupils' individual targets, needs and stages of development.  |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development | Satisfactory overall. There is a particular strength in the good provision made for the moral and social development of pupils. There is insufficient emphasis in the school's cultural provision for preparing pupils for the diversity of culture within society.  |
| How well the school cares for its pupils   | Good. The school gives strong pastoral support to its pupils. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good   |

The school has good relationships with parents and has implemented a number of effective initiatives to help them become more fully involved in their children's education. Whilst the information that the school sends to parents is satisfactory overall it is often not easy for parents to understand.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect   | Comment  |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Very good. The headteacher has provided the school with a clear sense of direction. She promotes teamwork amongst staff and provides skilful guidance to help them become more effective. The deputy head and senior management team fulfil their roles well and subject co-ordinators make a significant contribution to teaching and learning in their subjects. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities             | The governors are highly committed, and they work effectively with the headteacher to secure improvement. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and know the challenges it faces.   |
| The school's evaluation of its performance                       | Very good. The headteacher, subject co-ordinators and governors analyse the results of statutory testing carefully, and the headteacher regularly checks the quality of teaching through well-focused lesson observations.   |
| The strategic use of resources                                   | The budget is planned rigorously, and is appropriately linked to the school development plan. Very good use is made of local and national initiatives to gain funding to improve standards. Timetabling limits the efficient use of the school's accommodation and resources at certain times of the school day.   |

The school is well staffed by experienced teachers. This is complemented efficiently by well-deployed learning support staff. The accommodation is good and learning resources are adequate. The newly acquired computer suite is having a beneficial effect on raising standards in ICT. The school applies the principles of best value well.

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

| <b>What pleases parents most</b>  | <b>What parents would like to see improved</b>   |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The work the school has done to improve standards</li> <li>• The good teaching the children receive</li> <li>• The good leadership and management of the school</li> <li>• The care that teachers give to the children</li> <li>• The approachability of the school</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons</li> <li>• The amount of homework provided</li> <li>• The information that the school gives to parents</li> </ul> |

The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views of the school. The findings of the inspection are that parents concerns are partly justified. The homework given by teachers is inconsistent between classes and reports to parents are difficult for parents to understand. The school recognises both these issues and has plans for improvement. Extra-curricular activities, however, are good and better than those found in many schools.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. On entry to the nursery, children's language, communication and mathematical skills are very poor. In addition, their personal, social and physical development is at a particularly early stage. They make good progress in the nursery and the reception class. As a consequence, when account is taken of their very low starting points, these young children achieve well. Despite this, their limited skills and understanding on entry to the school mean that standards in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical understanding are well below average on entry to Year 1.
2. Results of the National Curriculum tests in English for 2000 show that at the end of Year 2 standards are well below the national average for reading and writing and below the average of similar schools. At the end of Year 6, results are well below the national average but well above average when compared with similar schools. Trends show an improvement in both key stages. The results for Year 6 pupils have improved at a faster pace than nationally.
3. In the 2000 national tests for mathematics, the standards at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 were well below average when compared with schools nationally. When compared with schools having a similar intake of pupils, results were average. The more consistent improvement in standards, reported in 1999, has continued. In science, results in National Curriculum assessments and tests in 2001 were similar to those in 2000 for both seven and eleven year olds; although they are still below the national average, the overall trend has been upwards for the last four years.
4. Indications for 2001 show that the 2000 levels have been maintained; they also show that girls continue to do better than boys although the evidence suggests that the gap is being narrowed as a result of the school's sustained efforts to address the issue. The school met its 2001 targets, and the provisional 2002 targets show that the school is planning for further steady improvement in attainment.
5. The evidence of the inspection broadly reflects these results. In English, mathematics and science, standards for about one third of pupils are below those expected for their age at seven and eleven. This, however, represents good achievement in relation to their starting points when they enter Year 1. The literacy and numeracy strategies are well embedded and are making an important contribution to raising standards at the school.
6. Nearly two thirds of pupils attain standards that are broadly in line with those expected for their age in reading and writing at age seven and eleven. At the age of seven just one or two pupils achieve above this, and at age eleven about one fifth of pupils achieve at the higher levels. Achievement for almost a third of pupils is below average. Overall standards are therefore well below average for reading at the end of Year 2 and below average at the end of Year 6. By the time higher attaining pupils are seven, they choose their own reading material confidently and are able to read difficult and unusual words such as 'revenge' and 'baguette'. They are able to talk about the plot and the characters and recount the favourite part of the story. They develop these skills to a higher level, so that by the time they reach Year 6 they are able to read and recast information accurately, offer interpretations about the choice of language in books and

draw complex inferences from the text. Lower attainers do not always understand the meaning of the words that they read, and have difficulty in understanding the intent behind the stories. They make insufficient use of phonic clues to read new or difficult words.

7. In writing, overall attainment at ages seven and eleven is also below average because of the high proportion of lower attaining pupils. Standards of spelling are well below average for boys and below average for girls. By the time that they are seven, above average attainers write imaginatively, using extended sentences and a good range of connective words to make their writing more interesting. By the time they reach Year 6 they write grammatically complex sentences using a full range of punctuation. Lower attaining pupils use simple words and sentences and struggle to produce extended pieces of writing.
8. The speaking and listening skills of many pupils are below the levels expected for their age throughout the school and this has a significant impact on standards in reading and writing. There are particular weaknesses in pupils' range of vocabulary and their understanding of the meaning of words. For example, in the course of one lesson, pupils did not understand the word 'plough', even though there was one working in the field opposite. Pupils' pronunciation of words is also often not accurate; for example, several pupils pronounce the word 'carnival' as 'carvinal'. They often miss out the article as in "Put kettle on", rather than, "Put the kettle on", and do not readily use the grammar of standard English; for example, an inspector was asked, "Whose you are?" rather than "Who are you?" These weaknesses are reflected in pupils' reading and writing, and often result in pupils not always having a clear understanding of the books they read. Words are often spelled as they are said and written sentences are often grammatically incorrect. When pupils' use of spoken language is poor, it also affects their use of language for thinking and their ability to sequence, order and extend ideas creatively and imaginatively and to apply their literacy skills in other subjects of the curriculum.
9. In mathematics, nearly two thirds of pupils achieve the standard expected for their age by the end of Year 2 whilst a small minority achieve above this. A third of the pupils achieve below the standards expected. At the end of Year 6 about half of the pupils achieve the levels expected for their age, a small number achieve above and nearly half achieve below the levels expected. The overall attainment of pupils is judged to be below average because of the comparatively high proportion of lower attaining pupils. By the age of seven, higher attaining pupils work in numbers up to 1000 and understand place value; average attainers are secure in numbers up to 100. They continue to make good progress as they move through the school and by the end of Year 6 are secure in all four rules of number. Lower attaining pupils count and order numbers up to ten by the end of Year 2 and use addition and subtraction in their working. By the end of Year 6 they are working confidently with numbers up to 100. Where weaknesses occur in mathematics it is often because pupils do not have the language that they need to discuss their ideas; explain their thinking and confirm their understanding. This limits their skills in logical reasoning and affects their ability to apply their number in other areas of the curriculum, in practical situations and problem solving.
10. Overall attainment in science is below the standards expected for pupils by the time they reach the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The progress and understanding of many pupils in Years 1 and 2 are inhibited by their difficulty in recording the outcomes of their investigations in writing and putting their predictions and observations into words. By

the time they reach Year 6, however, higher and average attaining pupils are able to make predictions when setting up an experiment, and have a sound understanding for their age of forces, materials and living things. Lower attaining pupils can repeat some of the scientific facts that they have been taught but do not always understand the scientific terms that they hear and they are often unsure of how to carry out an investigation. Where there are weaknesses it is because pupils are not able to extend their powers of reasoning to higher levels.

11. Standards in ICT for nearly two thirds of pupils are broadly in line with those expected for their age when pupils reach the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The school's involvement in the EAZ has given it access to a good range of expertise. The recent bid for funding to equip the computer suite was successful and is already having a significant impact on standards. The interactive whiteboards are proving to be a valuable learning resource, particularly for older pupils, in that they capture their attention and enable teachers to give clear visual demonstrations of the computer skills to be learned. As a result of this, pupils quickly learn to apply the skills that are taught to their work in other subjects, for example, compiling data banks in mathematics and importing images to illustrate their work in English. The early indications are that significantly more pupils are likely to attain the expected standards in most aspects of ICT by the time they leave the school at age eleven although the school recognises that there are weaknesses in older pupils' control technology skills.
12. There were limited opportunities to observe lessons in other subjects of the curriculum, but the evidence from pupils' work and records and from discussions with pupils suggest that standards are in line with those expected for design and technology, history, geography, physical education and religious education by ages seven and eleven, and that standards have improved since the last inspection. Standards in art are judged to be above the nationally expected levels by the end of Years 2 and 6. The youngest pupils in the school learn to mix powder paint and produce good representations of the real and imaginative world. Older pupils produce work showing meticulous detail, good control of media and tools, and are able to accurately depict shade and tone. In music, standards of singing are good by the time pupils reach the end of Year 6, which is also an improvement since the last inspection.
13. Pupils with special educational needs make at least satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment as a result of the good support they receive. The school monitors their progress and from this it can be clearly seen that standards are slowly rising. Individual education plans are not sufficiently detailed and targets are not always precise. The most able pupils make good progress overall. For the most part, they achieve standards which are above average for their age, and which appropriately reflect their capabilities, in English, mathematics and science.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

14. Pupils' attitudes to the school are good. They like coming to school, and when they were asked, older pupils could not think of anything they would like to change about the school. Pupils are very attentive in lessons and appear to enjoy their work. This is a result of the high expectations teachers have and also of the very good relationships between teachers and pupils. During the inspection, pupils worked particularly well in science investigations in Year 6, where they were fully involved in the practical work but also co-operated well with others in their group to arrive at an agreed conclusion. In a design and technology lesson in Year 4, pupils watched a demonstration of a running

stitch and a back stitch very attentively and were eager to start on their own work. Pupils generally maintain their concentration well, but on a few occasions, when pupils spend too much time listening to the teacher, they become passive and half of them lose their attention. Pupils are also very attentive in assemblies, which helps to create a calm, reflective atmosphere for these occasions. Pupils with special educational needs are enthusiastic about their learning and show an interest and involvement in all activities.

15. Pupils' behaviour is good, both in lessons and as they move around the school. They play well together in both playgrounds; it is mostly boys who play football, but those girls who want to play are welcomed. Although there were five exclusions during the last school year, these were all in line with the school policy about abusive and violent behaviour. No incidents of bullying or violent behaviour were seen during the inspection, and the school handles well the few incidents of harassment that occur. The school has a clear behaviour policy, and pupils understand the rewards and sanctions which are applied. The policy also emphasises the importance of good relationships in promoting good behaviour, and this has clearly been effective. Relationships both between adults and pupils and between pupils themselves are very good. The school promotes inclusion well.
16. Overall, pupils' personal development is good. Pupils willingly accept the opportunities to take responsibility that they are given. For instance, older pupils help in assemblies, with registers, with lunch boxes and cutlery, and also pick up litter. Year 6 pupils help as 'buddies' to younger pupils in the infants' playground, playing with them when they have no one else to play with. In all classes pupils have 'special jobs' which they do in the classroom. Pupils show a sense of responsibility in raising money for charity, in some cases taking the initiative themselves, for instance in organising a sale for a Blue Peter appeal. They are good at taking turns in the classroom, and also work well together in pairs and in groups, for instance when they are devising a sequence of movements in physical education. They help to put away equipment at the end of lessons and help to clear up after a science investigation using water. However, the opportunities for pupils to show initiative in lessons are limited, which restricts the development of their independent learning skills.
17. These findings are similar to those of the last report, when pupils' attitudes to work were described as a strength of the school, pupils were well behaved and keen to accept responsibility. The school had made good progress since the first inspection, when pupils' attitudes were judged to be satisfactory.
18. Pupils' attendance at the school is very poor. It is very low compared with other schools. Last year the level of attendance dropped to below 90 per cent, and fewer than two out of every hundred primary schools in the country have attendance levels which are as low as this. The drop is particularly disappointing for the school, as attendance had been steadily improving since the last inspection until it was approaching the national average.
19. There are two main reasons for the very poor attendance in the school. Firstly, there was an increase during the last year in the number of children who were constantly absent from school for medical or social reasons. Crucially, the school was without the services of an education welfare officer for much of this time, and had to manage without the support it needed to work with these families. The second reason for very poor attendance is the fact that most pupils have more time off school than is normal. There is a tradition in the area of taking days off for birthdays or shopping or visiting

relatives, although the excuse usually given is that the child was ill. As a result, unauthorised absence is lower than the national average. Most families take their holiday during term time because it is cheaper then, and this means that many children miss work covered in the summer term and the first half of the autumn term. Truancy is not a factor in the attendance levels. Children enjoy school and do not deliberately stay away.

20. Punctuality is poor. Many children are late for the beginning of the morning session every day because their families do not ensure that they are sent or brought to school on time. This disrupts lessons and assemblies for all pupils and means that teachers have to waste time settling pupils and recapping on what has already been covered. The low standards of attendance and punctuality across the school mean that very many pupils miss important work throughout the year, and this slows down their progress and limits the standards they can attain.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

21. The quality of teaching is good. No lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory, whilst 19 out of the 65 lessons observed were judged to be very good and four lessons were excellent. This indicates that there has been a considerable improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection, which is having a significant impact on the improving standards that are being achieved and the progress that pupils make.
22. The quality of teaching in reception and the nursery is very good. Teachers are knowledgeable about the needs of young children and the requirements of national guidance for this age group. Planning is well structured and clear and ensures that there is an appropriate balance of teacher-directed and child-initiated tasks. The wide range of activities that is provided is effective in enriching children's experience. Imaginative, interesting and well-designed tasks capture children's interest and help them to learn through play and talk. Interaction between the teachers and the children is very good and is effective in supporting children's learning, encouraging them to use speech and helping them to make progress. Children are sensitively but firmly managed and this gives them security and confidence in their early days of schooling.
23. The teaching of English is good and teachers are very secure in their knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy. Excellent teaching was observed in Year 6. Where teaching is best, teachers have very good subject knowledge and use a range of lively teaching strategies, which make learning interesting for pupils and successfully develop their understanding. For example, in a Year 1 literacy lesson, the teacher successfully used a puppet who had difficulty remembering his letter sounds to engage children's interest. They thoroughly enjoyed correcting his mistakes and in the process increased their own knowledge and understanding of the sounds that letters make. Later on, these same pupils were enraptured by a story about Mog the cat and could recount the story well because it was read with such wonderful expression. High expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving are evident in very good teaching. In the best lessons there is uncompromising use of a subject-specific technical vocabulary and teachers insist that pupils answer using full sentences. In these lessons, there is good encouragement for pupils to develop their ideas further, even though many find this difficult because they have poor vocabulary and find it difficult to sequence and extend their ideas in complex sentences. The lack of oral language skills is a barrier to learning for many pupils and there is a need to place greater emphasis on the teaching of speaking and listening so that clear speech, correct grammar and the development of vocabulary is emphasised

consistently throughout the school, to help pupils use language for thinking and organising their thoughts and to become more creative and imaginative users of language in the course of their work. Good use is made of resources and time in literacy lessons. For example, the interactive whiteboard is particularly effective in engaging pupils' attention and pupils apply themselves with great energy to tasks when deadlines are set for them to be completed. The school is carrying out some effective research into ways of making teaching for boys more effective. As a result it has introduced a wider range of teaching strategies, which include opportunities for learning in practical ways. This is proving effective in helping all children to learn because their interest is engaged and they are more involved in lessons. For example, in the course of learning about punctuation, the class works in the hall, walking together when sentences are read, and stopping when they come to a full stop.

24. The teaching of mathematics is good overall. The National Numeracy Strategy has been effectively implemented and has had a positive effect on teaching and learning. Teachers have a thorough understanding of the numeracy guidance and use this well to inform their planning. Features of the best numeracy lessons were the teachers' own mental dexterity in mathematics together with an ability to ask skilful questions. This helps pupils to increase their skills and overcome misconceptions. In the best teaching clear explanations and demonstrations are used effectively to enhance pupils' understanding, knowledge and skills, and as a result they make good progress. For example, pupils in Year 6 are enabled to increase their understanding of how to enter information into a data bank as a result of a clear explanation accompanied by a visual demonstration on the interactive whiteboard. In a Year 6 numeracy lesson the teacher used an overhead projector effectively to demonstrate the processes that pupils needed to go through when solving mathematical problems. Pupils rise to the challenges when they are set, work hard to overcome difficulties and are proud of their resulting achievements. Plenary sessions were often used well to give pupils opportunities to explain their mathematical methods. Not all pupils find it easy to explain their mathematical thinking, however. There is scope to give even greater emphasis to this aspect of their learning in order to help pupils confirm their mathematical understanding and to extend their powers of logical reasoning. A significant minority of pupils find it hard to concentrate because they are noticeably tired and this limits the progress that they make, even when the quality of teaching is very good.
25. The teaching of science is good. Teachers are confident in their knowledge of the subject and plan interesting and practical lessons which hold pupils' interest and promote learning. For example, in Year 1 pupils are given the opportunity to sample different flavours of crisps in an investigation to see how accurately they can identify the different types through their sense of taste. Explanations and demonstrations are also given in practical and visual ways in order to promote more effective learning for boys. This is effective in engaging the interest of all pupils and deepening their understanding. For example, in Year 1 a teacher uses a glove puppet to find out what pupils already know about their senses and effectively builds on this initial knowledge by encouraging the children to correct the puppet when he gets things wrong, using the correct vocabulary that is displayed on the wall. In Year 3 an interactive whiteboard was used exceptionally well to demonstrate the properties of magnets. Pupils' interest was captured as the magnets appeared to move magically across the screen; very high levels of interest were evident and pupils had a good recall of the main facts that they needed to learn. In the best lessons, teachers use questions skilfully and insist that pupils use the correct vocabulary to help them develop their scientific understanding by putting their thoughts into words. For example, in a Year 6 lesson the teacher asks "What else could you do?", to stimulate pupils' thinking, and then patiently ensures that

they use the correct scientific vocabulary, such as 'liquid' and 'solid', accurately. There are good opportunities for pupils to work together and in groups to carry out investigations and this is also effective in encouraging pupils to talk as a means of developing their scientific understanding. There is a need for the school to develop this good practice consistently throughout the school in order to improve the pupils' oral skills and help them record their scientific ideas and investigations with greater precision.

26. Some excellent teaching was observed in ICT. Not all teachers are fully confident in the subject but the excellent support given by the co-ordinator and the EAZ development worker for ICT is having a significant impact on improving the situation, and all teachers have a sound foundation of basic knowledge. They are now learning how to become more proficient in using the interactive whiteboard and the new ICT suite for whole-class teaching. During the inspection the ICT development worker was observed giving an excellent demonstration lesson. This was then followed by an equally effective lesson taken by the teacher who had been watching. Lessons for ICT are very well planned and structured to ensure that specific computer skills are taught, prior to pupils having an opportunity to try them out for themselves. The use of the interactive whiteboard is very effective in this regard. Pupils are fascinated by the ability of the teacher to change the image on screen by a simple touch in the appropriate place. They also show a sense of achievement when they are involved in manipulating images on the whiteboard themselves. This pride in their achievement is also evident when they print out the final images that they have produced on screen. For example, in Year 3, pupils were very keen to take their illustrated poems home to show their parents, an unusual occurrence for many of them. As a result of the clear visual images that they see, all pupils acquire a clear understanding of what they have to do and are able to be immediately involved in activities. Teachers give good ongoing support, encouraging them to try things out for themselves and asking questions, which skilfully move learning on. There are good seating arrangements, which ensure that pupils work in designated partnerships for their mutual benefit.
27. Across the school, teaching is characterised by very good relationships between teachers and pupils, and an orderly atmosphere in lessons. Planning is good in all subjects. There are clear learning objectives, which are shared with the pupils, and lessons are carefully structured to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding that have been identified. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers plan and evaluate together and this ensures that all pupils have equality of access to the curriculum and that ongoing work is planned on the basis of what has been already learned. There are good assessment procedures and teachers know their pupils well. As a result, learning objectives are very precise and work is well matched to pupils' differing needs. Marking varies between classes. Where it is most effective it includes constructive written feedback to help pupils know what to do to improve their work. All lessons proceed at a good pace, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Routines and procedures are well established; rules and boundaries to guide pupils' behaviour are consistently applied. There is insufficient opportunity for pupils to use their initiative in the course of their learning and there is also scope to develop pupils' skills of enquiry through critical thinking, problem solving and investigation more systematically through the school. There are inconsistencies in the way that homework is set between classes. When it is set on a regular basis and where pupils receive encouragement from parents it makes a significant impact on the progress that pupils make. Where pupils receive less support from home, for example with reading, pupils' progress is slower, although the school works hard to compensate for this.

28. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well so that their needs are met. Teachers and support assistants work together, often with advice from the school's special needs co-ordinator, and suitably matched work which directly addresses pupils' individual targets, needs and stages of development is well planned. Where necessary, or appropriate, the advice and support of outside specialists is sought. In many lessons, particularly in the core subjects of English, and mathematics, pupils with special educational needs benefit from the good support offered by classroom assistants. These valuable members of staff are well briefed about what the pupils might be expected to achieve, and are well trained so that they are able to interact very constructively with groups of pupils and with individuals, helping them to make good progress.

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

29. Children benefit from a very good range of learning opportunities in the nursery and reception class which enables them to make good progress in relation to their very low starting points in the development of their basic and personal skills. There is a very good range of opportunities to learn through practical experiences, for learning through play and talk and a good balance between teacher-directed and child-initiated tasks.

30. The quality and range of learning opportunities offered by the school in Years 1 to 6 are satisfactory. All pupils are offered a range of experiences in National Curriculum subjects and religious education relevant and appropriate to their ages. The school is very aware that boys do not achieve as well as girls and is actively seeking ways to give boys greater access to the curriculum. For example, teachers are adapting their teaching styles to involve pupils in more practical and visual ways. Nationally recognised schemes of work have been adopted for most subjects to help ensure continuity and progress in learning. The strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy have both been effective in raising standards. Satisfactory opportunities are provided for developing and using literacy and numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum. Opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and develop their thinking skills in the course of their work, to follow enquiries through problem solving and investigation, are not sufficiently embedded in the curriculum. The school continues to look carefully at the curriculum and how it can be adapted to take account of this.

31. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all areas of the curriculum. The school has recently begun withdrawing pupils in the present Year 3 class during literacy lessons, which enables these pupils to benefit from being taught in a small group by an experienced special educational needs teacher. Pupils in Years 4 to 6 are set for literacy and numeracy and this is enabling teachers to focus more precisely on their differing needs. The provision of a learning mentor is overcoming some of the barriers to learning caused by pupils who have little support from home or whose attendance is a cause for concern. The school is aware that many pupils have poor skills in spoken language and have future plans to improve this situation. However, the judgement of the inspection is that the lack of language skills is proving a barrier to learning for many pupils and that the school's curriculum needs to be adjusted to give greater emphasis to the systematic development of speaking and listening skills as a priority.

32. Extra-curricular provision at both key stages, and the range of visits and visitors provided make a good contribution to the intellectual, physical and social development of those who take part. The school aims to provide a visit or visitor for each class every half term. There are sporting activities for both boys and girls, including football and mat ball clubs; the range of other activities includes recorder, reading, computer, line dancing, story and poetry, and sewing clubs. Pupils visit places such as Scarborough, Treak Cliff Cavern, local museums and theatres in support of their learning. Visitors from the police and fire services, and local museums, for example, work with pupils in school. Events such as the Combined Arts' Project and Carnival Arts' Week provide further interesting and well- focused opportunities in creative arts.
33. Timetabling generally ensures that appropriate time is provided to deliver all curriculum subjects. The necessary emphasis on literacy and numeracy in recent years has led the school to timetable these during the morning sessions only. This results in some imbalance over the day, with very long sessions allocated to English and literacy. Further, facilities such as the halls and computer suite are not sufficiently used in the mornings. The school recognises the need to be more flexible now, both to redress the balance over the day and to make more efficient use of facilities.
34. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is satisfactory. The school currently makes provision for this aspect of pupils' development through assemblies and circle times, but recognises the need for an organised programme. Provision for personal social and health education is satisfactory. Aspects of health education, such as diet and healthy eating, are covered in science topics. There are agreed policies for sex education and drugs' awareness, and a citizenship curriculum is being developed.
35. Links with the community are good. There are links with the police, who run a disco, Rotherham United Football Club, Asda, whose staff are involved in a better reading club, and McDonalds who are involved with the school's attempts to improve its environment. Pupils visit a local nursing home at harvest and Christmas; they become involved with the wider community in their fund-raising activities, such as 'Love in a shoebox' for Romania, Barnardos and Red Nose Day.
36. Links with other schools are very good. They are promoted through the school being part of an Education Action Zone. Professional teams are formed to work on curriculum issues. A learning mentor from the secondary school visits weekly to work with Year 6 pupils. Bridging projects are organised, for example in science, to help Year 6 pupils in their transition to secondary school. The school also has links with Leeds University through the 'Go4Uni' project. Students visit the school and talk with pupils about courses on offer and how going to university can help them. This is effective in raising the aspirations of pupils and helps them to build long-term aims.
37. The overall provision for pupils' personal development is satisfactory. The provision for moral and social development is good, and for spiritual and cultural development satisfactory.
38. Opportunities for spiritual development are provided in assemblies and religious education lessons, where pupils learn about different aspects of their own and other peoples' lives and beliefs. Assemblies are carefully planned for both key stages. Each week has a theme that is carefully introduced and developed. Listening to music and prayers provide times for quiet reflection. Songs, such as 'From a Distance', are chosen well to fit in with assembly themes. Pupils' very good behaviour in assemblies, along

with the presence of staff, help to make these special occasions. Within the whole curriculum, however, there are few planned opportunities to help develop spiritual awareness. This was also the case in the previous 1999 inspection, and the school recognises this as a priority for further improvement.

39. Good opportunities are provided for pupils' moral development in assemblies and class circle times, where pupils become aware of the things that affect their own daily lives, such as friendship and sharing. Each class discusses its own rules for classroom behaviour, and consistently applied strategies for behaviour management help to reinforce pupils' moral development. There are termly incentives, such as a visit to McDonalds or the theatre, that encourage pupils to carefully consider their behaviour and its outcomes. Celebration assemblies provide very good opportunities to promote high expectations and positive attitudes to behaviour and learning. Adults act as good role models both in and out of the classroom.
40. Good extra-curricular provision and a regular programme of visits and visitors, along with opportunities within the community, make a strong contribution to pupils' social development. Within lessons, pupils are encouraged to work together in pairs or in groups, co-operating and supporting each other in their learning. They have an appropriate range of responsibilities and duties in the classroom and around the school. They take the initiative in fund raising, for example when working for the Blue Peter appeal. The planned citizenship curriculum will provide further opportunities for pupils' social development.
41. Pupils are given sufficient opportunities to learn about and appreciate their own cultural heritage through their studies in, for example, English, history, art and music. Theatre, museum and other visits add to this. Pupils in Year 2 have visited the All Pakistani Women's Institute to look at Asian dress, and Year 4 pupils have visited a mosque. Festivals such as Hanukkah and Chinese New Year are recognised. The Carnival Arts' Week brought carnival into school. However, these approaches to pupils' multi-cultural development have not sufficiently encouraged pupils' recognition and understanding of the diversity of cultures in Britain today. The school recognises this and has appointed a co-ordinator for multi-cultural education, to look at ways of introducing further opportunities for this development into the curriculum. The 1999 inspection also recognised that there was scope for further development in this area.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

42. The school is very attentive to the welfare of its pupils and offers them good pastoral care. Teachers make the effort to get to know their pupils quickly, and take every opportunity to check on their well-being. Registration times, for example, are used to find out how pupils are and whether they are ready to face the day. Good policies and procedures have been set up to provide a framework of consistent care for pupils, and this is reinforced by the role of the learning mentor who is able to access a whole range of support services. Arrangements for child protection are particularly strong. Staff awareness is heightened through regular training and discussion, and referral forms enable concerns to be closely monitored. The school knows that it needs to increase the opportunities available for pupils' personal, social and health education, and has good plans in hand to do this. Procedures for dealing with health and safety issues are also good, with clear lines of responsibility and regular inspections of the premises. The school does what it can to ensure that daily routines run smoothly, but the lunchtime arrangements are not ideal. The situation of the canteen means that all the

children, including the very youngest in the reception class, have to trail across the site and through the car park in all weathers. The canteen itself is in poor condition and does not provide acceptable surroundings in which the children can eat their lunch comfortably.

43. The school's systems for monitoring attendance are satisfactory, but many are newly introduced and have not yet had the chance to have an impact on improving standards. In addition, the school recognises the need to raise the profile of attendance amongst its parent community and make families aware that their children's levels of attendance must improve. The school reacted decisively to the drop in standards over the last year, by drafting in extra resources to combat the problem. The learning mentor has been given responsibility for chasing up absence on the first day, for example, and she is beginning to work with the new education welfare officer to target families who need particular help. The office staff continue to keep registers up to date and provide the headteacher with regular reports on attendance. The school is not yet making use of the computer packages available to provide a quick and easy overview of attendance by individuals or groups.
44. Behaviour is well managed in the school, and staff are successful in promoting good discipline. There is a consistency of approach across the school, so that children are clear what is expected of them and what will happen if they fail to meet those expectations. Staff treat pupils well and are firm but fair in their application of the school's system for rewards and sanctions. As a result, relationships amongst the school community are very good. The headteacher is not afraid to use exclusions for unsafe and unacceptable behaviour. Bullying is taken very seriously, and the key teacher system for vulnerable pupils offers them a good level of support. Those pupils who were interviewed said they felt safe at school and could approach staff with any worries they had.
45. The school has very effective systems for formally assessing pupils' attainment. It makes very good use of standardised test data, such as baseline assessments, end of Key Stage 1 tests and other optional end of year tests, to identify differences in attainment in English and mathematics, to identify areas of general weakness and then to plan future learning opportunities. The school uses test results to set individual targets for pupils in English and mathematics. The school is able to track pupils' progress and address weaknesses or concerns as they become apparent. All standardised test data and targets are shared with staff so that, as pupils move through the school, their progress can be effectively monitored and additional support given, such as additional literacy support, Springboard and Booster groups. Assessment data is also used to set annual school targets for improvement in English and mathematics. This enables the school to evaluate its effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. Good procedures for assessing pupils' progress in other subjects enable teachers to assess the impact of learning in these subjects.
46. Very good care is taken of all pupils with special educational needs. Many tests are used throughout the school to determine the exact nature of need. Outside agencies are used when necessary and this has resulted in very good provision for specific cases. The school makes very good use of local and national initiatives to provide additional support for its pupils.

## HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. The school is successful in building positive relationships with the majority of its parent community, and most parents in their turn are pleased with the school and what it does for their children. They feel that the school has high expectations for its pupils, that the teaching is good, and that the school is well led and managed. They find the school approachable and believe that their children are happy and are becoming mature and responsible. These views are fully upheld by the findings of the inspection. A few parents have concerns about the homework provided, the information they receive about their children's progress, and the range of activities available outside lessons. These concerns are only partly justified. The homework given by teachers is currently inconsistent across different classes, while reports to parents are confusing and full of jargon. The school recognises both these issues and has plans for improvement. Extra-curricular activities, however, are good, better than those found in many schools, and the children benefit too from a good range of visits and visitors to enhance their learning.
48. The school's efforts to draw in parents and work with them are good. In particular, some very good new initiatives have been introduced to help parents develop their own skills and to enable them to help their children. Parents and grandparents alike have been able to take advantage of sessions in family literacy and better reading, for example, and have been supported making story-sacks and curiosity kits for pupils to use. Those relatives who got involved have felt a great sense of personal achievement, and have been able to give knowledgeable and confident help to the school as a result. The school has made the most of its good links with the EAZ and the local college to forge ahead with these initiatives. The role of the learning mentor is proving to be a very good way of working closely with families and children who have difficulties, and helping them to access the services they need. The school makes every effort to involve the parents of special educational needs pupils in reviews and in the formulation of individual education plans.
49. Information for parents is satisfactory. The prospectus and the governors' annual report broadly meet requirements, but the school recognises that they need to be redesigned to make them more eye-catching and appealing to their readers. Letters to parents are very functional at present and do not share news or celebrate success sufficiently. Workshops and meetings on the curriculum are a good way of keeping parents up to date on this, but they are not currently backed up with any written information, such as termly topic letters. This means that parents are limited in the amount of support they can give their children at home, because they do not necessarily know what they will be covering. Reports to parents on their children's progress are satisfactory, and have some good features. They contain all the information required by law, and focus well on what children can do, and what they need to do to improve further. However, the reports are not straightforward to read, because of the daunting quantity of information contained, and because of the amount of jargon used. Parents have good opportunities to discuss children's targets and how they have met them at parents' evenings across the year. The school makes every effort to involve parents of pupils with special educational needs in reviews.
50. The contribution of parents to the work of the school and to their children's learning is satisfactory overall. Some parents are very committed and work tirelessly as governors, classroom helpers and fund-raisers. Many do their best to hear their children read and to make sure they do their homework. A significant number, though, do not have the confidence or commitment to support their children in their studies, and too many parents fail to ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. The school benefits from the strong commitment, energy and clear thinking of the headteacher, which contribute substantially to the improvements that the school is making. Her very good leadership and management skills foster effective teamwork among all staff, to ensure a shared commitment to raising standards. The headteacher knows the pupils well and works hard to ensure that the school does its utmost to meet their varying learning and developmental needs. Her sustained efforts to promote the educational needs of pupils are gradually encouraging more parents to be actively involved in the education of their children and the life of the school. There are well-developed plans to continue and extend this work, including the use of the computer suite as a community resource.
52. The headteacher checks teachers' planning carefully, examines pupils' completed work and rigorously analyses the results of statutory testing. She regularly monitors the quality of teaching through well-focused lesson observations across the school, and provides teachers with valuable feedback, which has a beneficial effect on their professional development. Her recognition and celebration of teachers' achievements, and the support that is provided for the development of their professional skills and expertise, ensure that teachers feel they are an integral part of a dynamic and positive learning environment. As a consequence, staff morale and expectations are high, and everyone is made aware of their valuable contribution to the life of the school. There is effective delegation of roles and responsibilities to the deputy headteacher and senior management team. They give good support to the headteacher and their work makes a significant impact on school improvement.
53. The governing body works very effectively with the headteacher and staff, and is highly committed to the school. Appropriate committees are established and help to guide the school's work. The statutory requirements are fully met. The results of statutory tests are debated thoroughly, and governors regularly visit the school to observe it in operation. Governors also receive reports from subject co-ordinators. The chair of governors has regular meetings with the headteacher, which focus on pertinent issues. The school benefits from the ongoing interest of a very long serving governor who has now been made an honorary presidential governor. The governing body has developed a better understanding of its work since the last inspection, when it was unclear about its own long-term role in monitoring progress. Overall the governors now have a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, know the challenges it faces and are fully involved in the school's improvement efforts.
54. The school development plan has been formulated through the effective leadership of the headteacher, with appropriate staff and governor involvement. It is well organised, with detailed action plans which focus on relevant priorities, and provides a firm steer to the work of the school. The monitoring role of the subject co-ordinators has developed satisfactorily overall. They are involved in checking planning and most have analysed samples of work to judge pupils' standards and progress. They are involved in rigorous analysis of statutory test results in English, mathematics and science and use their findings to inform planning for future improvements. The co-ordinators for English and mathematics have observed lessons in their subject areas in line with the emphasis that the school has rightly placed on raising standards in the basic skills. There is now scope for the planned development of opportunities for other subject co-ordinators to observe lessons as part of their monitoring role. All co-ordinators readily provide valuable advice to their colleagues, and the shared sense of direction and teamwork of staff ensures that ideas are quickly acted upon. Overall, subject co-ordinators have a good

understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their subjects, and are able to identify and target areas for improvement accurately as a result.

55. The school has a satisfactory ethos of inclusion, where every child is valued and supported according to their needs. All adults have a clear understanding of the school's policy for equal opportunities and consistently put it into practice. The school is particularly sensitive to practical aspects of inclusion, such as funding of visits. The special educational needs co-ordinator, who is experienced and well qualified, is well supported by the headteacher. She makes good use of release time during the school day to manage special needs provision, monitor its effectiveness and link with teachers. The school is well aware that boys in the school are not achieving as well as girls and it is taking effective steps to overcome this, including involvement in a research project. Resources are appropriately chosen to reflect the needs of pupils; for example, reading books have been chosen specifically to tackle the reluctance of some boys to read. More needs to be done, however, to remove the barriers to learning caused by pupils' poor skills in spoken language.
56. The administration of the school is effective. All visitors to the school are made to feel welcome and day-to-day matters are dealt with calmly and efficiently. This makes an important contribution to the calm and orderly atmosphere that is prevalent throughout the school. The financial management of the school is very good. The school makes very good use of outside initiatives in its efforts to raise standards. For example, it recently obtained a specific grant to provide the computer suite. The budget is carefully analysed by the headteacher and finance committee of governors. Financial planning is appropriately linked to the initiatives in the school development plan: governors debate expenditure rigorously in order to obtain value for money. Overall, the school makes very effective use of its resources. It is well led by the headteacher and the governors are effective. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and is mainly good or better, and pupils make good progress in their learning in relation to their low starting points. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are a credit to the school, and there is good provision for their personal as well as their academic development. Overall, the school provides good value for money.
57. There are sufficient teachers and together they have the expertise and experience to teach the age and ability range of the pupils. They are particularly well informed about English and mathematics, and generally have secure subject knowledge across most areas of the curriculum. Where there are weaknesses, for example, in some aspects of ICT, they are being addressed through well-targeted in-service training. The school's inclusion in the EAZ is having a positive impact on staff development, not only through subject-specific development workers, but also through effective links with other schools.
58. The accommodation is bright and attractive, and is kept in very clean condition by the conscientious caretaking staff. Classrooms are of satisfactory size: there is a well-equipped computer suite and two good-sized halls for physical education and drama. The separate dining room, although away from the main building, ensures that both halls are available for use immediately before and after lunch. However, timetabling arrangements, which involve the teaching of literacy and numeracy throughout each morning, limit the use of these good facilities to mainly afternoon sessions. The library, which is currently housed in a shared area, was under-used during the week of the inspection and is not suitable for whole-class use. The school has well-developed plans to improve this provision. Teachers take considerable care to enrich the environment with attractive displays of children's work, and the school benefits from pleasant

grounds. A new outdoor play area has recently been provided for the reception class and there are plans to extend it. Resources for learning are sound overall. However, the reception children require more equipment to develop their physical skills, such as large wheeled toys. There is also a need to extend the range of resources that are available to reflect the diversity of a multi-cultural society.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

59. In order to raise standards and improve the curriculum the school should:

- (1) Improve standards in speaking and listening by:  
bringing forward the school's own plans for improvement;  
ensuring the systematic development of : vocabulary and diction; the grammatical structure of standard English; and, the use of language for thinking in all subjects;  
raising parental awareness of the importance of speaking and listening, to learning at the earliest possible stage.  
(see paragraphs 1,8,9,10,14,23,24,25,67,84,85,86,92)
- (2) Improve pupils' attendance and punctuality by:  
continuing the good initiatives that have been already started in relation to those pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern;  
raising the profile of attendance in the school population as a whole.  
(see paragraphs 18,19,20,43,50)
- (3) Improve the curriculum for pupils in Year 1 to Year 6 by:  
embedding the development of problem solving, investigation and thinking skills into all subjects of the curriculum;  
ensuring that pupils have systematic opportunities to use their initiative in the course of their learning;  
reviewing the use of time during the school day to give greater flexibility in the way that the subjects of the curriculum are taught to make more efficient use of the school's resources;  
embedding multi-cultural education into the curriculum.  
(see paragraphs 16,24,25,27,30,33,93,85,101)

Minor issues:

Additionally the governors may wish to include the following issue in their action plan.

Improve the quality of the information that the school gives to parents by:  
making reports more straightforward and free of jargon;  
making information that is sent more visually appealing and easier to read;  
giving more information to parents, particularly about the curriculum.  
(see paragraphs 47,48)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed   | 65 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 30 |

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

|            | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number     | 4         | 19        | 29   | 13           | 0              | 0    | 0         |
| Percentage | 6         | 29        | 45   | 20           | 0              | 0    | 0         |

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

### 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)      | 23      | 251     |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 0       | 109     |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

|   | Nursery | YR-Y6 |
|---|---------|-------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs       | 0       | 10    |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 0       | 106   |

#### English as an additional language

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

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

|  | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 11           |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving           | 9            |

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

|                           | %   |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data               | 6.8 |
| National comparative data | 5.2 |

#### Unauthorised absence

|                           | %   |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data               | 0   |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

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

|  |      |      |       |       |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|  | 2000 | 27   | 19    | 46    |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results       |          | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above   | Boys     | 15      | 18      | 23          |
|   | Girls    | 16      | 16      | 16          |
|   | Total    | 31      | 34      | 39          |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School   | 67 (59) | 74 (59) | 85 (67)     |
|   | National | 83 (82) | 84 (83) | 90 (87)     |

| Teachers' Assessments                       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above   | Boys     | 16      | 23          | 16      |
|   | Girls    | 15      | 16          | 14      |
|   | Total    | 31      | 39          | 30      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School   | 67 (59) | 85 (65)     | 65 (65) |
|   | 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 6)

|  |      |      |       |       |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|  | 2000 | 31   | 16    | 47    |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above   | Boys     | 20      | 18          | 25      |
|   | Girls    | 12      | 7           | 12      |
|   | Total    | 32      | 25          | 37      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School   | 68 (55) | 53 (45)     | 79 (49) |
|   | National | 75 (70) | 72 (69)     | 85 (78) |

| Teachers' Assessments                       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above   | Boys     | 17      | 14          | 13      |
|   | Girls    | 11      | 11          | 7       |
|   | Total    | 28      | 25          | 20      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School   | 60 (33) | 53 (36)     | 43 (31) |
|   | National | 70 (68) | 72 (69)     | 79 (75) |

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

|                                 | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage      |              |
| Black – African heritage        |              |
| Black – other                   |              |
| Indian                          |              |
| Pakistani                       |              |
| Bangladeshi                     |              |
| Chinese                         |              |
| White                           | 251          |
| Any other minority ethnic group |              |

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

|                              | Fixed period | Permanent |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage   |              |           |
| Black – African heritage     |              |           |
| Black – other                |              |           |
| Indian                       |              |           |
| Pakistani                    |              |           |
| Bangladeshi                  |              |           |
| Chinese                      |              |           |
| White                        | 5            |           |
| Other minority ethnic groups |              |           |

*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: Y 1 – Y6**

|  |      |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 13   |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   | 22.6 |
| Average class size                       | 24.5 |

#### **Education support staff: Y1 – Y6**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Total number of education support staff | 7  |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week   | 24 |

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 1  |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   | 23 |
| Total number of education support staff  | 1  |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week    | 25 |
| Number of pupils per FTE adult           | 13 |

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

|                |           |
|----------------|-----------|
| Financial year | 2000/2001 |
|----------------|-----------|

|  | £      |
|--|--------|
| Total income                               | 693255 |
| Total expenditure                          | 668371 |
| Expenditure per pupil                      | 2109   |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | -20595 |
| Balance carried forward to next year       | 4289   |

### **Recruitment of teachers**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years   | 1 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years   | 0 |
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)  | 0 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)                           | 0 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 0 |

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

|                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 248 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 48  |

### Percentage of responses in each category

|  | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school.   | 72             | 21            | 2                | 4                 | 0          |
| My child is making good progress in school.  | 67             | 31            | 2                | 0                 | 0          |
| Behaviour in the school is good.   | 38             | 60            | 2                | 0                 | 0          |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.                              | 30             | 48            | 15               | 4                 | 2          |
| The teaching is good.  | 75             | 23            | 0                | 0                 | 2          |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.                          | 70             | 19            | 11               | 0                 | 0          |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 73             | 25            | 2                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.              | 79             | 17            | 2                | 0                 | 2          |
| The school works closely with parents.   | 67             | 25            | 6                | 2                 | 0          |
| The school is well led and managed.  | 73             | 25            | 0                | 2                 | 0          |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.                      | 73             | 25            | 0                | 0                 | 2          |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.            | 43             | 33            | 11               | 4                 | 9          |

### Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Most parents in their turn are pleased with the school and what it does for their children. They feel that the school has high expectations for its pupils, that the teaching is good, and that the school is well led and managed. They find the school approachable and believe that their children are happy and are becoming mature and responsible. These views are fully upheld by the findings of the inspection. A few parents have concerns about the homework provided, the information they receive about their children's progress, and the range of activities available outside lessons. These concerns are partly justified. The homework given by teachers is currently inconsistent across different classes, while reports to parents are confusing and full of jargon. Extra-curricular activities, however, are good, better than those found in many schools, and the children benefit too from a good range of visits and visitors to enhance their learning.

## **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**

60. Children are admitted to the nursery class twice a year, in September and January, as they reach the age of four. They spend three terms in the nursery on a part-time basis, prior to moving into full-time schooling in the reception classes. Nearly all the children in Thrybergh Primary School have attended the nursery, which also serves other schools in the area. The nursery is housed in an attractive purpose-built unit with an outdoor play area. The reception class is housed in a classroom in the main school building and has the use of a small, recently established outdoor play area.
61. The nursery and reception staff plan together, to ensure that children in both areas have access to a similar curriculum at an appropriate level. The influence of planning is clearly reflected in the way the nursery and reception class work. The curriculum covers all six areas of learning and activities are purposeful, coherent and well structured.
62. Provision in both the nursery and the reception class is very good and this is a strength of the school. Teaching is very good and a rich environment for learning through play and talk has been created. There is a good balance between teacher-directed and child-initiated tasks and there are ample opportunities for children to take part in practical and purposeful activities. The nursery teacher and nursery nurse make a highly effective team. They work closely together, and share responsibilities for groups of children and areas of the nursery. This results in the children benefiting from their shared expertise. In reception the teacher's knowledge and understanding of the individual needs of her pupils and of how young children learn best make a significant impact on their well-being, the progress that they make and their positive attitudes to school
63. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the Foundation Stage. There are effective links with outside agencies, who visit the school regularly to offer support to children and families in need of specific help. Teachers and the nursery nurse work hard to involve parents and there are excellent monitoring arrangements, which are used to inform planning for children's particular needs. This contributes to the good progress that children with special educational needs make.
64. The partnership between parents and the staff is sound. There are appropriate induction procedures, which ensure that children are well prepared for entry into the nursery and the reception class. Parents are kept appropriately informed of their children's progress and of the work that the children are doing. There is scope, however, to extend these links, particularly in involving parents more closely in further supporting their children's learning prior to coming to school. On entry to the nursery most children who go on to enter the school have very poor language and communication skills and personal and social skills. The quality of education that is provided in the Foundation Stage is very good and prepares them appropriately for the National Curriculum.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

65. On entry to the nursery, children's personal, social and emotional development is very poor. They lack confidence and find it hard to work with their classmates. As a result of the very good teaching they receive, both in the nursery and the reception class, pupils make good progress, develop positive attitudes to school and learn to co-operate with others. Most children begin to concentrate for extended periods because of the wide

range of activities that are well suited to their needs and interests. In spite of the teachers' best efforts, however, a significant minority of children are not always able to maintain concentration because they are too tired. The nursery teacher and nursery nurse give sensitive encouragement for children to try new experiences for themselves and this helps them to gain in confidence. For example, in the course of making buns, children are shown how to break an egg into the a bowl. Some are extremely worried about this but with support achieve the desired result and display a huge amount of satisfaction and pride as the eggs slither into the mixture. In the course of whole-class discussions, playing with small models of the real world and in role-play, children have ample opportunities to develop an awareness of their own feelings, and gradually develop a growing knowledge of the language they can use to describe them. This results in children who do have problems and concerns being able to approach the adults who work with them to make their needs known. Children's growing ability to accept the needs of others makes a significant contribution to the positive relationships they develop with their classmates. By the end of the reception year they have a satisfactory understanding of the basic rules which make for harmonious groups, such as turn taking and working together. Children have a developing knowledge of what is right and wrong and some understanding of the consequences of their actions for themselves and others. They can dress themselves and take care of their personal hygiene. There is good provision of equipment and resources to reflect children's own backgrounds and cultures, for example, cooking and dressing-up clothes in the role-play area. This makes an effective contribution to the development of their sense of self, and awareness of their own cultures. More could be done, however, to help them develop an awareness of cultures that are different to their own.

66. In both the nursery and reception classes teaching is very good. Staff build trusting relationships with children from an early stage and encourage children to try new experiences. They use varied and suitable teaching methods, including lively and effective interaction with children's play, giving clear explanations, introducing props at appropriate moments and using questions skilfully to move learning on. Children are encouraged to think for themselves and take responsibility for deciding the activities they will take part in when they are not working directly with the teacher. Children are given opportunities to demonstrate what they know and understand both during the course of activities and in small and large group review sessions. This encourages them to think about what they have achieved, take a pride in their work and grow in confidence when talking with others.

### **Communication, language and literature**

67. Children's communication and language skills are very poor on entry to the nursery. They make satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points but are inhibited in their enjoyment and use of spoken language and so attain standards that are below those expected by the end of the reception year. Most children use words and gestures and go on to develop these into simple statements changing their tone of voice to make the meaning clear. Their vocabulary in the initial stages mainly focuses on objects and people that are of particular importance to them. It is gradually broadened to reflect the range of experiences that the nursery and reception class provides. However, most children need support to use talk to describe or commentate on their actions, to sequence ideas and recreate roles and experiences.
68. As a result of the emphasis that the nursery places on books, children quickly begin to enjoy listening to stories and poems and sharing books with interested adults. By the end of their time in the nursery most children hold books carefully the correct way round and understand that the marks on the page carry some meaning. They take a particular interest in the illustrations and listen intently as adults read to them. The reception

teacher builds effectively on this as she introduces the more formal aspects of literacy, for example the sounds that letters make. She does this orally and in ways which help the children to enjoy their work. For example, she challenges the children to say the sounds sadly and happily, loudly and softly, or in the way that an animal might say them. As a result, children are actively involved and maintain interest and remember what they have been taught. It is noticeable, however, that although children can link some letters to the sounds that they make, few can recognise the initial sounds that they hear in the names of objects. For example, in trying to find an object from a selection provided beginning with 'b' they find it extremely difficult to pick out the box. Children continue to enjoy books in the reception class, and the good provision of small models to represent the characters and settings in the stories that they hear is effective in helping them to consolidate their understanding of the story and vocabulary. For example, a miniature jungle has been created for follow up work on 'Walking Through the Jungle', and children enjoy playing with the animals, taking them on journeys and imitating the sounds that they make.

69. Children in the nursery are encouraged from an early stage to make marks using pencils, crayons and paints. They also have a range of good opportunities to develop the co-ordination of the eye and hand movements that they need to learn to write when working with clay, scissors and construction equipment. In the reception class, children are encouraged to 'have a shot' at writing their own names on a 'register' as they come into the classroom. This encourages them to gain in confidence and some children begin to form recognisable letters as they attempt to write their name. Children in both the nursery and reception classes use the keyboards on computers to type in letters which appear on the screen and which they then print out.
70. The teaching of communication, language and literature is very good, both in the nursery and reception. Most of the work on literacy, including early phonic work, is done through exciting, practical and imaginative activities, which involve play and talk. Activities are well structured and linked together to ensure coherence and continuity in the curriculum. Teaching takes into account children's different attainments and reflects high expectations for children to progress further. This results in sufficient challenge for the small minority of children who can talk fluently and who are beginning to read and write with confidence. Throughout the Foundation Stage there is an emphasis on providing real experiences, which will develop pupils' vocabulary. Given children's starting points on entry however, there is scope to place even more emphasis on the development of children's oral skills in order to: widen the range of words they have at their disposal; help children to use simple grammatical structures; and, encourage the use of talk to organise, sequence and clarify thinking.
71. Regular assessments are systematic, informative, objective and clearly linked to the early learning goals. Assessments are based on observations of children's behaviour and activity, listening to children in different contexts and evaluations of their work. Good use is made of them to help and encourage pupils to overcome difficulties and to inform ongoing planning for different needs. Teachers know their children well and this makes a substantial contribution to the provision that is made and the good progress that children make.

### **Mathematical development**

72. When children enter the nursery at the age of four, their mathematical development is very poor for their age. As a result of good teaching in both the nursery and the reception class, they make good progress in relation to their starting points. A minority attain or exceed the standards expected for children who are five years old by the end

of the reception year, although the majority attain below. Children begin to show an interest in numbers and in counting at an early stage because of the well-designed activities provided. For example, in the nursery they make holes with their fingers in clay and then count the number of holes that they have made. They peg socks on the line in the role-play area, carefully matching up the pairs and selecting the number of pegs they will need. In the reception class they count along with a small glove puppet called Eddie the Elephant as he points to numbers in a line up to ten, and loudly correct him when he makes mistakes. They particularly enjoy shouting zero as he falls off the end of the line when counting backwards. A small number of children are able to count the correct number of objects in a series of small bags and select the correct numeral to stand for the number that they have counted. Other children use their knowledge of numbers when they use real money to buy items in the role-play area, which has been set up as a shop. Children are not yet recording and writing numbers.

73. Children in the nursery begin to develop an early understanding of shape and space as they build tall towers and long lines with blocks, and enclosures with stickle bricks and lego. As they become more confident they play with shapes and make arrangements and patterns with beads and pegboards. In the course of their work with sand and water they fill and empty containers and begin to learn the language and meaning of 'full' and 'empty', 'more' and 'less'. Practical experiences such as cooking also reinforce this knowledge and in addition help children to develop an early understanding of weight. When making collages they cut various lengths of paper and straws and make comparisons between them. This work is built on effectively in the reception class where children learn more formal recognition of shapes and begin to use language to correctly describe comparisons between objects, such as 'bigger', 'smaller', 'heavier' and 'lighter', for example when they are examining fruit. Although they find it easy to say which fruit is the heaviest, their concept of 'lighter than' is not yet secure.
74. The teaching of mathematics is very good, both in the nursery and in the reception class. Teachers demonstrate an enthusiasm for the subject themselves and present the work on mathematics through purposeful and practical activities, which interest the children. They plan a wide range of mathematical opportunities and make good use of talk to help children develop their mathematical vocabulary in the course of intervening in their play. There is very good use of everyday activities, such as registration, to promote the use of counting and number recognition. Planning takes into account children's different attainments and reflects high expectations for all, including the small number who achieve at higher levels.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

75. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world are very poor for their age on entry to the nursery. They make good progress as a result of the excellent opportunities that are provided for them to explore and make sense of the world around them, both indoors and out. These include formal input, practical play experiences and visits to places within the locality and further afield. Children in the nursery recreate roadways and maps for their model cars and learn something about people who help them in the community. They investigate the natural world by observing the growth of plants. In the reception class they begin to gain an early understanding of place as a result of walks around the school in which they identify the different features of the school building, where classrooms are and what different rooms are used for. Well-structured planning results in children's understanding being further developed through visits to the local area and the creation of maps and models which identify significant features of their journey. They become increasingly aware of the area in which they live and of the services that people who live in the area provide. Children in the nursery find out about

some of the properties of materials as they play with sand and water and observe the movement of gravel as it cascades down a tube. They learn something about the changes that heating has on materials as a result of making their own food, such as buns. In reception, children learn something about the different environments in which animals live as a result of their work on 'Walking Through the Jungle', and when observing their pet goldfish in the classroom. They look carefully at a variety of fruit, noting differences in colour and texture and the different kinds of seeds that appear when they are cut in half. They investigate the different tastes of fruits and decide which they like best, comparing their findings with their initial ideas. They have an early understanding of the passing of time and their place within it as a result of reflecting on changes in themselves since they have been born. Children achieve well when making models from construction equipment and use computers with confidence, demonstrating good hand and eye control when controlling images on screen using a mouse.

76. Teaching for knowledge and understanding of the world is very good both in the nursery and the reception class. All adults who work with the children interact and support them in ways which help them to learn from their mistakes. They act as good role models as they work alongside children, showing real enthusiasm for activities and posing appropriate questions, which encourage the children's curiosity. They give very careful consideration to the provision of resources and make effective use of the outdoors and the local environment.

### **Physical development**

77. Children's physical development on entry to the nursery is poor. They benefit from suitable opportunities to develop manipulative skills when using construction toys and play-dough, and when painting, cutting, drawing and working with role-play equipment. These opportunities are appropriately extended into the reception class. Children make good progress and demonstrate increasing control as they manipulate material to achieve the desired effect. Children in the nursery enjoy regular access to the outdoor area, where, supervised by adults, they develop their co-ordination and their awareness of space for themselves and others. The well-designed hard play area ensures that children need to control their movements through a growing awareness of the speed and direction in which they travel. Some children demonstrate that they can do this with great accuracy but many lack confidence and co-ordination and need a great deal of encouragement to ride on the tricycles, for example, and to pull themselves along a bench or jump from a step. Access to outdoor play using large toys and equipment for reception aged children is more limited. However, a dedicated area has recently been provided and there are plans to extend it. Children in the reception class have access to the school hall for activities, which involve the children in more formal preparation for the early stages of the National Curriculum. They begin to control and co-ordinate their bodies confidently, when walking and running, and have a satisfactory awareness of their own space in relation to others.
78. The quality of teaching for pupils' physical development is very good in the nursery and in reception. Teachers and the nursery nurse interact with activities to help children to develop and extend their skills. For example, a child who was having difficulty pushing the pedals on a tricycle was shown how to do so. When stirring a mixture to make buns a child with an awkward wrist action was shown how to hold the whisk and move his wrist in circles. When working with clay children are shown how to make marks in the clay, and push it and pull it to make different shapes.

## **Creative development**

79. Children's creative development is very poor on entry to the nursery. As a result of the very good teaching and the time that they are given to explore and experiment with materials and ideas, children make good progress overall in relation to their starting points. They make very good progress in painting where many achieve standards in line with those expected for their age by the end of the reception year. In the nursery there is very good training to show children how to set up an easel for themselves and mix powder paints. Children enjoy creating a range of different colours and observing the different marks the paint makes on the paper. In the reception class, children produce good paintings of real objects such as fruit, which have variations in tone and colour to reflect their observations. Children respond well to opportunities to express their ideas when singing and moving to music. They learn a range of songs by heart, sing them enthusiastically at an early stage and accompany themselves with appropriate movements and mimes. Children's ability to make up their own imaginative stories when using the role-play areas and small world equipment is at an earlier stage of development and is mainly inhibited by their poor language skills which limit their ability to converse with others, sequence their ideas and confirm their thinking.
80. Teaching for creative development is very good. Good planning ensures that children have ample time to develop their own ideas. All adults support and encourage children in making independent choices and value their ideas and suggestions. A range of good quality resources is provided and there are very good opportunities for children to develop their own ideas.

## **ENGLISH**

81. Results of the National Curriculum tests for 2000 show that at the end of Year 2 standards are well below the national average and below the average of similar schools. At the end of Year 6, when compared with the national average, standards were below average but well above average when compared with similar schools. Results of this year's tests are similar. Trends show an improvement in both key stages. In Key Stage 2 improvements have been made at a faster pace than the national average. Girls' performance is better than that of the boys'. The school recognises this and is taking action to remedy the situation. Evidence from work shows that the school is improving the performance of boys.
82. When pupils start Year 1 a high proportion have below average speaking skills. Despite the good progress made in the nursery and reception classes, most pupils are still not confident speakers. This is because of the very low level of communication skills that many children have when they first enter the nursery. These below average speaking skills have a negative impact on standards and by the end of Year 2 standards in reading and writing remain below average. Since the last inspection improvement in literacy has been given high priority by the school and many initiatives have been implemented to help raise standards. These include the setting by ability of pupils in Years 4 to 6 and the withdrawal of pupils in Year 3 for literacy, enabling lower attaining pupils to be taught in smaller groups. Other initiatives include the Additional Literacy Strategy support in Years 3 and 4, Better Reading, the Early Intervention programme in Year 1, and Family Literacy. The school is now a trial school for First Steps, which is a local education authority project to aid literacy development. All these initiatives are helping to raise attainment.

83. At the end of Year 6, overall standards are below average. This is partly due to the large number of pupils with special educational needs in the year group.
84. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are below average. At the end of Year 2, pupils are beginning to listen more carefully but because of limited vocabulary many of them do not always understand what they are required to do. They rarely give more than one word answers to questions. Speaking skills improve as pupils progress through the school but not sufficiently to bring them up to those expected of pupils nationally by the age of eleven. Many pupils find it difficult to sustain a conversation or answer questions in detail, as was seen when discussing their reading books. As yet, the opportunities for the pupils to practise their speaking skills are not sufficiently planned for across the curriculum. The school is aware of the need to raise speaking and listening skills and is prepared to implement a policy of planned and identified opportunities across the curriculum as a priority. To this end a new policy for raising speaking and listening skills has been written and a co-ordinator has been appointed to implement it.
85. Reading standards at the end of Year 2 are well below average and at the end of Year 6 are below average. By the time higher attaining readers are seven, they are confidently choosing their own reading material and are able to read difficult and unusual words without hesitation, for example 'baguette' and 'revenge'. They are able to talk about the plot and characters in favourite stories and recount their favourite part of the story. Below average readers are still struggling to make sense of text and rely heavily on picture clues and on memory of having seen the text before. There is no attempt to self-correct or use phonic clues. By the age of seven, average and above average readers know the difference between fiction and non-fiction but they are not confident when trying to locate information. These skills are under-developed. By the age of eleven, pupils have made good progress. Very low attainers have difficulty with simple words, for example, confusing 'was' and 'saw'. They do not read even simple texts fluently nor do they use expression. Some pupils are unable to read silently to themselves. Higher attaining readers read confidently and with expression. They choose their own books and can give reasons for their choice. They have favourite authors and favourite genres. However, there is a weakness in that they find it difficult to explain what it is about a particular type of book that appeals to them. Although there is definite progress in the development of information skills, the pupils are not as confident as is expected. Some pupils have poor alphabetical skills, which make their pace of work slow when using a dictionary or index. Library skills are taught in the classroom as part of the literacy hour as the library area is too small to accommodate a whole class.
86. Standards in writing are below average at the ages of seven and eleven. This is a reflection of the poor speaking skills that a majority of pupils have. Many pupils speak a dialect, which often appears in what they write. By the age of seven, above average attainers write imaginatively and hold the readers' interest. They can write extended sentences using a good range of connectives. They use full stops and capital letters correctly and are beginning to use speech marks to show dialogue. In the writing of average attainers the verb and subject of a sentence often do not agree and the only connective used is the word 'and'. Lower attainers find it difficult to engage the interest of the reader and much of what they write is not easy to understand. They still use a mixture of upper and lower case letters within words and the only punctuation used is a full stop, which is often used simply at the end of the piece of writing. By the age of eleven, all abilities have made good progress. Higher attainers write grammatically complex sentences using a full range of punctuation. They use interesting vocabulary and write successfully in different styles. Average attainers work confidently and can

engage the interest of the reader though they find it difficult to develop characters in their stories. Below average attainers find difficulty in producing a sustained piece of writing. Although their spelling has improved, weaknesses occur because they mostly write in simple sentences which are not always grammatically correct. For example, the verb and subject of the sentence often do not always agree. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress with the support of class teaching assistants.

87. Pupils throughout the school respond well to their literacy lessons. In lessons that are well planned and in which the pace is good, pupils are enthusiastic and work well. Pupils work well in pairs and in small groups, for example, during guided reading as well as concentrating well when engaged on individual work. Behaviour is good.
88. The quality of teaching is good. There were no unsatisfactory lessons observed during the inspection. Teachers' expectations of their pupils are high and the pupils respond well. This is reflected in the progress that pupils make, principally in Key Stage 2. Teachers have responded well to the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and use the literacy hour well. The reading session is now taught outside the literacy hour, enabling more time to be devoted to the development of writing skills. This has given good progression to pupils' learning. Teachers use skilful questioning to encourage and to assess pupils' understanding. All activities meet the needs of groups of pupils of different abilities. In one Year 3 lesson good use was made of the interactive board to model pupils' writing, which enhanced learning. Assessment is carried out regularly and all pupils have targets against which their work is assessed. The final part of the lesson is used well to share pupils' work and to see if the lesson objectives have been achieved. Teachers have very good classroom management skills. They give timed targets for work, which ensures that the lesson moves along in a purposeful way. When teaching is very good, teachers exhibit a personal enthusiasm for the work, which encourages a good response from the pupils. Setting the pupils for literacy seems to be having a positive effect on their learning.
89. The co-ordinator is an experienced and very effective teacher. She is keen to raise standards and has implemented many new developments. There are good systems in place to assess all aspects of pupils' progress in English. These assessments are used to plan future work and to track individuals' progress. The co-ordinator monitors the statistical data from the National Curriculum test results and the optional tests in Years 3, 4 and 5. Teaching is also monitored through classroom observations. The subject is well resourced and makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the study of a wide range of texts.

## **MATHEMATICS**

90. In the 2000 national tests, the standards at the end of both key stages were well below average when compared with schools nationally. When compared with schools having a similar intake of pupils, these results were average. Since 1997, results have risen at both key stages, with a greater improvement in 2000. The more consistent improvement in standards, reported in 1999, has continued. Indications for 2001 show that the 2000 levels have been maintained; they also show a significant difference between the performance of boys and girls, which the school has recognised. The school met its 2001 targets, and the provisional 2002 targets show that the school is planning for further steady improvement in attainment. The evidence from pupils' work shows that the school is gradually improving the performance of boys.

91. The impact of the National Numeracy Strategy, very good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' progress, and the continuing strong focus on mathematics in the school's development plan, have been important factors in raising standards. Pupils' mathematical attainment on entry to the school is poor. The inspection found that, based on prior attainment, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make increasingly good progress throughout both key stages. However, the overall standards achieved remain below those expected nationally.
92. By the end of Year 2, nearly two thirds of pupils attain average standards and are secure in their understanding and use of number up to 100. They recall number facts to 20, see patterns in number, and recognise multiples of two, five and ten. A small number of more able pupils work in numbers up to 1000, and understand place value. Nearly one third of pupils who work at below average levels count and order numbers up to ten, and recognise addition and subtraction in their working. Most pupils collect and record data in block graphs, but do not compare the information gathered. They recognise two and three-dimensional shapes, but have difficulty describing their properties. Their language skills limit their ability to discuss the work they are doing and to reason mathematically.
93. By the end of Year 6, just over half of pupils attain average levels and have a satisfactory understanding of number and place value. They work securely in all four rules of number and understand negative numbers; they multiply and divide whole numbers and decimals by ten and 100. About one quarter of pupils work at below average levels but work confidently in numbers up to a 100, and recall number facts to 20. About one fifth of pupils work at above average levels. They order fractions and recognise common decimal and percentage equivalents. They have a sound knowledge of shape, identify shapes from given properties and find out the sum of their interior angles. Pupils use standard measures satisfactorily in written problem work, with more able pupils comparing metric and imperial measures. They record data on bar and pie charts and interpret their results, with more able pupils identifying the mean, mode and median of a set of results. Pupils use strategies well for solving one and two-step word problems, but are not generally confident in explaining their workings or in applying their mathematical skills to practical situations.
94. Teaching and learning overall are good, with no unsatisfactory lessons observed during the inspection. Three of the lessons seen were judged to be very good. Lessons are well planned and prepared; they have clear learning objectives, which are shared with pupils, so that all know the purpose of the lesson. Good use is made of resources to stimulate pupils' enthusiasm, as in a Year 3 lesson where a computer-operated interactive white board enhanced learning. Tasks are set and clearly explained for the range of ability within classes, to enable all to make progress, as in a Year 6 lesson where the range of word problems set was appropriate and challenging. Careful ongoing assessments are made of pupils' progress, and lessons are correctly amended in the light of these. Weekly planning was changed in Year 3 where pupils had encountered some difficulties in their learning. The introductions to lessons mostly adopt methods that involve all pupils, gain their attention, and provide further assessment opportunities. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils recorded answers to a variety of questions on the six times table. Questioning is generally satisfactory during introductions. It is not always sufficiently targeted, with some pupils answering questions and others not involved. In better lessons pupils are expected to explain their answers and so gain greater understanding. This happened in a Year 2 lesson where pupils, with support, explained how they worked out the missing numbers in number sentences. Classroom support assistants are well briefed, and support groups well.

However, during the introductions to lessons, opportunities for them to be involved are missed, for example by monitoring pupils' speaking and listening. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and expect the best behaviour. Pupils respond well, displaying positive attitudes and good behaviour, which impacts on their learning. They generally concentrate well and show a strong interest in their activities. In one lesson, however, pupils' tiredness and listlessness, despite very good teaching, had a detrimental effect on their learning. Pupils are given good opportunities to work independently in pairs or in groups; this was very effective in a Year 6 lesson where pupils discussed word problems and worked well together to find solutions. Pupils have individual numeracy targets linked to the levels they are expected to be working at in the different areas of mathematics. They understand these targets, and this knowledge of their own learning has a positive effect on their attitudes to mathematics. The conclusions to lessons provide useful opportunities for teachers to assess progress, but do not give sufficient opportunity for pupils to discuss the ease at which they have learnt or the difficulties they have met, in relation to learning objectives. During group work, teachers and support assistants talk with pupils about the work they are doing, marking work, carefully pointing out errors and praising good work. However, particularly at Key Stage 2, although work is marked consistently, there are few written comments to inform pupils how well they have done or what they need to do to improve. Homework is set, but its use is not consistent throughout the school.

95. The National Numeracy Strategy has been effectively established, and there is a sound use of mathematics to support other areas of the curriculum, for example, in science where Year 5 pupils took and recorded different body measurements, and in ICT where Year 6 pupils explored how changes in a spreadsheet affected results. Opportunities are provided for speaking and listening and appropriate subject vocabulary is introduced, and the school has recognised the need to develop these opportunities further in order to improve mathematical understanding.
96. Co-ordination for mathematics is good. There are appropriate targets on the subject's development plan to help raise standards and the quality of teaching further. With the assistance of a local authority consultant, teaching has been observed and written feedback given to teachers with targets for development. Staff training is well organised to meet the particular needs linked to these targets. The co-ordinator sees planning, and carefully analyses the results of national and optional end-of-year testing to identify areas for particular attention. Pupils' progress is very carefully recorded and monitored; these records are the basis for the good support given by way of sets in Key Stage 2, groupings within classes and sets, Springboard and Booster classes in Years 5 and 6, and the provision for pupils with special educational needs.

## **SCIENCE**

97. The standards attained by pupils at the ages of seven and eleven are below those expected for their age, but pupils make good progress from the time they enter the school and they achieve well. Results in National Curriculum assessments and tests in 2001 were similar to those in 2000 for both seven and eleven year olds; although they are still below the national average, the overall trend has been upwards for the last four years. The results for eleven year olds were close to the average for schools with pupils from a similar social background in 2000. The attainment of boys and girls is similar.

98. Pupils in Year 2 need support in recording the outcome of their investigations, because their writing skills are weak. They understand the need for sleep and for eating healthy foods. They know that materials, such as clay, change shape. Pupils are able to recognise which items need batteries from a series of pictures. The majority do not yet have a clear understanding of what constitutes a 'fair test' and they do not find it easy to put their predictions into words. They also find it difficult to answer the question 'why?', when trying to explain changes to materials. Often results of investigations are recorded better pictorially, as for instance when pupils in last year's Year 2 depicted the changes as ice cubes melted. Teachers are aware of these weaknesses and usually prepare appropriate recording sheets for pupils. They take every opportunity to reinforce specific scientific vocabulary, both in lessons and through displays on the classroom wall.
99. Pupils in Year 6 are able to choose from a range of materials to investigate how solids can be separated from a liquid in a mixture and devise their own way of writing up their findings, although a framework for recording during the investigation is provided by the teacher. Higher attaining pupils are able to predict successfully what will happen to a burning candle if a glass is placed over it. They have a sound understanding of animal habitats and also of gravity as "a force which pulls you to the ground". Pupils of average ability are able to use a graph to demonstrate gravitational pull, or the rate at which salt dissolves. Lower attaining pupils understand, for instance, "that friction is when two surfaces rub together", but they have not carried out any detailed investigation of this, and teachers' marking does not always indicate how they can improve their understanding.
100. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school, with examples of good and very good teaching in both Key Stages 1 and 2. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject and plan lessons well to hold the interest of pupils and promote good learning. In a lesson with a class of pupils from Years 1 and 2, the teacher planned a range of interesting activities to develop pupils' awareness of the different senses, introducing them with a glove puppet, who says, for instance, that he uses his eyes to smell. This captivates pupils, who are able to correct him, using vocabulary that is displayed on the wall, which at the same time provides pupils with good opportunities to develop their speaking skills. The teacher was supported well by classroom assistants in the activities, when, for instance, they attempted to do a jigsaw when blindfold. In an excellent lesson with Year 6 pupils, the teacher showed great patience in questioning pupils to ensure that they used scientific vocabulary, such as 'mixture', 'liquid' and 'solid' accurately, and also insisted on their using complete sentences, thus helping to develop their speaking skills. When they are engaged on the investigation, she asks very good questions, such as "What else could you do....?" to stimulate pupils' thinking. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good, and this makes pupils keen to learn. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and behave well in lessons, because they enjoy the practical activities and find them interesting. They work well together in pairs and larger groups, which include both boys and girls, when carrying out investigations.
101. Standards have risen considerably since the last inspection in 1999, with the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level in tests at the age of eleven rising from just under a half (already more than double the results at the time of the 1998 inspection) to two thirds. Since then the school has made effective use of national guidelines for teaching science and has improved its resources, although more use could be made of computers to help pupils, for instance in the presentation of their findings. There is a clear strategy for raising standards, with the emphasis on

developing pupils' investigative skills. This now needs to be embedded. Although at present there is no provision for the subject co-ordinators to monitor teaching in the classroom, they have analysed the results from national tests well to identify weaknesses in teaching and learning and are taking effective steps to remedy these

## **ART AND DESIGN**

102. Standards of work achieved at both seven and eleven years of age are generally above those expected nationally. The portfolio of samples of pupils' work put together by the art co-ordinators reflects a wide range of two-dimensional activities at both key stages. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well.
103. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are able to use large brushes when painting big pictures and show good control when using finer brushes to paint detail, for example when trying to suggest the texture of the fur of a soft toy they are painting. The way in which pupils approach composition shows a developing spatial awareness. The pupils know how to mix colours using both paints and pastels and use this skill to obtain the colours they require. Year 1 pupils were observed mixing shades of brown to match the colour of a toy during a lesson of observational art. They develop good observational skills at an early age. They are encouraged to look carefully at an object, sometimes using magnifying glasses, to determine texture and subtle shades of colour, so that they can reproduce the main features when doing observational drawing. The portfolio clearly shows that progression is very good from the nursery to Year 6. From the earliest age, children are given the opportunity to experiment with colour and pattern. They experiment with different media including powder paint and textiles. By the age of seven pupils have learned to compose a picture using the size of paper appropriately. Figures are drawn more in proportion and facial features are more accurately placed. A delightful display of Year 2 paintings of their visit to 'Sea Life' shows a good standard of composition and good use of colour. Year 3 pupils create very pleasing patterns by choosing a small area of a picture of a flower or shape and, using this as the starting point for their own composition, expanding it into a full-sized picture. These pictures show a meticulous attention to detail and good paintbrush control. By the age of eleven, pupils' observational drawings of fruit show a maturity of pencil control and an ability to depict shades and tones. The pupils are given the opportunity to produce computer-generated pictures throughout the key stages.
104. The scheme of work provides for a progressive development of skills. Planned units of work are skills based to give the pupils the necessary techniques to develop their own creativity. The school has found that the pupils need lots of experience in exploring media, tools and techniques to develop their own ideas before looking at the work of artists. They do, however, look in depth at the work of great artists and there are good examples of work displayed in the school undertaken by the younger pupils.
105. Very few lessons were observed during the inspection. However, teachers' planning is good, ensuring that a range of drawing and painting skills are taught and that progress is maintained. Relationships are good between pupils and the adults they work with. Teachers and classroom assistants are most effective when they work with small groups to promote progress. They keep pupils' learning on track through stimulating discussion. They know their pupils well and challenge is matched to ability.

106. The subject is well co-ordinated. The school has successfully introduced its own scheme of work, which concentrates on teaching basic skills. The school realises that more attention needs to be paid to three-dimensional artwork, but this is planned for. The art co-ordinator and the governor responsible for art monitor the subject at every stage throughout the school. The school is fortunate in that this governor is a qualified art teacher and she often supports teachers in both planning and teaching. She also is a volunteer classroom assistant during art lessons, which enhances the learning of the pupils.
107. Resources are well cared for and each classroom has an area for storage in addition to the large central storage room.
108. Art contributes well to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and moral development. The scheme of work provides opportunities to look at other cultures and to develop an insight and appreciation of the world through art. Arts week involves the whole school and this year the theme of 'Carnival' was taken out into the wider community.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

109. There were limited opportunities to observe design and technology during the inspection, and the school has not retained examples of pupils' finished work. Inspectors were able to discuss with pupils their work, and to see some of the planning and evaluation of their designs, but it was not possible to make a judgement on the overall standards achieved by pupils in Years 2 and 6.
110. No lessons were observed in Year 1 and 2 but evidence from work seen suggests that standards are broadly in line with those expected for their age by the time pupils reach the age of seven. For example, a display of puppets designed and made by last year's Year 2 pupils showed a satisfactory standard of work. Pupils had also attempted to evaluate their work, describing "the bit I liked best", such as making the hair, but there was no evidence that they were able to suggest things they could improve in their design. Some pupils had used a computer to help in the task.
111. Evidence from pupils' work shows that pupils attain standards in line with those expected for their age by the end of Year 6. For example, they have produced a design for a slipper, taking account of the needs of the user for whom it is intended, which ranged from a four year old to a retired person. Pupils in Year 4 have designed wallets and purses, and some pupils have included measurements in their design, as well as illustrating the different stages of the process of making. Pupils in Year 3 designed a sweet box, and drew up instructions for making it, one pupil concluding with the instruction "Enjoy!".
112. In the two lessons which were observed, teaching was good, and this quality of teaching is confirmed by the evidence of the work seen. Teachers plan lessons clearly and provide good demonstrations, for instance of different types of stitches. They prepare their resources well. As a result, pupils are clear about what they have to do and are able to get on with their task. Teachers also develop pupils' design skills well in other areas of the curriculum, for instance when they make Tudor houses or Ancient Greek boats in history. The school is following national guidelines for design and technology. This appears to be effective in raising standards, although the co-ordinators have not yet directly monitored teaching.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

113. In the lessons observed, from assessment records and examples of work marked against National Curriculum criteria, pupils achieve standards in history and geography that are similar to those expected for their age, showing that standards have been maintained since the last inspection in 1999. Satisfactory progress is made throughout the school.
114. By Year 2 in history, pupils develop a satisfactory sense of chronology, and are starting to be familiar with time lines and events. They know about the lives of famous people, such as Florence Nightingale, and sequence the events in their lives. They are beginning to learn how to find out about the past by making comparisons with life today, for example by looking at washday items from the recent past, and by comparing seaside holidays past and present. In geography they have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of human and physical features through looking at the local landscape and its buildings, and comparing them with those of a seaside town. They follow local routes and understand simple maps as a bird's eye view.
115. In Key Stage 2, pupils understand that the past can be divided into periods of time such as Tudors and Victorians. They understand that changes are brought about in people's lives by events such as the Industrial Revolution. They have a sound knowledge of the impact of ancient civilisations, such as the Romans, and how archaeological evidence provides clues to life at these times. By Year 6, pupils have started to develop and use research skills, with more able pupils realising the importance of comparing different sources of information to build up a picture of the past. For example, pupils researched how spare time was used in post-World War II Britain and the clothes that people wore. In geography, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of different world environments, locating them and understanding how their different features affect people's lives. They gain a sound understanding of their own locality by comparing it with a town in India, and by considering how they could improve it.
116. Teaching and learning in history and geography are satisfactory; no unsatisfactory lessons were observed. Lessons are mostly well planned and prepared, with clear learning objectives that are shared with pupils, so that they know the purpose of the lesson. In better lessons, pupils are questioned well, and expected to use appropriate subject vocabulary. This was evident in a Year 6 geography lesson where pupils were considering location, climate, landscape and occupations in different mountain areas of the world. The teacher was very supportive of those who were unsure or incorrect in their responses, so developing positive attitudes to learning. In a Year 5 lesson on the Victorians, opportunities for pupils to discuss artefacts, and to develop a knowledge and understanding of them, were missed as the teacher tended to do most of the talking. Learning is at times restricted through pupils' lack of vocabulary and the need to explain words used, such as 'tractor' and 'ploughing' in a lesson about Egyptian farming. In better lessons activities are planned that are appropriate to the learning needs of different pupils. In a Year 4 history lesson more able pupils were expected to write about farming in ancient Egypt and to compare it with farming today. Less able pupils had to put given words and phrases onto a grid to make this comparison. In a Year 1 geography lesson, following a good introduction, pupils were expected to draw and label a sketch map of the route down the school driveway, which was beyond the capabilities of many pupils. Pupils behave well in lessons and pay careful attention; they work well together in groups and pairs, supporting each other. These positive attitudes have a beneficial effect on their learning.

117. Teachers use other curriculum areas satisfactorily to support history and geography, to provide interesting approaches to the subjects. Year 5 pupils acted out the day of a Victorian child working in the mines; Year 3 pupils used a computer to draw and label a Roman soldier; they also had an outdoor activity in physical education that taught the mapping skills of direction and orienteering. Learning in the subjects is further developed through the use of big books in literacy, such as 'Life in the Desert', 'Dear Greenpeace' and 'My History'.
118. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership and management for the subjects. National guidelines have been introduced, and the progress made in the units studied is carefully and usefully recorded. Samples of pupils' work are collected to keep a check on standards and progress. She has identified the need to further develop speaking and listening opportunities within lessons, and to provide activities that reflect pupils' particular literacy skills. Good use is made of visits and visitors to enhance the curriculum, for example visits to Eden Camp for a World War II experience, and visits from museum staff who bring in a range of artefacts from the past for pupils to look at and investigate.

### **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

119. In the last inspection standards in ICT were below those expected for pupils aged seven and eleven at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Since then the school has updated its provision with the result that all pupils now have access to a well-equipped computer suite, more powerful computers and a wider range of software. The impact of these improvements is beginning to be seen throughout the school and standards have improved. In Years 1 to 6 pupils now make good progress in relation to their prior achievement and the majority are on course to attain standards that are in line with those expected for their age by the time they reach the ages of seven and eleven. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment and benefit from working collaboratively with other more confident users of computers in their class. Overall, pupils make sound use of their computer skills to support their work in English, art and mathematics. There is a clear programme of work based on national guidance to ensure that their skills will be used in other subjects of the curriculum.
120. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have the skills to confidently review and modify their work as it progresses and this contributes to its accuracy when using the computer for tasks in art and writing. When writing they show that they can change the style and size of font and select words from a word bank on screen. In Years 3 to 6 pupils make sound use of their word-processing skills to write letters and poems. They import graphic images to illustrate their work and arrange their work to best effect on screen. Older pupils are developing the skills to formulate spreadsheets. In the course of this work they copy and paste cells and use formulae based on cell references. As a result of this work they know that spreadsheets are used to organise, manipulate and amend data. Pupils' understanding of control technology is evident in their use of a programmable floor robot. The school currently lacks all the equipment that is necessary to develop control technology to a higher level.
121. The quality of teaching is good overall. The school's involvement in the EAZ has had a significant impact on the quality of teaching and the progress that the school is making in raising standards. There is a well thought out programme of training from the ICT development worker who gives demonstration lessons and works alongside

teachers to develop their confidence and skills in areas that they have identified as a particular weakness. A particular strength in teaching is the use of the interactive whiteboard to support whole-class teaching of specific computer skills. The pupils are fascinated by the ability to control the images by the touch of a finger on the overhead screen. They follow the demonstrations that the teacher gives very closely and are keen to contribute their ideas and to demonstrate that they understand what they have to do. Good classroom organisation and management give appropriate opportunities for pupils to plan and collaborate together. Older children respond particularly well to this and work sensibly together, sharing the equipment and offering ideas and suggestions to each other.

122. The subject is very well led and managed. The school has benefited from EAZ funding to release the subject co-ordinator and he has used this time well to develop the subject. Additional external funding has been successfully applied for and this has been well targeted to improve ICT provision. The introduction of a nationally recommended scheme of work has been effective in ensuring clearly focused lessons and a secure structure for progression throughout the school. The co-ordinator has built good links with other schools in the area and has made good use of these to enhance the development of the subject at Thrybergh. Appropriate assessment arrangements, linked to the scheme of work, are in place, and they help teachers to plan for the different needs and abilities of the pupils. The school day is organised so that all classes are involved in literacy and numeracy lessons throughout every morning. The computer suite is, therefore, unused during this time. There is scope to review these arrangements so that the school makes the maximum use of the resources that it has available throughout the school day.

## **MUSIC**

123. Insufficient evidence was available during the course of the inspection to make a judgement about overall standards and the progress that pupils make. However, it is clear that they make good progress in developing singing skills, and the quality of their singing is above average. This is an improvement since the last inspection. In contrast to their spoken English, pupils demonstrate clear diction in their singing, even when the songs are more challenging, and pupils generally have good control of pitch and know when to sing loudly and more quietly. Pupils listen to music attentively and demonstrate satisfactory appraising skills when expressing their responses to performances.
124. Insufficient lessons were observed to make a judgement about the quality of teaching. However, children in Year 5 benefited from good teaching during the inspection, characterised by high expectations from the teacher, effective reinforcement of musical vocabulary and the teacher's secure subject knowledge. A new scheme of work for music provides valuable guidance for teachers and ensures that pupils receive a broad range of learning opportunities in music. The school benefits from the help of a friend of the school who visits on a regular basis to teach the recorder.
125. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator monitors the subject appropriately and gives well focused advice to support individual colleagues. He has a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and good plans to ensure continued improvements in the subject. There is a satisfactory range of resources for music, although there is scope to further extend opportunities for pupils to experience musical traditions from the wider range of cultures represented in our society.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

126. During the inspection it was possible to see only a limited range of physical education activities. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 were observed doing gymnastics, and they achieved the standards expected for their age. In Year 2 they show a basic level of control and co-ordination in linking together a series of actions, involving different shapes and balances. In Year 6, pupils work well together in pairs to develop a sequence with three different shapes. Most are able to make a smooth transition between the shapes and are able to achieve a good finishing position. They are aware of some of the effects of exercise on their own bodies, such as an increase in heart rate.
127. Pupils in Year 3 were observed taking part in an outdoor orienteering activity. They were able to find their way between different points in the school grounds, although they did not always orientate their maps correctly. They also worked well together in a team to follow a route. Year 4 were observed in a games lesson, where they practised football skills, first in dribbling a ball and then passing it; they also took part in a game where the emphasis was on passing. Pupils showed ball skills which are average for their age, but they found it difficult to apply these skills and show an awareness of space in the game.
128. Pupils have the opportunity to swim in Year 6, but only for nine weeks of the year, and the majority do not achieve the recommended minimum of swimming 25 metres. There was no opportunity to observe dance or athletics during the inspection, but these activities are included in the school's planning, which now follows the national guidelines for the subject. Pupils also have further opportunities to take part in extra-curricular activities, such as matball, football and athletics, in all of which they compete against other schools. The school has had visits from Rotherham United Football Club and Sheffield Eagles rugby league club, whose players have shared their expertise with pupils. The club also helps individual pupils who are particularly talented, for instance in gymnastics or football, to take part in local competition.
129. In the lessons seen the overall quality of teaching was good. It was very good in the Year 3 lesson, when the teacher set clear time limits for the different activities and checked regularly that pupils knew what they were doing. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject and are able to demonstrate skills, such as passing a football, well. In the Year 6 lesson the teacher provided good evaluation of the gymnastic sequences pupils had devised, which enabled them to improve further. Sometimes pupils are not given the opportunity to discuss and evaluate their own work, and as a consequence do not learn as well as they could. Also, sometimes the classroom assistant working with the teacher does not have a clear a view of the purpose of the activity and so is not able to support pupils as well as she might.
130. Pupils have good attitudes towards physical education. They enjoy the activities and work well together in pairs or in teams. They behave well in lessons, for instance when they were taking part in the orienteering activities, where a few quick reminders from the teacher ensured that they remained focused on what they were doing. Physical education makes a good contribution towards pupils' social development in the opportunities it gives for them to work together. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the subject and is able to support other teachers well. The school recognises the need to develop the area of dance, and this will become a priority next year.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

131. There were limited opportunities to observe lessons during the inspection and the school has not kept samples of pupils' past work, but from the evidence available, pupils aged both seven and eleven achieve the standards expected for their age.
132. In a lesson observed in Year 2, pupils showed a good recall of the New Testament parable of the lost son, and recognised that the forgiveness of the father in the story is a symbol for God's forgiveness. When they tried to empathise with characters in the story, their response was limited by their own speaking skills. In a mixed class of Years 1 and 2, pupils showed a satisfactory understanding of the significance of 'belonging', in this case to a family. As pupils move into Year 3 they develop their ability to understand the metaphorical nature of some concepts, such as God as shepherd, and begin to use simile to express their own feelings, for example, "When I'm angry I feel like a kettle boiling up".
133. From talking to pupils in Year 6, it is clear that they have a good recall of details of Muslim and Christian practices, and some knowledge of Judaism and Hinduism. They are able to talk about the practice of fasting, both in Christianity and Islam, and the importance of pilgrimage to a Muslim. They are aware that these faiths are all represented in their own society, and believe that the purpose of religious education is "to learn about other people". In the lesson observed in Year 6, pupils were able to put themselves in the position of Anne Frank and write adequately about their own hopes for the future.
134. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive. They work well individually at the tasks they are set, and are keen to contribute in a role-play or in discussion. The teaching seen was uniformly good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and manage them well, as a result of which they work well. They have established a rapport with their class which makes it easier for pupils to share their thoughts, for instance about belonging to a family. They plan opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills, for instance putting a pupil into the 'hot seat' to answer questions in the role of the father of the lost son, and also writing skills when they write a diary.
135. The school has improved its resources for religious education, and has acquired a range of objects associated with different religions, with which to enrich teaching. Pupils have the opportunity to visit a church and a mosque, to extend their understanding of religious practice, but they do not visit or receive visits from followers of other faiths. The co-ordinator has planned teaching in accordance with national guidelines, but teachers also need to be aware of the targets of the agreed syllabus, which are the standards against which pupils' attainment should be assessed.