

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CROSSHALL JUNIOR SCHOOL**

St Neots

LEA area: Cambridge

Unique reference number: 110892

Headteacher: Mrs J Elliott

Reporting inspector: Mr M J Weaver  
9352

Dates of inspection: 8 - 11 January 2001

Inspection number: 185289

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Paul Hiscoe
Date of previous inspection:	December 1994

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
9352	Mr M J Weaver	Registered inspector		The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management Staffing Accommodation Learning resources Key issues for action
13706	Mrs G Marsland	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
27899	Mrs G Beasley	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Music Equal opportunities	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
12301	Mrs J Boden	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology	
30864	Mrs C Boyce	Team inspector	English History	
20326	Mr P Clark	Team inspector	Pupils with special educational needs Geography Religious education	
21277	Mr S Hill	Team inspector		
10611	Mr M James	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education	Assessment

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## 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	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>10</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>OTHER ISSUES</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>26</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is much bigger than most other primary schools, with approximately twice the number of pupils on roll. It is a foundation school for boys and girls, having 466 full-time pupils aged 7 to 11 years. The attainment on entry to the school is above average with standards achieved in English, mathematics and science being well above the national average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. All pupils speak English as their first language. The number of pupils with special educational needs is low compared to the national average; ten of these have statements of special educational need and this is broadly in line with the national average.

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

Crosshall Junior School is an effective school with pupils achieving very high standards in the national tests by the time they are eleven in English and mathematics. In science they achieve standards that are above the national average. The inspection findings confirm this attainment with the exception of science, which is in line with the national average. Attainment in art and design and elements of music, dance and drama are very high. In all other subjects pupils reach standards that are broadly in line with the national expectation for their age with the exception of information and communication technology, which is below. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning, but could achieve higher standards, particularly in the development of their scientific enquiry skills and in the use of computer technology skills. The teaching in lessons seen and the leadership and management of the school are good. The school applies the principles of best value well and provides sound value for money.

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

- High standards are achieved in English, mathematics, art and design and drama, singing and dance.
- The use of assessment data is effective in setting learning targets for the majority of pupils.
- Teaching is good overall and teachers make learning fun; teaching in art is very good. Effective use is made of classroom support staff to aid pupils' learning.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good; provision for their cultural development is good; procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety are also very good; the school is kept very clean and is well maintained.
- The leadership and management are good and the school's aims and values are reflected very well in its work; governors are closely involved in the school and fulfil their responsibilities well.
- Parents are very supportive and many provide good support to teachers in classrooms.
- Relationships between pupils themselves and with adults, and the pupils' personal development, are very good; these features contribute significantly to the good working atmosphere in the school.

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

- Pupils' enquiry skills in science.
- More computers are required and the school improvement plan needs to address the use of computers to raise standards in information and communication technology in all subjects.
- The monitoring of teaching in all subjects.
- Higher-attaining pupils could do better in English, science, design and technology and information and communication technology.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

Since the last inspection in December 1994, the school has sustained the standards achieved overall at that time. Standards have risen in English and mathematics, religious education and music. Standards in information and communication technology have improved but are still below the national expectation. The issues raised at the last inspection have all been addressed though further attention needs to be paid to the school improvement plan to raise standards in information and communication technology in all subjects. The good financial control and very effective day-to-day administration has been sustained. The arrangements for the appraisal of staff are maintained and the introduction of performance management

legislation is in hand. The procedures for assessing pupils' achievement in all subjects is carried out well but the monitoring of teaching in many subjects, whilst planned, has yet to be implemented. The need to extend the higher-attaining pupils in science and design and technology has yet to be fulfilled. The school makes satisfactory progress overall and provides sound value for money.

### STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			Similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	B	B	A	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	B	B	A	C	
Science	A	B	B	C	

The majority of eleven-year-olds reach standards in English and mathematics that are well above the national average. In science they achieve standards that are above the national average. Pupils' attainment is broadly in line with standards achieved in similar schools. The trends show an improvement in English and mathematics over the previous years, with a dip in science; taking English, mathematics and science into account, the overall trend is broadly in line with national trend. Whilst the school's targets for improvement in English and mathematics are high they are already being exceeded. Standards in all other subjects are in line with the national expectation except for information and communication technology which is below, due to the unsatisfactory provision of computers, resulting in pupils having insufficient access to enable them to improve. Attainment in art and design, dance, drama and singing are very high. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress toward the targets in their individual education plans. Pupils' attainment in religious education is in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.

### PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils have positive attitudes, they enjoy school and are keen to succeed.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good with some that is exemplary. Most pupils are attentive and respond well to instructions.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils show initiative and take responsibility willingly when they have opportunity. Pupils set their own targets for improvement in English and mathematics. Relationships between pupils themselves and with adults are very good overall.
Attendance	Well above the national average.

The school council is effective in developing pupils' maturity and many older pupils take initiative to support charities. The support provided by the classroom learning assistants for pupils with special educational needs contributes well to pupils' learning and personal development.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	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 teaching observed in lessons was good. Across the school as a whole, the teaching was satisfactory or better in 98 per cent of lessons. It was good in 40 per cent and very good in a further 17 per cent of lessons seen. In these lessons the teaching was imaginative and enthusiastic and pupils learned well. Unsatisfactory teaching was seen in only two lessons; due to weaknesses in the teachers' management of pupils and the slow pace of teaching. The teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy is good. The support provided for pupils with special educational needs is very good, enabling pupils to make good progress. A feature of teaching is that teachers work well to ensure that all pupils are included in lessons though, in some classes, the higher-attaining pupils are not always challenged sufficiently and the development of enquiry skills in science is weak. Taking all subjects into account and the work of pupils over the prior twelve months, teaching is satisfactory overall.

#### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. The teaching of non-statutory French in Year 5 and the very wide range of after-school clubs contribute well to pupils' development.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Good teamwork between teachers and classroom learning assistants enables all pupils to make good progress toward their individual targets. The provision is well managed by the special needs co-ordinator and the good provision at the time of the previous inspection has been sustained.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development and provision for their cultural awareness it is good. This makes a considerable contribution to the school's ethos of which parents are very supportive.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. This is a strong feature that reflects the school's aims and values, and the adults in school are good role models.

The school's partnership with parents is very good. Due attention is paid to sex education and the dangers of the misuse of drugs. Careful analysis is made of the national test results and the achievement that pupils make during the school year. This enables the school to review individual targets and revise them appropriately at the start and mid point of each year. This is good practice. The planned curriculum for what pupils are to study is satisfactory though it is weak in the use of information and communication technology, across the curriculum due to the lack of sufficient computers in classrooms.

#### **HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher has a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses from her monitoring, from the survey carried out with staff and from visits by local inspectors requested by the school. The school's aims and values underpin its work. The improvement plan has identified the way forward but it does not concentrate enough on the use of computers across all subjects. The senior management team monitors the school's performance satisfactorily.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors are very supportive of the school and several have links with subjects being taught. They are generally aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and receive sufficient information for them to evaluate the impact of their decisions on pupils' attainment and learning.

The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school has identified its strengths and weaknesses and has plans in hand to address them. Arrangements for subject co-ordinators to systematically monitor the quality of teaching in all subjects have yet to be implemented. Good assessment procedures are in place and teachers review pupils' work well, but this does not always lead to future lessons meeting the needs of all pupils.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory overall. Good use is made of the teaching and support staff, the classroom resources and the funding available. The accommodation is used efficiently. The school provides sound value for money.

There are sufficient staff to meet the requirements of the school's curriculum. . There is a strong team spirit amongst all adults involved in the school. The accommodation is good, though the hall and hard-surface playground are too small. The provision of good quality classroom resources is satisfactory except for computers, where insufficient provision impedes pupils' learning. The implementation of performance management is satisfactory, but has been delayed due to external constraints. Good attention is paid to the principles of best value.

### **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 teaching is good.</li> <li>• The school expects pupils to do their best.</li> <li>• Their children enjoy the school.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• Pupils' developing maturity is well supported.</li> <li>• Parents feel comfortable in approaching the school.</li> <li>• The wide variety of after-school clubs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better information on how their children progress.</li> <li>• A small number of parents believe that their children should not have to pay for after-school clubs.</li> <li>• Several parents are concerned that children having sandwiches are treated less fairly.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive comments. Pupils' end-of-year reports are satisfactory but do not give information about how well pupils perform in design and technology. The cost of after-school clubs is relatively small but more information for parents who find the cost prohibitive would be beneficial. The team agrees that pupils taking sandwiches are treated less fairly and this should be resolved.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The results attained by the eleven-year-olds in the national tests in 2000 were well above the national average in English and mathematics and above average in science. There has been a rise in standards achieved in English and mathematics but a dip in science, due in part to pupils' enquiry skills being insufficiently developed through the programme of work provided. The teacher assessments of pupils' expected attainment are very close to the standards achieved and indicate that effective systems for assessing pupils' work are in place. The proportion of pupils that reached higher standards was above the national average but was broadly in line with pupils' attainment in schools of similar context. The inspection findings reflect these results.
2. Eleven-year-olds achieve above average standards in speaking and listening and in writing. In reading they are at the level expected by the time they are eleven. Pupils' presentation of their work is at least satisfactory; although they write in joined writing, many use rubbers to correct their work and this does not enable teachers to assess the development of their ideas sufficiently to plan for their future learning. In speaking and listening, many pupils are very articulate, expressing their thoughts and ideas well. Pupils are keen to read and their skills are built upon systematically during literacy lessons, with good attention to vocabulary, sentence structure, comprehension and inference. Pupils in one Year 6 class were asked to explain the meaning of complex phrases in a story, which they did effectively. Most pupils throughout the school use sentence construction accurately though several in many classes make minor errors in their spelling.
3. In mathematics, the eleven-year-olds successfully develop their own strategies for solving problems and readily identify the information they need to draw their own conclusions from their work. Pupils confidently undertake work in addition and subtraction, as well as in a range of multiplication and division. They have a clear knowledge of place value to seven figures, and most can add and subtract negative numbers. Pupils are confident in saying the times-tables, and in quickly recalling individual multiplication and division facts to 10x10. Pupils work well using two and three decimal points.
4. The use of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum is good in English and mathematics, though numeracy is not used sufficiently in science measurement, in tabulating findings and in the construction of databases. The development of basic skills in scientific enquiry is weak. The learning targets for English and mathematics have been low compared with pupils' attainment and these have been exceeded for the last two years. Revised targets have now been agreed and are much more realistic, though these are also currently being exceeded. Despite the good opportunities provided in weekly lessons, attainment in basic skills in computer technology remain at an unsatisfactory level. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
5. In science, pupils have sound knowledge of parts of the human skeleton and know that it gives a body shape and protects its vital organs. They understand why some materials are used for specific purposes according to their properties, such as for soundproofing or for electricity cables. They have sound understanding of how switches are used in an electrical circuit and have an appropriate knowledge of forces and the effect that forces have in slowing various objects. Their scientific enquiry skills, however, are not being developed well enough as the work provided does not provide the learning opportunities necessary. By the end of the key stage, pupils' achievement in information and communication technology is underdeveloped, primarily due to the low provision of computers for teaching information technology and the lack of computers for work across all subjects of the curriculum and in the classrooms. Year 6 pupils are beginning to find out how to develop multimedia presentation and all pupils are able to select a suitable background and add

- text to their title page. Some higher-attaining pupils are able to add a picture and animation. On many occasions pupils use well the knowledge from their use of computers at home.
6. The standards in art and design are high. Pupils' observational drawings and illustrations are particularly good, and they use a very wide range of techniques to achieve specific effects. In religious education and all other subjects, pupils' attainment is in line with that expected nationally.
  7. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support to meet their individual needs and most pupils make good progress in developing their literacy skills in speaking, listening and reading. Strong evidence indicates that some pupils make very good progress against their prior achievement.

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

8. The pupils' attitudes, their personal development and consistent attendance are a strength of the school. Pupils' behaviour overall is very good with occasions where it was exemplary. Pupils' attitudes to the school are very good; this is an improvement since the last report. Parents correctly believe that the pupils are considerate, mature and responsible, demonstrating a sense of pride in their work and the reputation of the school. They enjoy coming to school and these views are confirmed by the inspection findings. In lessons, the pupils are enthusiastic and concentrate for long periods of time. During question and answer sessions they are eager to contribute and they talk openly about their views. A good example of this was seen in a Year 4 religious education lesson in discussing physical similarities between themselves and others in the class. The pupils settle well to tasks and organise themselves swiftly into pairs or groups when required. Pupils have high self-esteem, which is built well by the adults in school. Pupils with special educational needs display a very positive attitude towards the school. They receive very good support from teachers, and classroom support assistants are sensitive to their individual needs.
9. Behaviour in the classrooms, in assemblies and around the school is very good. The school has clear behaviour guidelines in place, which are consistently applied by the staff and are successful in promoting positive behaviour. Pupils keep the agreed class rules that are clearly displayed. At breaks and lunchtimes the pupils move around the school in a calm and cheerful manner and interact sociably with supervising staff and friends. There have been no exclusions from the school during the last year and no bullying, racism or oppressive behaviour was seen during the inspection. The pupils respect the behaviour guidelines and the impact their actions have on others. Parents have confirmed that bullying, when it occurs, is dealt with effectively. Despite the small proportion of twelve ethnic minority pupils, there are no racist concerns.
10. The personal development of the pupils and relationships throughout the school are very good. The pupils listen to what others have to say and help each other. They work well together in pairs and groups regardless of gender or race. The very good relationships between the pupils and with staff make a positive impact on the warm, caring ethos of the school. The pupils respect the feelings, values and beliefs of others and sensitively discussed the appearance and character of their friends in a Year 4 religious education lesson. Pupils are trustworthy and take responsibility readily, with many pupils fulfilling the role as class helper for preparing classrooms before their peers arrive. They contribute to the termly school magazine and are eager to participate in the annual talent show. The pupils act as monitors in the classrooms, hall and library. Year 6 pupils assist the staff by answering the telephone at lunchtime and serving on the stalls during the summer fair. Year 5 pupils take responsibility for the storage and use of games equipment. The school has a school council of 16 elected pupils who meet weekly to put forward the views of the pupils and organise fund-raising events, and have recently raised funds from which a donation to Action Aid has been made. Other monies raised are used to purchase resources chosen by the pupils. A recent initiative is to collect postage stamps for the Blue Peter Appeal. Currently over 9,000 stamps have been collected. These responsibilities have a positive impact on the pupils' personal development.

11. Attendance throughout the school is very good, including pupils with special educational needs, and makes a positive impact on the pupils' attainment and progress. The attendance rate for the last reporting year was well above the national average. Unauthorised absence was broadly in line with national figures. The pupils are punctual for school and registration is efficiently undertaken and meets statutory requirements. However, although actively discouraged by the school, some families regularly take holidays in term-time.

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

12. Overall the quality of teaching observed was good, with much that was very good. This sustains the findings of the previous inspection. Across the school, as a whole, the teaching was satisfactory or better in 98 per cent of lessons. It was good in 40 per cent and very good in a further 17 per cent of lessons seen. In these lessons the teaching was imaginative and enthusiastic and pupils learned well. Unsatisfactory teaching was seen in only two lessons due to weaknesses in pupil management and the slow pace of teaching. Taking the findings from samples of pupils' work in all subjects and their attainment at the end of the key stage, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall enabling pupils to make satisfactory progress overall.
13. Teachers' knowledge and understanding are satisfactory overall. It is very good, however, in the teaching of English and mathematics. Teachers' planning overall is satisfactory. Objectives for what pupils are to learn are clear and are generally communicated to pupils at the start of the lesson, with most lessons closing with a review of what pupils have learned in connection with the planned learning objectives. Teachers' day-to-day assessment of what pupils know and understand is good overall, though it is not always used sufficiently to plan future lessons, such as in science where unnecessary time was spent reinforcing what pupils knew instead of taking their learning forward. Higher-attaining pupils, however, could do with more challenge in their work. This is particularly relevant as pupils' attainment on entry to the school is above that found nationally. The emphases on teaching in most of the subjects of the curriculum are developed satisfactorily from the programmes of study and scrutiny of pupils' work. Where teachers are well skilled the resulting work of pupils is high. In creative arts for example, pupils' singing and drama skills are well developed and pupils develop high levels of confidence in their abilities.
14. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is very good in English and mathematics, but sufficient use is not always made of numeracy skills across the curriculum, such as in science for example, where pupils do not have enough practical experience of measuring. The development of pupils' skills in science enquiry is weak, as pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to plan and carry out their own investigations. The teaching of information and communication technology, whilst generally good in direct teaching lessons in the computer suite, is not developed sufficiently to support pupils' work in the subjects of the curriculum or to meet the current statutory expectations in using computer technology. This is due primarily to the slow development in the provision of computers and the limited access that pupils have to computers in the computer suite. A few other computers are located in classes, but there is insufficient provision to enable all pupils to develop their skills systematically.
15. The setting of pupils into ability groups is particularly effective in mathematics and all pupils make good progress according to their abilities. Setting arrangements in English do not fully follow the National Literacy Strategy for all lessons, but the school's planning enables pupils to develop their extended and creative writing alongside the literacy hour recommendation. Although setting in science is less effective, as pupils of all abilities receive work of similar content, most pupils' progress satisfactorily according to their abilities. This is not making the best use of time, however, to more effectively challenge higher attaining pupils. The school has now developed a draft policy for supporting able pupils, but has yet to ensure that lesson plans are directed to meet their needs appropriately.
16. Behaviour management is generally very good and is a strength of the school. Good teaching

- strategies enable pupils to enjoy their work and this encourages pupils to be attentive and to work well collaboratively and in groups. This enables the teachers to concentrate on what they are teaching. Good use is made overall of the plenary sessions at the end of lessons. These often reflect the interest that pupils have taken in their work and ensure that the good relationships are strengthened through effective interaction and review of pupils' learning. Teachers know the pupils well and form good relationships. In one class however, the slow pace of teaching and weak classroom management resulted in restless behaviour in the lesson.
17. The teachers regularly mark their pupils' work in books, but often it is only corrective or giving praise for the work done. Occasional examples of comments indicating how pupils could develop their work further are evident, though there are insufficient overall. Praise and encouragement are regularly given and when pupils set their individual targets they are challenged appropriately, sometimes regarding the realism of their high expectations. Homework is set regularly and parents fully support this. Many parents commented at the pre-inspection meeting, however, that some project work was too difficult for their children to achieve.
18. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs in classes is good and they receive effective individual support. In English and mathematics, teachers meet the needs of pupils well, confidently providing appropriate activities effectively, supported well by classroom learning support assistants. This support and that provided by the local education authority play an important part in ensuring pupils with special educational needs benefit from activities and they make good progress against their prior learning levels. Nevertheless, in some lessons in other subjects, for example geography, pupils with special educational needs complete the same work as other pupils when an easier task would promote better learning. Work in these lessons is planned, however, without direct reference to targets set in individual education plans and this restricts progress.

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

19. The curriculum is broad and relevant and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education. It is enriched through a wide range and variety of additional experiences. Pupils are given numerous opportunities to perform and demonstrate their talents and these make a significant contribution to the creative arts subjects of art and design, music and dance. Educational visits and visitors to school also enhance the learning and pupils particularly remember the memorable visit to the Millennium Dome last year. The balance of the curriculum while satisfactory overall has particular weaknesses. While there has been significant progress since the last inspection with the purchase of more computers, some of which have been organised into a suite, there are still insufficient resources to meet the needs of the subject, specifically to teach the use of computer technology across other subjects. The provision for information and communication technology is therefore unsatisfactory. Insufficient attention and emphasis is given to the teaching of scientific enquiry skills and this is a factor of the unsatisfactory progress of higher attainers in the subject, an issue from the previous inspection which still needs to be fully addressed. There is a suitable personal, social and health education policy, which ensures good provision for sex education and drugs awareness. Good opportunities are provided in science lessons for pupils to learn about the importance of self-care including the importance of healthy diets and exercise. The school is awaiting a new personal, social and health education programme of work, which will enrich this aspect of the curriculum further. Good provision is made for all pupils to be included in having equal access to the curriculum and the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good, and reflects the findings of the last report. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are clear, concise and written in a style that is easy to follow against measurable targets.
20. The school's strategy for teaching literacy skills is good. The English curriculum is rich in opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills through projects such as the

performance of the annual Shakespearean play in Year 5. The writers club gives pupils good opportunities to visit plays and musicals at the local theatre, whilst visiting theatre groups perform for the whole school. The school's strategy for teaching numeracy skills in mathematics is good.

21. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. Assemblies, which include an Act of Worship, are held daily either in the school hall or in year groups. A calm and quiet atmosphere is created on these occasions for pupils to reflect on their contribution to the life of the school. In one assembly for example, pupils were given good opportunity to consider carefully the personal contributions they and others bring to the school. It was notable that many pupils could recall acts of good deeds and special talents that others have. In lessons, particularly in religious education, pupils are given suitable opportunities to empathise with others' feelings and to learn to value and respect the faiths and beliefs of different religions. All lessons provide very good opportunities for pupils to listen to each other's opinions and all contributions are valued by pupils in response to the high expectations set by teachers and support staff.
22. Provision for pupils' moral development is also very good. Each class elects one person to represent them on the school council, which decides school rules and makes decisions about fund-raising and other events. They are asked to consider a range of issues including whether to hold non-uniform days to raise funds for charity. Opportunities are provided in 'circle time' and assemblies for pupils to consider their actions and the impact they have on others and to celebrate the particular achievements of individuals throughout the week. Teachers provide very good role models and treat pupils and their ideas and suggestions with respect, which enables pupils to understand the value of good behaviour and respect for one another.
23. The school makes very good provision for pupils' social development. Residential visits are organised for each year group and the wide range of extracurricular clubs makes a significant contribution to pupils' social development. Consequently, relationships between adults and pupils are very strong and harmonious. Older pupils have opportunities to take responsibility for jobs before school starts, during lunchtime and at other times during the school day. These include taking telephone messages, ringing the bell at playtime and carrying out various tasks to help adults before the school day begins. Each class has two librarians and pupils are keen to take registers to the office. Pupils' organisation of the recent stamp collection in response to the Blue Peter Appeal is evidence of pupils' confidence in using their initiative and of developing independence. However there are fewer opportunities for pupils to take initiative in lessons. Opportunities are made, however, for pupils to develop social skills through group work in drama lessons, music and dance, and playtimes are sociable occasions when all pupils share playground equipment amicably.
24. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. History, music, art and design, geography and dance make very good contributions to pupils' cultural development through the study of the local area and those abroad, through visits to places of interest and visitors into school. This is particularly strong in history where, for example 'living history', provided by visitors through a range of practical activities, has given pupils an awareness of how the Romans, Greeks and Tudors lived. A range of music from different countries and cultures is used for pupils to listen and dance to and teachers raise pupils' awareness of multicultural Britain by reading stories that allow pupils to consider the varied cultures within British society. This aspect of cultural development could be further developed in other subjects. The large school choir regularly sings to local audiences including elderly residents.
25. Satisfactory links have been established with the community, which makes a positive contribution is made to the life of the school. The local nurse visits to support pupils learning about drugs awareness and issues about growing up, whilst the environmental health visitor has supported the school's initiatives to raise pupils' awareness on health and hygiene issues. Theatre groups visit the school and musicians and visiting specialists add to the quality of teaching in some subjects, notably mathematics with some sporting agencies providing coaching linked to sport in the community.

26. There are good links with partner institutions. Staff regularly liaise with the infant school and gain a good knowledge and understanding of pupils' strengths before they enter the junior school. Good links are being forged with the local technology college to support the teaching of information and communication technology, and the secondary school staff meet regularly with the school to discuss the curriculum and pupils' attainment. The school is part of a School Centred Initial Teacher Training scheme (SCITT) with Nottingham University and the trainees contribute well to the delivery of the curriculum. Good partnerships are also held with other teacher training institutions that use the school for the training of postgraduate trainees.
27. The provision for extracurricular activities is very good. The range of clubs is very wide and the quality is very good. There are many sporting activities including cricket, netball, table tennis and football and musical groups including two recorder groups and choir. In addition pupils are able to join First Aid classes in Year 5, art club in Year 4 and a debating club in Year 6. Computer, environment and book clubs are open to all Year groups. The writers club regularly contributes to the county's Poetry Anthology and makes visits to theatre productions. The 'Footworks' dance club makes a positive contribution to dance. All clubs are very well attended and pupils report how much they enjoy the opportunity to take part in them.

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

28. The school cares for its pupils well and this reflects the views of the parents who feel that they can confidently approach the staff if problems arise. This confirms the findings of the last report. The caring attitude of the staff is a strength of the school. A good example of this is the ability of the teachers to manage pupils with serious allergic reactions. The school nurse provides very good support and all staff are aware of the pupils concerned. The pupils know that they are valued by the staff and respond accordingly. The school has a well-equipped first aid room and the several staff trained in first aid provide effective support for dealing with illness and accidents.
29. The school's procedures for child protection and providing for the pupils' welfare are very good. The school has a comprehensive child protection policy in line with local authority guidelines. The headteacher is the named member of staff responsible and she ensures that all members of staff, including lunchtime supervisors, are aware of procedures. The headteacher has received appropriate training and frequently advises staff on any procedural changes. The school has an appropriate health and safety policy in place in line with local authority guidelines. The policy is consistently adhered to and has been reviewed since the last inspection. The school carries out a fire drill each term and all fire precautions and equipment checks are in place. Electrical equipment is inspected annually and whole-school risk assessment has been carried out. Staff continually remind the pupils of health and safety issues, a good example of this being demonstrated in two design and technology lessons with regard to hygiene when using recorders as part of the experiment. Pupils are well supervised by ancillary staff at breaks and lunchtimes and in pupils' use of small apparatus. The school nurse provides very good support for pupils and parents and holds annual staff training on issues such as asthma and child protection.
30. Some parents have concerns regarding the accommodation for pupils with packed lunches and the supervision of the adventure playground. Pupils have expressed the view that their children would appreciate the opportunity to eat their packed lunches with friends having school meals. The headteacher acknowledges that the accommodation for these pupils is not ideal and the inspection confirmed that the provision for pupils with packed lunches is inadequate. Procedures for the supervision and safety of the adventure playground are in place but during the inspection the playground was not in use due to inclement weather, so no judgement on the effectiveness of supervision can be made.
31. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. The office staff monitors



attendance and punctuality and the headteacher is informed should problems arise. The school makes appropriate contact with the educational welfare officer when necessary. The good attendance is promoted through attendance leaflets in the school prospectus, certificates for pupils and staff and the class award of 'Gordon the gorilla'.

32. The school has very good procedures in place for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour. An effective behaviour policy is in place and a graduated scheme of sanctions is appropriately used. However, when behaviour concerns arise, the school offers support before any sanctions are imposed. Positive behaviour is promoted with 'Worker of the Week' certificates, stickers and 'Honour Award' assemblies. Should challenging or oppressive behaviour occasionally occur it is dealt with swiftly and fairly and is effectively recorded by staff. Parents are informed as necessary.
33. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good overall and have improved since the time of the last inspection. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, assessments are undertaken regularly, and teachers keep extensive records of pupils' attainment. The records that are presently kept by teachers in Year 5 are on computer, and it is the school's intention that, should this experiment be successful, all records will be kept in this way. The information is used effectively to place pupils in sets for English and mathematics throughout the school and for science in Year 6. The information is also used effectively in English and mathematics to ensure that pupils are provided with work that is suited to their individual needs. It is not always used so successfully in science. In other curriculum areas, good assessment procedures are in place, with those for art being very good. The records that are maintained clearly help teachers identify pupils' current attainment, as well as the progress they have made.
34. Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress through the school in English, mathematics and science are very good. All pupils are provided with targets at the beginning of the year, and they are reviewed early in the spring term, using the information that has been gained. New targets are then provided. As a result of these procedures, teacher assessment has improved significantly since the time of the last inspection. A comparison of teacher assessments with the results achieved by Year 6 pupils in the National Curriculum tests shows them to be particularly accurate.
35. Procedures for monitoring and supporting the pupils' personal development are good. The caring ethos of the school and the personal, social and health education programme including 'circle time' underpin these procedures. The staff know the pupils well and pupils' files are frequently monitored. Pupils are encouraged to set their own target in co-operation with the teachers, and class targets are clearly displayed. During registration periods the pupils regularly work on personal targets in their Records of Achievement. Good links with outside agencies are maintained and the school nurse has arranged suitable integration packages to ease pupils back into school after prolonged illness. The efforts that the school makes in the support and guidance for pupils has a positive effect on behaviour, attitudes and learning and contribute well to raising standards.
36. All legal requirements are met regarding regular checks on the attainment of pupils with special educational needs. The individual education plans clearly indicate additional learning to be undertaken and supported, and success against targets can be easily identified. The school adopts a variety of good strategies to check the progress of pupils with special educational needs. The information required has a direct impact on teachers' planning and deployment of support staff throughout the school. At regular intervals most pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in reviewing their own progress against agreed targets.

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

37. The overall quality of the school's partnership with parents is very good and is a strength of the school. This confirms the findings of the last report where parents were noted as making a valid

contribution to the school. Parents have praised the quality of the information given to them including the educational standards achieved and the range of extracurricular activities. The majority of parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Some parents have expressed the view that they would like the school to adopt a healthy-eating policy and to confirm the existence of a contingency fund for educational visits and after-school clubs. Other parents are also unaware of how fund-raising monies are used. During the inspection a varied choice of healthy foods including fruit, pasta and salad was available at lunchtime. A contingency fund for visits is in place and parents are reminded of this prior to a school visit and during the induction evening. Improved information on the contingency funding available for pupils to attend the after-school clubs should be provided to parents. The charge for attending after-school clubs is low and is used to purchase resources for the club. Monies raised by the pupils and parents are allocated to the Action Aid charity and to purchase resources chosen by the pupils. Parents are informed of the pupils' decision in the following newsletter. The parents would appreciate more clarity in the information the school provides, particularly regarding the management structure of the school.

38. The school maintains very good links with parents. The notice boards in the reception area and the entrance hall keep parents well informed and newsletters are issued each half term. The majority of the home-school agreements have been signed and returned by parents. The headteacher and staff operate an open-door policy and are easily accessible. Parents' consultation meetings and school productions including the annual talent show are very well attended.
39. The impact of parental involvement with the school is very good. The Crosshall School Association provides very good support by organising fund-raising and social events. Over £5,000 is raised each year, which has been used to purchase computers and games equipment and has assisted in the building of the adventure playground. A group of volunteers including grandparents actively support activities in the classroom such as literacy, numeracy and reading. Occasionally parents with skilled specialist knowledge provide appropriate assistance such as in science.
40. The quality of information for parents is satisfactory overall. Frequent letters and newsletters are sent home to keep parents informed about school events and achievements. Parents are informed about curriculum development, and sessions have been held to inform parents of the literacy and numeracy strategies. A further meeting is planned for the spring term for science. When parents cannot attend these meetings information is available from the school. The school also provides information for each year group concerning classwork, educational visits, homework and arrangements for sporting activities. The reception area displays information leaflets and newsletters for parents and visitors to take. The governors' annual report to parents and the school prospectus provide interesting and informative details about the school. The governors' annual report, however, omits some items that are legally required to be reported; it lacks information regarding pupils with disabilities, special educational needs and school security. The school prospectus is required to give a more detailed explanation of the school's special educational needs policy. Parents have the opportunity to consult staff formally each term to discuss their child's progress and these meetings are very well attended. The pupils' end of year reports do not fully meet statutory requirements. Design and technology and information and communication technology are not reported separately, with comments mostly given to information and communication technology; insufficient information is included on the foundation subjects other than English and mathematics. The school has acknowledged the need to improve the report format, which is at present under review.
41. The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home is good, parents supporting research tasks and homework well. The classroom volunteers provide very good support. All parents have been informed about homework guidelines and the school's expectations regarding homework, resulting in a positive response from the majority of parents. The reading record diaries are a valuable link between school and home and provide an additional opportunity for home and school two-way communication.

42. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are discussed with parents at regular planned intervals. All parents receive a copy of the work to be undertaken that includes a range of additional work to be completed at home. Parents are promptly informed if their child is identified as needing to be placed on the special educational needs register and if their child needs to be moved to a different stage on the register. All parents contribute to the annual review and value this practice.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

43. The school has a positive ethos that reflects its aims well. It is committed to improvement and to ensuring that pupils do well according to their differing abilities. Overall, the action taken since the last inspection is satisfactory. All issues identified have been addressed satisfactorily, with the exception of the development of the curriculum for using information and communication technology and appropriate challenge for higher attainers, particularly in science. The good teaching, however, has been sustained enabling continuing high standards in English, and good improvement has been gained in mathematics. In art and design, the good teaching has enabled pupils to make very good progress. The new design and technology programme is now well structured, providing challenge and interest for most pupils and the good provision for pupils with special educational needs has been sustained.
44. The headteacher and senior staff provide good leadership. The headteacher has introduced an effective team structure for year groups and for team leaders to support the teachers planning. Major subjects and aspects of the school's work have an attached co-ordinator and shadow co-ordinator. This is generally effective and is used well for staff and subject development overall, though it does not ensure that the subject co-ordinators fulfil their responsibility to monitor teaching in their subject. Considerable emphasis is placed on providing care to ensure that all pupils are included in the life of the school and on maintaining the good relationships. This is reflected well in the pupils' personal development. There is also a firm commitment to raise standards. Effective plans have been put in place for achieving high standards in English, mathematics and art and design and good provision is in place for standards to be raised in design and technology. Improvement in information and communication technology is weak, however, due to the insufficient provision of computers. Whilst the direct teaching for using computers is generally good, there is unsatisfactory use of computers across the other subjects of the curriculum.
45. The headteacher and senior staff analyse the results of national tests and use the findings to plan further development in pupils' learning. They also analyse pupils' work regularly and use this analysis to set new learning targets at the start and mid point of the academic year. This is good practice. The targets for literacy and numeracy by the end of Year 6 have recently been revised upwards but are already being exceeded by the end of the key stage.
46. The headteacher, senior staff and governors have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The management team has conducted a strengths and weaknesses analysis and identified those areas where improvement is needed. This is supported by the effective use of a local education authority inspector to offer an external evaluation of the work of the school. Monitoring of teaching is conducted in English, mathematics and science and the standard of monitoring is satisfactory. The quality of teaching in other subjects, however, is not monitored and the school is not sufficiently aware of the how effectively the good quality planning is used or how well pupils are achieving according to their individual abilities. Feedback is given to teachers following lesson observations and teachers are required to write their own evaluation of how they will use the feedback given to them, whether it be to develop their own teaching, teaching within their subject responsibility or their own personal development. Whilst this is a positive approach, a weakness exists in that subject co-ordinators and team leaders are unaware of how teaching is improving. Many subject co-ordinators do not currently have release time in which to fulfil their

role fully including the monitoring of their subject responsibilities. A programme of monitoring has been planned, but has yet to be implemented.

47. The school improvement plan has been reviewed as required at the last inspection and now includes some improvements. It needs to be further developed to indicate the planned dates by which actions should be achieved within the overall time frame, links with performance management, responsibility for monitoring and cross-curricular links where applicable. The school has identified its three key criteria, yet the second priority focusing on the development of information and communication technology in taught sessions and across all subjects of the curriculum is not addressed. In this instance, monitoring progress in pupils' use of computer technology through the improvement plan is unsatisfactory. The school has planned to develop its teaching strength in science in order to raise standards but, the actions taken have not achieved the school's intent or led to the weaknesses being resolved.
48. The governing body is properly constituted; it fulfils its responsibilities well overall and is very supportive of the school. The chair of governors and the headteacher maintain strong working links regarding the planning and development of school priorities. These priorities are appropriate and governors are fully involved in the development of the school improvement plan. Useful links have been established by which several governors take a monitoring view of specific subjects through informal visits and discussion with co-ordinators. This generally gives them regular and useful feedback to support the work and to gauge the quality of the daily life of the school. Some subject co-ordinators have presented their plans to the governing body for developing the standards in their subjects. Plans are in hand but have yet to be fully implemented for all co-ordinators to present their subjects plans to governors.
49. The educational aims in the improvement plan are generally sufficiently supported by budgetary planning though there are insufficient funds set aside for information and communication technology for use across the curriculum. Financial control is very good with effective use being made of computerised systems by office personnel. Overall, the principles of best value are applied well, resulting in the purchase of good quality resources. Governors with responsibility for literacy and numeracy are enthusiastic and take an active and effective involvement in supporting the subjects. The recent audit of accounts, conducted by external auditors, has identified that the school accounts are in order and that all financial matters fulfil legal requirements. Prudent management of the school's finances has enabled the school to carry forward substantial sums of money to the following year. Although the carry forward is twice that recommended, the school has committed much of it to rebuilding costs for replacing the Year 4 accommodation and a further computer suite. This carry forward, however, should be reviewed to ensure that sufficient computers are provided to meet the needs of the curriculum and guidelines of the Quality and Curriculum Authority.
50. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides good leadership and is committed to providing high quality support to all pupils with special educational needs in the school. She ensures that teachers and special educational learning assistants are fully aware of the pupils' needs. Arrangements are managed in terms of directly supporting, assessing and reviewing pupils' progress in the classroom. All classroom support staff have undertaken additional training and this positively enhances the quality of support provided both in the classroom and around the school.
51. The governing body is fully involved with issues regarding special educational needs, but the school is aware of the need to encourage greater participation in monitoring the success of the school's policy in this area. A more active involvement in financial aspects related to the special educational needs budget would target the need to purchase additional resources to enhance the satisfactory range of resources presently available.
52. Good emphasis is placed upon all pupils' having equal access to the curriculum including those with special educational needs. The governors' annual report to parents does not contain all

essential information that is statutorily required to be reported. The prospectus is currently in the process of being revised and should include further detail comments on the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs. The administration procedures are effective. They are well managed by the very efficient administration team and, as a result, the procedures are unobtrusive and support the day-to-day running of the school very well.

53. The school is adequately staffed with appropriately qualified teachers. The school is very well staffed with a substantial number of classroom learning assistants, one quarter of them being well qualified and having personal experience that enables them to understand the needs of the pupils very well. This provision is high compared to the national average but the staff provide good support and contribute well to the effectiveness of pupils' learning. All teachers have job descriptions that satisfactorily refer to their subject and management responsibilities. The turnover in teaching staff over the last two years at 50 per cent, due to a variety of positive reasons, is very high, but the arrangements for ensuring the integration of new teachers into the school have proved to be effective. The school has maintained its strategy for appraising the professional and personal development of teaching staff and is well placed to implement the statutory performance management policy. The school participates in the training of teachers through the SCITT scheme in conjunction with Nottingham University. The scheme is monitored regularly and provides good support for those in the training scheme; the trainees also provide good support to the delivery of the planned curriculum in the school.
54. The school is attractively planned and designed, but being open plan it has limitations in that high levels of noise are transmitted between classes, particularly during literacy and numeracy sessions, although there is no evidence that it has a detrimental impact on pupils' learning. The school uses its accommodation efficiently, making good use of the wide central corridors, music room, library and small drama hall. The hall and playground, however, are too small for the number of pupils on roll. The hall is cramped when used by older pupils, particularly when apparatus is used in physical education. At lunchtimes, pupils having sandwich lunches are required to sit in the adjacent chair storage area at tables without tablecloths and in so doing are treated less fairly than their peers. Some parents have raised this as concern, which is supported by the inspection team. Midday assistants and kitchen staff work efficiently to clean and prepare the hall for use during the afternoon session. Overall, the accommodation is kept very clean by the hard working and conscientious site officer and cleaning staff and the buildings are well maintained. The playground although extended recently through funding by the parents association remains crowded during lunch and breaktimes, though the generally high standards of behaviour of pupils ensure that no disruption is experienced. There is a large grassed area for use during the summer months and an attractive outdoor adventure playground, also used during the summer months. The accommodation, connected to the infant school, is good and enables infant pupils to visit the junior school safely. A wide variety of pupils' work and other posters and learning support material are displayed around the school, which is mainly of good quality and contributes satisfactorily to pupils' learning in a number of subjects.
55. The school's resources are satisfactory overall with the exception of computers, which are insufficient to meet the needs of the curriculum. The library is well organised and effectively managed. Pupils regularly visit the library to use the good quality books, to browse the 'Discovery Box' and 'Aquila' resources and to use the internet on the four computers at lunchtimes.
56. The school has maintained the previously good standards of education overall, the high levels of behaviour, personal development and the good relationships between pupils and with adults. The pupils' attainment is high in English and mathematics, but broadly in line with those of similar schools. Expenditure is appropriate for foundation schools and, taking into account the high carry forward of monies, the school gives sound value for money.

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

In order to rise pupils' achievement and the standard of education further, the headteacher, governors and staff should take the following actions. The school has already identified those items marked with an asterisk:

- Improve standards in science (\*) by:
  - reviewing and revising the programme of work to ensure pupils' skills in scientific enquiry are developed; (paragraphs 1, 4, 5, 14, 19, 76)
  - reviewing and revising the setting arrangements to ensure all pupils receive challenging work appropriate to their abilities. (paragraph 15)
  
- Improve standards in information and communication technology(\*) by:
  - providing more computers to meet the National Curriculum requirements and national guidelines in information and communication technology lessons and across all subjects of the curriculum; (paragraphs 4, 14, 19, 43, 86, 102, 113)
  - including in the school improvement plan the school's priority to develop and monitor the full implementation of information and communication technology and its application to all subjects of the curriculum. (paragraphs 48, 107)
  
- Develop the planned role of subject co-ordinators to monitor the quality of teaching in all subjects. (paragraphs 13, 49, 86, 90, 96, 107, 113, 118, 122)
  
- Ensure that challenging targets are set for all pupils, especially the higher-attaining pupils, through using the good assessment in planning future lessons. (paragraphs 2, 15, 43, 63, 105)

Other issues which should be considered by the governors are:

- improving the opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of their cultural heritage; (paragraph 24)
- ensuring that the governors' annual report meets statutory requirements; (paragraphs 40,52)
- ensuring that numeracy is used effectively across the curriculum; (paragraphs 14, 79)
- developing the school improvement plan further to identify priorities, target dates for each action, monitoring of subjects and cross curricular links where applicable. (paragraph 47)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

87
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Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

94
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### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	17	40	41	2	0	0

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	466
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	20
<b>Special educational needs</b>	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	10
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	68
<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	19

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	96.1
National comparative data	93.8

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	55	58	113

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	49	44	53
	Girls	52	50	54
	Total	101	94	107
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (83)	83 (82)	95 (89)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	50	44	52
	Girls	52	49	54
	Total	102	93	106
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	91 (84)	83 (83)	95 (91)
	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	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	6
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	4
White	456
Any other minority ethnic group	0

**Exclusions in the last school year**

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



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

**Teachers and classes**

**Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	17
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.4
Average class size	29.3

**Education support staff: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	25
Total aggregate hours worked per week	375

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

**Financial information**

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	914,417
Total expenditure	911,506
Expenditure per pupil	1961
Balance brought forward from previous year	88,889
Balance carried forward to next year	91,880

## *Results of the survey of parents and carers*

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	466
Number of questionnaires returned	167

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	37	2	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	53	43	2	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	47	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	55	11	2	0
The teaching is good.	51	45	1	2	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	43	16	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	34	8	3	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	29	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	37	50	10	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	47	47	4	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	48	2	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	47	42	8	2	1

### **Other issues raised by parents**

Several parents are concerned that:

- children taking sandwich lunches are treated less fairly than others'.
- all after-school clubs are fee paying.

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

**ENGLISH**

57. By the end of the key stage, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level in English in the National Curriculum tests for 2000 was well above average when compared with all schools, and in line when compared to similar schools. Most pupils exceed the national expectations of eleven-year-olds. Learning is effective and overall pupils make good progress. Standards were described as above average at the time of the last inspection and this standard has been maintained. Since the last inspection the standards have improved steadily in line with the national trend. In the tests of 2000 over 89 per cent of pupils attained at least the national target of Level 4 and of these over a third attained the higher Level 5 standard. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and there is no significant difference in the progress of pupils from differing backgrounds.
58. Pupils develop good speaking and listening skills. They concentrate and listen well during discussions in literacy lessons or when following a text, such as poems on the theme of winter. They are considerate when others are talking and expressing an opinion. Pupils are interested and listen attentively such as in assemblies and many have good retention for detail and information. Progress in speaking is good. Pupils usually speak clearly and are given many opportunities to answer questions and explain their ideas. Teachers encourage those who are reluctant to speak to contribute to discussion.
59. Pupils make good progress in reading, so that the attainment of the vast majority is at the expected level by Year 6. Pupils' reading skills are built upon systematically during literacy lessons, with good attention to vocabulary, sentence structure, comprehension and inference. They have good powers of concentration, which have a positive effect on their attainment. Many have good inference and interpretation skills as shown during their study of Creation poems in Year 6. In another Year 6 class pupils were asked to explain the meaning of complex phrases in the story 'The Tulip Touch' and guessed the meaning by using contextual clues before checking them in the dictionary. In a Year 4 class pupils were learning to scan a text for relevant information, linked to their work in science. All pupils have reading record books, which pupils use both in school and at home. They contain instructions clearly set out for parents, but they include very little diagnostic comment to support the development of individuals' skills. All pupils take their reading books home, benefiting from the help and support of parents and other adults. The range and selection of texts is good. The reading skills of the higher-attaining pupils indicate good fluency, expression and understanding while lower-attaining pupils are well supported in their efforts.
60. Attainment in writing is above average by the end of the key stage and pupils make good progress. Standards in writing have improved steadily since the last inspection. In literacy lessons, pupils write in different styles and for different purposes. Pupils in Year 3 were asked to write in postcard style using the theme of Odysseus writing home to his wife, while in a Year 6 class pupils were asked to write a descriptive piece on the Creation. They are beginning to edit and improve upon their first efforts. Pupils become increasingly aware of differing styles as they move through the school and of the range of purposes for which language is used. Writing skills are generally used quite well to support other subjects such as history. Pupils of all abilities are offered appropriate opportunities to write in a variety of styles and at sufficient length. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and are very well supported in their work.
61. Spelling is taught carefully and systematically through the school. Pupils are given selections of spellings to learn from word lists and are tested each week. Teachers also draw attention to mistakes which occur in their work. Pupils make good progress in handwriting and most pupils have a fluent joined style. Writing in pen, however, although clearly stated in the English policy, is not consistent throughout the school.

62. Pupils have good attitudes and behaviour in almost all lessons through the school. Teachers quickly establish interest and purpose when, for example, reading Greek myths in Year 3, Shakespeare's 'The Tempest' in Year 5 and 'The Tulip Touch' by Anne Fine in Year 6. All these texts create a very good focus for language development with rich learning experiences. Pupils listen actively and many are keen to contribute to discussion. They settle to work quickly when a new activity is started. By Year 6, most pupils share ideas and work together co-operatively, respecting the ideas of others. The good attitudes result particularly from good teaching that encourages pupils to try hard and take pleasure in the activities. During the inspection week older pupils were seen acting as librarians, carrying out their duties enthusiastically and efficiently and a small but steady stream of pupils visited the library to choose books and work on the computers during the lunch hour.
63. Standards of teaching are good and have been maintained since the last inspection. The quality of teaching relates closely to the progress pupils make in lessons. Lessons are planned thoroughly and use the National Literacy Strategy learning objectives although not the strict format. In the best lessons observed, the objectives were shared and discussed with the pupils. In less successful lessons, where the lesson objectives were not shared, pupils did not always have a clear understanding of what they were expected to achieve by the end of the session. Teachers set clear expectations for attention and behaviour. Behaviour is generally well managed and teachers are responsive to pupils, encouraging their attention and interest. Careful planning by teachers, based on year group targets, usually results in work that is mostly well matched to the needs of different pupils. Occasionally, however, tasks are pitched at an appropriate level for most groups of pupils but do not challenge the more-able pupils sufficiently. The pace of lessons and the amount of work pupils produce is good. Most teachers display good knowledge of the subject and their effective questioning skills provoke discussion and widen understanding. They use correct technical vocabulary and extend pupils' understanding of it. Most plenary sessions are used well and reinforce the objectives of the lesson, encourage pupils and recognise their efforts. Assessment procedures are good and data from test results is closely analysed and targets set for all pupils.
64. A scrutiny of books shows regular opportunities for writing and progression of skills through the school. Teachers mark books regularly. Comments are encouraging but do not often indicate to pupils how they may improve their work in the future. A programme of library skills with clear progression is in place and pupils have weekly sessions in the library as well as being able to visit freely during the lunch hour.
65. The English curriculum is well structured, broad and balanced with a good choice of texts. Pupils have opportunities to take part in drama both in class and as a school production such as Shakespeare's 'The Tempest'. A writers' club is held weekly during the lunch hour and produces, amongst other things, a school magazine. A Book Week is held annually and authors, such as Anthony Horowitz, are invited into school to encourage the children and support their work. A Book of the Year initiative also encourages pupils to make critical evaluations of current and newly published fiction. Pupils' poems have been regularly published in a Cambridgeshire anthology. Links have been forged with both the adjacent infant school and the high school when Year 2 and 6 pupils and Year 6 and 10 pupils join together for partnered reading. These activities ensure that the subject has a high profile within the school and enable pupils to enjoy reading and writing. Less successful is the use made of information technology in English and no word processing was seen during any lesson during the inspection.
66. The English co-ordinator is well qualified, committed and quietly confident. She has good subject knowledge and some vision for the subject. She has made good analysis of test data, gender issues and staff professional needs. She has begun to monitor teaching and learning through lesson observations but this is still at an early stage. Time allocation of the subject and timetables throughout the school are inconsistent and the practice of double sessions on two days and none

on a further two days for some year groups needs careful monitoring. The subject is ably supported by the literacy governor, who is well informed and takes small groups of pupils for extended reading and writing. She meets regularly with the headteacher and co-ordinator to discuss issues and together they review and modify targets when necessary. Specific government grants for additional literacy support are used wisely and small groups of pupils are targeted for additional help. This has ensured that all pupils are given every opportunity to reach their own personal best.

67. Pupils display positive attitudes to reading and are keen to improve their skills. This interest is encouraged by the provision of very good library facilities in school. The library is an attractive and centrally placed specialist room with a pleasant atmosphere. It is well organised and managed by a knowledgeable librarian appointed three years ago.

## MATHEMATICS

68. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are well above the national average and are average compared to similar schools. These inspection findings confirm that the school is maintaining the high standards it achieved in the National Curriculum tests in 2000. At the time of the school's previous inspection, standards were reported to be broadly in line with the national average. Very significant improvements have been made since that time and have kept pace with the national trend.
69. By the time they are eleven, pupils successfully develop their own strategies for solving problems, checking their results to see whether they are sensible. They readily identify the information they need, and draw their own conclusions from their work. In Year 5, pupils solve problems and apply their knowledge to practical concepts and identify how successful they are. Year 4 pupils organise their work and check their own results, presenting them in a clear and organised way. Pupils in Year 3 try to find methods to answer problems and are beginning to organise their work.
70. In number, pupils in Year 6 confidently undertake work in addition and subtraction, as well as in a range of multiplication and division forms. They have a clear knowledge of place value to seven figures, and most can add and subtract negative numbers. They use decimals to two and three places in all four operations of number, as well as in the context of measurement and money. Most pupils have a clear understanding of fractions, and they identify equivalent fractions and reduce a fraction to its lowest terms. Pupils use and interpret co-ordinates in the first quadrant, and higher-attaining pupils confidently produce work involving all four quadrants. In Year 5, pupils add and subtract to two decimal places using money and measurement as a context. They recognise fractions and their equivalents and are using percentages to describe proportions of a whole. They recognise the relationships in number and use mathematical terminology correctly. Pupils in Year 4 show understanding of place value up to 1000. And use their knowledge to multiply whole numbers by 10 and 100. They are able to double and halve numbers, including short multiplication and division. They use simple fractions to recognise when two fractions are equivalent. Year 3 pupils recognise numbers up to 1000 and round numbers up and down successfully. They use simple fractions, naming the numerator and denominator and identify decimal fractions to one decimal place.
71. In shape and space, pupils in Year 6 are able to identify and calculate perimeters and areas of regular and compound shapes, using an appropriate formula when required. They readily compare two simple distributions, confidently identifying the range and median. Pupils successfully name a range of angles, including right angles, acute, obtuse and reflex angles and use protractors successfully to measure angles to the nearest degree. In Year 5, pupils reflect simple shapes in mirrors to identify lines of symmetry. They draw a variety of shapes and identify a number of angles, measure a range of standard lengths and estimate and use their knowledge well to check their accuracy. In Year 4 they use two and three-dimensional shapes and find the areas and perimeters of simple shapes. Pupils in Year 3 identify the number of vertices, edges and surfaces

of three-dimensional shapes. They identify lines of reflective symmetry.

72. Year 6 pupils collect data on a variety of issues, and they successfully produce a range of graphs to display their findings. Most pupils understand the concept of probability, and they confidently use the appropriate terminology to describe their observations. Year 5 pupils use the mode and range to describe sets of data and in Year 4, pupils collect data to produce tables, graphs and tally charts, for example, to identify the frequency with which their favourite colours and food are repeated.
73. The quality of teaching and pupils' learning are good, overall. Examples of very good teaching were also observed throughout the school. Lessons are carefully planned, based on the pattern of the national numeracy framework. In particular, teachers make careful allowance for the provision of practical and problem solving activities. All teachers make good use of mental activities at the beginning of lessons; they are aware of the need to extend pupils' mathematical vocabulary, and they are careful to address this issue during lessons. Teachers mark pupils' work promptly but, although some teachers provide regular comments of advice or praise, others do not carry out the practice consistently. Teachers have good subject knowledge, provide clear instruction and give much well-directed support; as a result, all pupils make good gains in their knowledge and understanding. Where teaching is very good and teachers' subject knowledge is particularly secure, lessons have a very brisk pace, teachers' expectations are very high and higher-attaining pupils are especially challenged. As a result pupils make very good progress in their overall mathematical ability.
74. Pupils clearly enjoy the work and the mental activities in particular. They settle to their written and practical tasks with interest and enthusiasm, work well with other pupils when required, know what they are expected to do, and make great efforts to accomplish their tasks. Pupils are nearly always very well behaved, and on occasions their behaviour is exemplary. This enables them to concentrate well and make considerable progress. Teachers make very good use of plenary sessions to check pupils' understanding and celebrate some of the work done. Whilst a small number of pupils are careless at times, most pupils take great care with the appearance of their work.
75. The school uses the National Numeracy Strategy to enable its teachers to produce good quality lesson planning. This ensures that standards have been raised significantly. The setting arrangements are used successfully, especially in Year 6 where the use of a booster class and extra teaching staff have contributed markedly towards the raising of standards. The setting ensures that all pupils receive work that is suited to their particular needs, and this is an improvement since the time of the previous inspection. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and she carefully monitors work being undertaken in the school, as well as supporting her colleagues' planning. She has played a very important role in raising standards. Assessment has improved and is now very good. It is being used effectively to identify pupils' attainment, to set suitable work and to help set targets for the future. Very good use is made of this information to set challenging activities for higher-attaining pupils in particular. Many pupils find mathematics an exciting subject, and show excitement when they find answers to problems. Numeracy is generally used appropriately in other subjects, such as design and technology, but limited use is made, at present, in information and communication technology to further develop pupils' mathematical skills.

## **SCIENCE**

76. In 2000, the National Curriculum test results indicated that standards were above average compared to those of other schools nationally and average in comparison with similar schools. Inspection evidence, however, does not support this. While most pupils have average levels of science knowledge, their scientific enquiry skills are weak. Overall standards have been

maintained since the last inspection, but pupils are not as good as they were at applying their knowledge to new situations and finding things out for themselves. This is because, since the last inspection, the school has placed a greater emphasis on pupils' acquiring factual knowledge, and in doing so has adopted a direct teaching approach that does not give the pupils enough opportunities to plan and carry out their own investigations. This has a negative effect on the progress that pupils make. While most pupils make satisfactory progress in learning scientific facts, higher-attaining pupils make unsatisfactory progress because the work does not challenge them to achieve their full potential. This weakness was identified in the last report.

77. Most pupils have satisfactory knowledge across the science curriculum. By the time they are eleven, pupils can name the major bones in the human body and they know that the skeleton gives a body shape and protects its vital organs. They know that muscles are attached to the bones and that these enable the body to move. They understand why some materials are used for specific purposes according to their properties, for example for soundproofing or for electricity cables. They explain how switches are used to complete an electrical circuit and allow the electricity to flow. They have a suitable knowledge of forces: they know, for example, that friction is a force that can slow things down. Year 5 pupils describe observations, sometimes using scientific language, and also have a suitable knowledge of forces. Little evidence was available of their ability to relate them to everyday uses. In Year 4, pupils generally understand reversible and irreversible changes to predict, to describe what happened and to determine whether they were right. Pupils in Year 3 have science enquiry skills that are broadly satisfactory for their age; they know that ice melts and water evaporates but their work does not show evidence of their knowledge of reversible changes.
78. The school has introduced a programme of work since the last inspection and has supplemented it with the latest national guidance. However, the activities are too narrow and are usually carried out by the teacher with the pupils observing or closely supervised by the teacher. An analysis of the work in pupils' books shows that, although pupils are taught how to find things out and how to present their work, there is an over-emphasis on whole class lessons and teacher demonstrations. This means that the pupils do not learn to think for themselves or learn successfully what is important in gathering evidence. This was seen in the top Year 6 set when pupils worked in groups to plan an investigation into the stopping distances of a bicycle in wet and dry conditions. They knew what they were to find out but they had little idea of what was important in obtaining the information. They wrote descriptively about what they would do, for example who would draw the lines on the playground and who would pour the water on the ground. They paid little attention to keeping the test fair apart from a few of the higher-attaining pupils who recognised that the bicycles would need to be ridden at the same speed.
79. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers have good knowledge, which they use to good effect to ask probing questions to assess the level of pupils' understanding and lead their thinking forward. This was seen in a Year 5 lesson on electricity. Pupils were asked to explain why they thought things were happening. When one group of pupils put both wires on one end of the battery or on its side, the teacher instigated a discussion on the flow of electricity in a circuit. His lively approach and motivating questions spurred the pupils on to find out which materials were conductors and which were insulators. Teachers manage pupils well and this creates a secure learning environment where the pupils are ready and willing to learn. Most teachers give pupils good opportunities to develop their literacy skills through extended writing about what they have learnt. The use of numeracy skills, however, is limited because the pupils do not have enough practical experience of measuring. Pupils do not use computers to record and present their findings in tables or graphs. This is a significant weakness. The main weaknesses are the over-emphasis on class lessons and the overuse of worksheets in Year 6. Pupils do not learn to think for themselves and higher attaining pupils in particular are not challenged enough.
80. Procedures for assessment are good. Teachers assess pupils at the end of each topic. However, the information gained is not always used effectively to plan further work. An example of this was

seen in Year 4 when the majority of pupils knew the names of the bones in the human skeleton and the functions of the skeleton at the beginning of the lessons where the objectives were to teach this information. As a result a lot of unnecessary time was spent reinforcing what they knew already instead of taking their learning forward.

81. Management of the subject is satisfactory overall. In response to the school's request, the local authority adviser is supporting the school in its priority to develop pupils' scientific enquiry skills. The co-ordinator is aware of the weaknesses in the subject and has produced a satisfactory action plan to address them. There is a need to identify in the planning the links between English, mathematics and science. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and examines pupils' books. Although she provides good quality feedback, this has not so far been acted upon. She does not have the opportunity to observe teaching in other classes and so does not have a clear overview of the subject throughout the school.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

82. The attainment of eleven-year-olds is well above expectations. This is an improvement since the last inspection. It is clear from the work in the portfolios and the displays around the school that pupils' skills are developed systematically as they move through the school.
83. Pupils' observational drawings and illustrations are particularly good. Pupils use a very wide range of techniques, such as overlaying lots of colours and using toning and shading to achieve specific effects. Pupils' drawing skills develop systematically, and they competently and accurately produce observational drawings. The benefit of this can be seen in other subjects. Their close observational skills, for example, are used to good effect in science. This was seen in Year 6 work when pupils did very detailed drawings of natural objects. Pupils have a good knowledge of the works of a wide range of famous artists and can emulate their techniques in their own work. Pupils use a very good range of media including textiles and clay. The work is linked well to other subjects. In Year 6 for example, printing builds on the work done in Year 5 in a topic on food technology. Pupils study the work of Andy Warhol and produce their own designs for food labels, adapting them for specific audiences. Through this they learn to appreciate that art is a useful commercial tool.
84. The quality of the teaching is very good and all pupils, including those with special educational needs and higher-attaining pupils, make very good progress. In a Year 5 lesson introducing perspective, the teacher clearly had very good subject knowledge that enabled her to discuss artists' work from different periods of time together with its various features. She used samples of work effectively to illustrate the points she was making, and made very good use of demonstration to illustrate to pupils how they could produce perspective in their work. Teachers' planning is clear and what the pupils are to study is well communicated. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge and are very effective in demonstrating what is expected of the pupils, and work is linked well to pupils' own experiences. Good emphasis is given to pupils' developing a careful examination of the subject of their art. Teachers have been very successful in encouraging pupils to work carefully to produce their best work, linking this effectively to the way well-known artists work over long periods to achieve the results that are valued so highly. These results are seen in the very high quality pictures that are displayed around the school such as a picture in the style of Monet in the school office.
85. Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. They are keen to learn and they enjoy what they do. They co-operate very well in groups. Pupils show great enthusiasm and interest in the work. They listen and watch intently, provide suitable and thoughtful answers, and settle with very good concentration when tackling their own work. They know what they were



required to do, but they also received much well-directed help from the teacher and the student who was supporting. This enabled them to make very good gains in their drawing skills, especially in relation to perspective.

86. The co-ordinator and shadow co-ordinator provide excellent leadership. They have very good subject knowledge that they use effectively in guiding teachers in their planning and practice. This gives all the staff the confidence to teach artistic skills effectively. The co-ordinator, however, does not receive release time to monitor classroom practice. The detailed planning provides for more challenging tasks that build upon the pupils' skills and knowledge as they move through the school. Printing for example, is developed using a variety of techniques.
87. The pupils benefit from the high profile that the subject enjoys. The school values their work and displays it prominently. The best work is mounted in good quality frames. A relative weakness is the anonymity of the work on display. Resources, including a kiln, are very good. The programme of work has been revised to reflect the latest curriculum requirements although links with information and communications technology are not fully in place. The co-ordinator has identified this weakness and arrangements are in place to address it. There is a successful art club that enables pupils to develop their skills further and very good links are held with a local art club. The work by members of this club is displayed alongside the pupils' own work, thus providing very good examples of what can be achieved.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

88. By the end of Year 6, standards are as expected for eleven-year-olds. This is in line with the findings of the last inspection. The school has made a very good start in addressing the weaknesses identified in the last report. The co-ordinator who has held the post for one year has had a major influence on this. He is very well qualified and has been able to use his expertise to very good effect. The improvement is also a reflection on the good quality management and the very good working relationships between staff in the school. The programme of work is in the process of being revised. The units in place now identify close links with science and art, and pupils see a real purpose in what they do. In Year 4 for example, pupils are challenged to make soundproof boxes. This is not just a random activity; it follows a presentation on noise pollution by staff from the Environmental Health Agency. In making their boxes, pupils develop their skills of cutting and measuring a wide range of materials. The work reinforces their learning in science about materials, and in evaluating their finished products pupils develop skills of fair testing. In Year 5, the food technology project includes the design of effective packages and advertisements using skills taught in art. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily. However, the school has not yet addressed the issue of challenging the higher-attaining pupils.
89. Only two lessons were seen during the inspection, both in Year 3. These were judged to be good and very good respectively. In the better lesson, the teacher showed very good subject knowledge and presented the lessons in such a lively and imaginative way that the pupils were captivated by the activities relating to air pressure and learning was very good. Through a good variety of activities, such as pumping up an airbed, they learnt that air is much stronger than they thought, and that it is used in a variety of ways. Discussion with the older pupils and an examination of their work indicates that the impact of teaching over time is satisfactory. The pupils develop their skills satisfactorily as they move through the school by using an increasing range of materials and tools. Teachers encourage the pupils to evaluate their work effectively and look for ways to improve it. The school has not yet introduced the element of control technology although it is aware of the need and plans to do so in the near future.
90. Pupils enjoy their work and talk with enthusiasm about what they have made. They work well in groups and respect the views of others. This reflects the very good relationships within the school. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development and economic awareness.

Pupils in Year 6, for example, play a part in organising the Summer Fair for which they design and make games. This involves submitting a bid, including a cost analysis and a design proposal, to the Crosshall School Association. The co-ordinator has worked hard in developing the new programme of work to reflect the revised National Curriculum and supports colleagues well, but is not yet receiving non-contact time to monitor the quality of teaching. The school is well placed to improve standards further by completing the actions identified in the subject development plan.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

91. By the age of eleven years, pupils' attainment in geography is in line with standards expected for their age and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress overall. Lesson observations, scrutiny of work and discussions with staff and pupils confirm that pupils receive a sound and interesting range of experiences and activities to increase their awareness and understanding of the local environment, reasons for settlement and environmental change.
92. In Year 3, pupils gain a sound understanding of the local area surrounding the school and The Eatons, confidently locating the position of the school and the route taken from home. In Year 4, pupils investigate the early settlements in St Neots, successfully linking this with local history. Pupils recognise that map symbols give them information on what maps are telling them about major roads, local rivers and major routes. Using a range of resources, pupils successfully start to develop their enquiry skills, viewing the local area and comparing settlement patterns to surrounding similar towns in the locality. Overall, the quality of pupils' work is good.
93. In Year 5, pupils confidently undertake a weather survey of St Neots, as observed in one class, recording weather symbols and establishing average rainfall and daylight hours. Pupils clearly describe the reasons for the flooding of the local river and the damage caused within the designated flood plain. In Year 5, pupils successfully use mathematical skills in the form of co-ordinates to accurately locate and position bedroom furniture, developing their mapping skills. Nevertheless, the undertaking of independent geographical enquiry-type investigations by pupils is at present unsatisfactory as most work is teacher directed. In Year 6, pupils confidently locate the names of continents and the many countries within them. Pupils can talk knowledgeably about the different hot and cold regions of the world in relation to their position relative to the equator, and how climatic conditions affect people's lives.
94. The quality of teaching is sound overall with examples of both very good and unsatisfactory teaching being observed. Teaching at present enables pupils to develop a basic knowledge and understanding of the topics studied, but does not pay sufficient attention to the systematic development of geographical knowledge and skills. Where teaching is most effective, such as in the use of maps to locate St Neots within the British Isles, pupils develop their knowledge well. Confident teaching clearly illustrates relationships with Europe and the World and the purpose of the activity is clearly explained. At times, challenging questions promote good learning for all pupils and expectations of pupils' contributions to learning are high. Pupils are positively encouraged to work together and present their views to the class in a confident manner. Teaching is less effective where teachers' subject knowledge is weak, failing to give the pupils the correct amount of information to complete the planned task. The teaching of geography is well planned to develop and extend pupils' technical vocabularies, their writing, mathematics in the use of scale and co-ordinates and science which has been linked well to climate and weather.
95. Pupils' attitudes to geography are good and they are well behaved. They listen attentively to the teacher and to one another and are keen to discuss and predict their ideas. Pupils show much ability to collaborate effectively and use their good understanding of everyday experiences to apply to the topics studied. They work well collaboratively in small groups when required, and respond positively to the tasks given them.

96. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. Teachers are supported by a detailed framework for planning that ensures progress of topics. Assessment of pupils' progress is sound and, though the co-ordinator has an accurate picture of what is happening in each year group, through lack of opportunity to monitor classroom practice, she has insufficient knowledge of standards in each aspect in every year group. There is appropriate coverage of the National Curriculum. The development of information and communication technology skills to enhance pupils' understanding is at present unsystematic and therefore unsatisfactory. The school has a satisfactory range of accessible resources to support the teaching of the subject and the range of reference books in the school library is adequate. The school is aware of the need to develop more fully well planned opportunities to visit the local environment to develop pupils' geographical skills still further.

## **HISTORY**

97. No history lessons were seen during the inspection week and judgements are therefore based on a scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with the co-ordinator, shadow co-ordinator and pupils and examining the resources and displays in school.
98. Standards in history are at least in line with national expectations by the end of the key stage and these have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress, steadily building up their knowledge about earlier times. In Year 3, pupils learn about the lives of the Ancient Greeks and the myths and legends which influenced their view of the world. In Year 4, they learn about the Romans, their lives and contribution to Britain. Year 5 pupils study the Tudors and examine many aspects of the period, while Year 6 pupils know many details about the Victorians. In the work examined, pupils show an understanding of chronology and the historical period being studied and by the end of the key stage are developing satisfactory research skills.
99. The requirements of the National Curriculum are fully met through a cycle of topics. Pupils' studies are well supported by a good selection of books and attractive and sometimes interactive displays around the classrooms, as well as by special historical days such as Tudor, Greek and Roman Days. Visitors to school for the Roman Day produced 'living history' activities for pupils to learn about living in Roman times and being in the Roman army. During one such day an impressive clay mosaic was made. They make helpful visits in connection with their studies to the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, for example, when learning about the Greeks, and the Cecil Higgins Museum in Bedford for the Victorians. Pupils took part in Shakespeare's 'The Tempest', which was produced during Year 5's study of the Tudors in the autumn term. This engages pupils' interest, has important cross-curricular links with English and emphasises the legacy of the Tudors.
100. The teaching of history is sound, based on the scrutiny of pupils' work and examining teachers' planning. Resources are adequate to support the study units and are augmented, where necessary, by use of the library and museum support services.
101. The leadership and management are sound overall. The co-ordinator and shadow co-ordinator are well qualified, committed and enthusiastic. They keep up to date with new developments in the subject, consider staff professional needs to develop the curriculum and have a satisfactory overview of the subject. Monitoring teaching and learning in history is still at an early stage and consists of moderating pupils' books; monitoring of teaching however, is not yet in place.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

102. Standards in information and communication technology are below the level expected nationally overall, due to the insufficient opportunities to use computers and other information and communication technology equipment in all subjects and in lessons other than while working in the computer suite. The laptop computers were not in use during the inspection and a small number

of computers were seen being used by pupils during library lessons. Only a few Year 6 pupils recall using the Internet and sending email in school and personal research is difficult due to the low number of computers with Internet access. The school has identified this as a weakness and plans to address it. No other information and communication technology equipment was seen being used by pupils to support their learning during the inspection.

103. Standards in pupils' work and in lessons seen, however, are in line with national expectations. There was very little work presented during the inspection of pupils' previous work and pupils themselves could recall only limited access to computers. There was also a noticeable absence of information and technology work on display. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop keyboard and other computer skills in weekly lessons in the computer suite but these are still at an unsatisfactory level. This was an issue in the previous inspection and has not yet been fully addressed.
104. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 confidently, and many independently of the teacher, select from the menu bar to change the style, size and colour of their writing. Some Year 3 pupils are able to change each and every letter by highlighting them individually before deciding on the way they wish to present them. Pupils in Year 5 are learning how to enter information into a spreadsheet and are learning the abilities of Excel to manipulate the data and calculate totals. Year 6 pupils are beginning to find out how to use PowerPoint to develop a multimedia presentation by the end of the term. During lessons seen all pupils showed an excitement at what the program could do. All pupils were able to select a suitable background and add text to their title page and some more able pupils managed to add a picture and animation. Scrutiny of work shows that most pupils from Year 4 onwards are able to combine text and pictures to present their work giving thought to an audience. Apart from some 'control' work in the previous term, there was no additional evidence on which to judge standards.
105. The quality of teaching and learning seen during the inspection was satisfactory. Teachers' planning is sound and identifies learning objectives and outcomes clearly. These are explained clearly to pupils at the beginning of lessons and reviewed carefully at the end. Very good subject knowledge and personal expertise allows teachers to question pupils fully to find out their level of understanding and move learning forward. For example Year 6 pupils were able to suggest a good number of reasons why a PowerPoint presentation effectively conveyed the information to its audience. These included the clear way that the text was set out and that it was large enough 'to see from a distance', and the interesting and different ways that the text enters the screen 'captures the audience's attention'. Very good support is given by learning assistants who move around groups giving advice and helping those who require additional explanation of procedures. The use of time in the computer suite is sometimes inefficiently used so that pupils have too little time on the computers to develop their keyboard and other skills sufficiently. The appropriate setting of time targets by some teachers ensures that pupils' progress during most lessons is satisfactory. However, due to the insufficient amount of opportunities that pupils have to use computers and other equipment in all subjects, learning over time is unsatisfactory.
106. Pupils' attitudes to using computers are good overall. They are keen to gain experience in the work they do and show a keenness to explore the capabilities that the computer programs offer. They work well together in pairs when required, sharing computers well and taking turns in tabulating information electronically. They listen well to one another and seek and value others' responses. Many pupils are fascinated by the different computer screen styles available to them in using programs for presenting information.
107. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. The priorities identified by the school are appropriate and when implemented should raise the profile and standards in the subject further. The co-ordinator has identified the software and equipment necessary to develop the use of information and communication technology in all subjects and this should be done as a matter of urgency to meet this statutory requirement. The

vision statement for the subject is relevant to meet the development needs of the subject. It is not yet, however, in the form of a carefully costed improvement plan with identified and measurable success criteria and outcomes, which can be monitored closely through standards achieved by pupils in the subject. The monitoring of standards and teaching is currently unsatisfactory.

108. The computer club gives those pupils involved good opportunities to consider the capability of information and communication technology to organise information and present their work.

## MUSIC

109. Pupils throughout the school attain standards expected for their age in all aspects of music except in singing where it is very good. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 sing well. Whole-school singing lessons are enjoyable events and the very good expertise of the music co-ordinator ensures that pupils develop good levels of technical skill. Pupils particularly like singing lively and popular songs, evident when a buzz of excitement spread through the hall when 'Right said Fred' and 'Food, Glorious Food' were announced. Pupils sing lullabies and gentle hymn tunes equally as well. The school has appropriately focused on the development of pupils' listening and appraising skills, which are now average for pupils' ages and show an improvement since the previous inspection. The tuition provided by visiting specialists is good and extracurricular groups including choir and recorders add extra opportunities for pupils to perform in front of an audience. These include performing in assemblies and to community groups in the locality.
110. When listening to 'The Planets' by Gustav Holst, pupils in Year 6 skilfully identify aspects of the music to describe the planet they think each extract may be depicting. For example, when describing Mars, pupils commented that 'it could be Earth as there is lots of movement', or 'sounds like war so it could be Mars'. Others told stories of space travel matching their stories to the different sounds that they heard in the music. When talking about Venus, pupils used their knowledge of planets to help their descriptions. This was shown in one comment: 'peaceful, sleepy Neptune because it is very black and grey'. Pupils throughout the school develop their listening and appraising skills satisfactorily by identifying and considering the use of ostinato rhythms in different pieces of music in Year 4, or deciding how to sing different parts of a song to add interest in Year 3.
111. The quality of teaching in music lessons is satisfactory. The quality of teaching in whole-school singing sessions is very good. Teachers use a range of interesting activities to spark pupils' interest and provide exciting opportunities for them to learn about different elements that help produce the sounds that they do. They are given opportunities to work in groups to compose simple accompaniments to songs. Their performances to the class are generally well accepted although, in one lesson, a minority of pupils were less co-operative and not all pupils were able to perform their piece successfully. Usually contributions are valued and accepted by all and used successfully by the teacher to raise everyone's awareness about how musical effects are produced. This wide choice of interesting songs motivates pupils to sing.
112. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good. They listen particularly well to one another's comments and contributions and respond positively to times when they are required to listen critically. Pupils show very positive attitudes to singing in general and a large number of pupils readily seek and gain a place in the school choir. On a few occasions, however, and despite interesting opportunities being provided, a small number of pupils find it difficult to co-operate with others in group work.
113. The co-ordination of the subject is good. Many improvements have taken place since the previous inspection notably the higher skills in singing, in listening and in appraising. This is partly due to a closer focus on these aspects in the school's priorities for the development of the subject and to the monitoring of planning within and across year groups. Plans are in place for monitoring the

quality of teaching in lessons, although these have yet to take place. Many teachers have been trained and have developed personal skills in order to teach the subject more effectively and this has been a great success. There are clear and appropriate priorities for further development and plans are already in hand to implement these. The use of information and communication technology is not used sufficiently well in pupils' learning and this should be developed further. The music room provides a suitable place for musical activities to take place where all resources are to hand and easily accessible to pupils in their music making. Music makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development through the inclusion of music from a range of countries and cultures.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

114. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are broadly in line with national expectations, except in dance where they are higher than expected. Standards in dance have improved since the time of the school's previous inspection. Only three physical education lessons were observed during the inspection, in Years 4 and 6.
115. By the time they are eleven, pupils successfully perform a range of dance movements. Those in Year 4 for example, readily imitate the actions of the heart and produce appropriate 'powerful' movements. Pupils in Year 6 confidently develop sequences of movements relating to space travel, such as a rocket taking off. Pupils produce a steady rhythm into their work, and show most suitable variations in speed, level, shape and direction. They readily analyse their own work, and identify and implement ways to improve their performance. Pupils successfully develop their games skills of passing, striking and catching a ball, and they readily take part in small-sided team games, based on netball, football and tennis, to further develop their skills. Pupils recognise the need to warm up for and recover from exercise and they confidently explain the effects of exercise on their bodies. Pupils in Year 3 attend swimming lessons for part of the year. All become suitably confident in the water, and by the end of the autumn term about 60 percent of pupils are able to swim twenty-five metres unaided. All pupils in the school develop their outdoor activity skills such as orienteering, when attending residential visits.
116. The overall quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory, with good and very good practice also being observed in Year 6. Teachers produce good planning and they provide an appropriate range of resources to help pupils develop their skills. Clear instruction is given and this allows all pupils to make satisfactory gains in their learning. When teachers provided particularly helpful demonstration and instruction, and where time was allowed for pupils to discuss and develop their work, pupils developed their skills well as in the Year 6 dance lessons. Teachers' expectations of the pupils are high. Members of staff change into appropriate clothing for lessons and they provide generally good demonstration for pupils. They have sound subject knowledge overall and make suitable demands of the pupils' performance. Lessons are generally conducted at a brisk pace, with pupils being given suitable opportunities to increase their skills. On occasions, however, the pace of the lessons slows, when teachers spend too much time providing instructions. Teachers usually show good control and management skills, although very occasionally a small minority of pupils do not give their full attention to their teacher, preferring instead to carry on with the activities being undertaken. Teachers often use pupils to demonstrate good practice and opportunities are usually provided for pupils to discuss the quality of the work seen, which helps pupils identify the areas where they might improve themselves. Teachers provide help and support to pupils in all aspects of their work and in particular they emphasise the need for safety.
117. In turn, pupils show very good attitudes, behave very well overall, work well independently and with a partner or group, and carry equipment carefully and safely. Pupils join in enthusiastically, especially in dance, enjoying themselves and making satisfactory, and sometimes good, physical effort. Pupils fully appreciate the work of other pupils when, for example, pupils in Year 6 readily applauded the dance performances of their classmates.

118. The school has a suitable programme of work, and all aspects of work are covered during the year. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and he has drawn up a suitable action plan to identify ways in which the subject should develop in the future. He is aware of the work that is being undertaken in the classes, but he has no opportunity to observe lessons taking place, to monitor the standards being achieved and where improvements might be made. The school has good assessment procedures, and much information is available to help judge pupils' current skills and identify the progress they have made. Activities involving counting, especially in games activities, give support to the school's initiative in numeracy. The school makes very good arrangements for the provision of extracurricular sporting activities for pupils, and has a number of successful sports teams. These activities, together with residential visits, contribute significantly towards pupils' social development.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

119. Acts of collective worship and the teaching of religious education meet the requirements set out in the locally agreed syllabus. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in learning about the major religions. Parents are also informed of their rights to withdraw their children. The school has sustained the satisfactory standards noted at the previous inspection.
120. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils confidently recall the main symbols, teachings and customs of religions such as Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism. They understand the importance and influence of great religious teachers such as Moses, Brahma and Shiva. Year 6 pupils relate simple stories like the Creation, and the celebration of Hindu festivals which helps pupils to realise that other faiths have something in common with Christianity. Many pupils begin to realise and develop their understanding of how Christians and those of other faiths draw on their religion in daily life to help them. They understand why people go on pilgrimages and something of the significance of Epiphany such as the Visitation of the Three Kings after the birth of Jesus. Pupils show very good elements of spiritual development where beautiful pictures and visualisations are used to good effect.
121. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers' good knowledge and understanding of the religions studied results in effective class discussions on faiths and issues. Teachers often combine religious education and personal and social education activities. For example, in a very good lesson observed in Year 4 the class teacher successfully linked a sensitive understanding that 'we are all special' to the fact that individual footprints in newly fallen snow are unique. Where teaching is most effective, teachers read texts very expressively to involve pupils in the story from the start such as in the story of Moses. Activities are well planned to keep pupils suitably on task and maintain the pace of the lesson. There is good balance between direct instruction and pupils' independent work in groups. Discussion is well guided and so leads pupils to deeper insights, such as in a Year 5 lesson where pupils were asked to consider the feelings Moses' mother may have had when leaving her new born baby in the rushes. In a Year 3 lesson some pupils were aware that Muslims follow the Qu'ran. There are some well-chosen opportunities to consider how people behave in certain situations either in real life or in stories. This encourages pupils to think of how their actions affect others. Where planning is least effective, lesson objectives lack clarity so neither pupils nor the teacher can evaluate whether they have been achieved. Occasionally the written text at the end of a lesson lacks purpose and imagination and pupils lose interest as a result. This prevents some good teaching from being judged to be even better. In most lessons teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour are explicit and they spend little time on the management of pupils. In some lessons there is an over-reliance on work sheets, and opportunities for pupils to develop their extended writing are not fully exploited. Often pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to research their work independently.

122. The management of the subject is good. The newly introduced subject programme of work provides teachers with a suitable structure for planning and giving good coverage over time. The co-ordinator has not yet monitored teaching and is unaware of how effective teachers' delivery of the subject is. There are good cross-curricular links to art and design and literacy. The use of the Internet to gain additional information is unsatisfactory. Visitors enhance the quality of the religious education curriculum but these are mainly for Christianity. Teachers do not consistently assess pupils' attainment formally, but where teaching is good, lessons have relevant learning targets that meet the needs of the majority of pupils.