

INSPECTION REPORT

Belton C. of E. Primary School

Sadlers Wells, Belton, Loughborough

LE12 9TS

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 120114

Headteacher: Mr R.T. McDermott

Reporting inspector: Boyd Gunnell
12360

Dates of inspection: 31st January to 2nd February 2000

Inspection number: 186793

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior School

School category: Voluntary Controlled

Age range of pupils: 4 to 10

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Sadlers Wells
Belton
Loughborough

Postcode: LE12 9TS

Telephone number: 01530 222304

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr R.H.B. Thomas

Date of previous inspection: 22nd January 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Boyd Gunnell	Registered inspector	Mathematics, Science, Information Technology, Design and Technology, Physical Education	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What the school should do to improve further. Equal Opportunities, Special Educational Needs.
Anthony Comer	Lay inspector		How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Susan Metcalfe	Team inspector	Children under the age of five, English, Art, Geography, History, Music, Religious Education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well does the school care for its pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Belton Church of England Primary is a very small school situated at the edge of the rural village of Belton. The number of pupils on roll has declined in recent years and there are now 57 boys and girls aged 4 to 10. More of these pupils are of above average attainment and fewer of below average attainment than found in most primary schools. The proportion of children on the school's register of special educational needs is similar to the national average and one child has a statement. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. The Governing Body is seeking approval to extend the age range to include 11 year olds so that pupils remain to the end of Key Stage 2.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Belton Church of England Primary is a good school that is popular with parents. Pupils of all ages are enthusiastic learners. They achieve high standards in most of what they do because they are taught well. The staff continually evaluate what they and the pupils achieve and know what needs to be done to raise standards higher. Governors work well with staff and pupils and support them in their work. Adults and pupils respect each other and enjoy each other's company, which is why the school is very good at looking after the pupils in its care. Parents value the school's achievements and, along with the local community, make a strong contribution to pupils' learning. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good, but in a few respects the school is insufficiently self-critical or robust in the actions it takes to improve. The school is effective and has the capacity to become very effective by making the few improvements described in this report. While it achieves high standards, it provides only satisfactory value for money because it is very small and the cost per pupil is therefore very high.

What the school does well

- Pupils are taught well and often very well, which enables them to make good progress.
- Pupils generally achieve high standards at Key Stage 1, and in mathematics and science at Year 5.
- Children under the age of five achieve very high standards because they are taught very well.
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. Those under the age of five make excellent progress.
- More able children under the age of five and those in Key Stage 1 make very good progress.
- Pupils enjoy being at school. They work hard and rise to the high challenges set by teachers.
- Behaviour is very good and attendance at school is very high.
- Pupils' personal development, including their social and moral development, is very good.
- The curriculum is very good and gains from excellent contributions by parents and the local community.
- Arrangements for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic and personal development are very effective.
- Parents have positive views about the school and relationships with the great majority are very good.
- The school is well led and managed by the headteacher who is supported well by the staff of the school.
- The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection.

What could be improved

- The Governing Body is insufficiently involved in the strategic management of the school.
- Not enough attention is given to actions that will have most impact on raising standards.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory for pupils in Years 2 and 3, and for the school library and the headteacher.

The school has far more strengths than areas it needs to improve on. The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The key issues raised by the previous inspection in January 1996 have been tackled well. Standards in reading, mathematics and science have risen since the last inspection. High standards have been maintained for children under the age of five, while standards in writing continue to be satisfactory overall. Pupils' enthusiasm for learning and their behaviour have remained high and pupils with special educational needs continue to make very good progress. Arrangements for pupils' personal, social and health education have improved. New schemes of work have been introduced for most subjects, and the work of co-ordinators is much more effective. While there have been improvements to the English curriculum, reports for parents, and the teaching of physical education and music, more is possible in these areas. The overall quality of teaching and lesson planning has also improved.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
reading	B	B	B	B
writing	A	B	C	C
mathematics	A	A*	A	A

Key

very high
A*

well above average A

above average B

average
C

below average
D

well below average E

Achievement is good and standards are very high for children under the age of five. More able children in this age group make very good progress and those with special educational needs make excellent progress.

Achievement at Key Stage 1 is very good and standards are high. Pupils' performance in national reading tests is above that of similar schools and for mathematics it is well above. Pupils' achievement in national writing tests has fallen in recent years but remains in line with the performance of similar schools. However, the number of pupils taking these tests each year is small and the performance of one pupil can significantly change the letter grades given above. As a result any changes from year to year should be treated with caution. The school has given writing priority in its development plan. Standards and achievement in science are high, and satisfactory in information communication technology (ICT).

Achievement at Year 5 is generally good. Overall achievement in English is good and standards are high. However, the standard of reading and writing skills, such as grammar, are much higher than the standard of pupils' extended writing in which they are expected to apply a range of writing skills for themselves. Achievement in mathematics and science is good and standards are high. While achievement is satisfactory overall and improving in ICT, standards vary between its different aspects. The school has given ICT priority for improvement in its development plan.

At Key Stages 1 and at Year 5 standards and achievement in religious education are satisfactory. Achievement in geography is good. It is satisfactory overall and good in part in art, design & technology, history, music and physical education.

The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is very good in Key Stages 1 and 2. The achievement of more able pupils is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. With the exception of boys' weaker performance in writing, there is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. The school is on schedule to meet the targets it has set for pupil achievement.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils like being at school. They thrive on challenge and work hard to achieve the high standards set by teachers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good. Pupils play and work well together in classrooms and about the school. Occasionally a few boys need reminding of the need to concentrate during lessons.
Personal development and relationships	There are strong, friendly and purposeful relationships between pupils, teachers and other adults who work with them. Pupils successfully plan and manage their own work and willingly accept and fulfil responsibilities in class and around the school.
Attendance	Attendance is very high and has improved significantly since the last inspection.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-10 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good	Good

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

The quality of teaching was excellent in 3% of the lessons observed, very good in 38%, and good in 41%. 15% of lessons were satisfactorily taught while a very small amount, 3%, were unsatisfactory. Stimulating activities are a common feature of lessons and teachers have a good understanding of most of what they teach, especially literacy and numeracy. They set high expectations for academic achievement and work rate. As a result, pupils work hard, are good at learning new knowledge and skills, and successfully use them to solve problems. Pupils work well on their own because they enjoy learning and they listen carefully to what they are asked to do. Teachers ask probing questions and pupils respond by confidently talking about their own ideas, even when they are not sure they are right. Pupils are set personal learning targets for English and mathematics and they know these are intended to help them improve. Lessons are well planned to enable different groups of pupils such as slower and faster learners, to learn effectively, and to ensure they benefit from the expertise of the nursery nurse and support staff. Teachers usually manage pupils' behaviour very effectively, but there are times when they are not persistent enough in maintaining a sufficiently high standard.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	These are very good in Key Stage 2 and excellent for Key Stage 1 and children under the age of five. The school is working on improving arrangements for extended writing and ICT, especially in Key Stage 2. Extra-curricular activity is very good and very well supported by the local community.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There are excellent arrangements for children under the age of five and in Key Stage 1. Provision is very good for pupils in Key Stage 2.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The overall provision is very good. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills. The arrangements for pupils' social and moral development are very good and those for cultural and spiritual development are good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Arrangements for monitoring academic performance are very good. There are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for looking after the welfare of pupils. Relationships with the great majority of parents are very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well led and managed by the headteacher, supported by staff who fulfil their management responsibilities very well. Staff work effectively as a team and successfully make improvements in a range of areas. However, some of the strategies used do not focus strongly enough on the actions that will have most impact.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are strongly committed to the school, work well with staff, and meet their statutory responsibilities. Many are new to the Governing Body and recognise that their monitoring of school improvement needs to be more effective because they rely too heavily on the headteacher. Governors do not make a strong enough contribution to the strategic management of school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher and staff know the school's strengths and what needs to be improved. The evaluation of pupils' performance in English, mathematics, science and ICT is particularly strong and effective in triggering actions for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of the expertise of its teaching and non-teaching staff. Teaching resources are adequate, with the exception of ICT, and used well. Accommodation is mostly used well although the largest class is taught in the smallest classroom. The accommodation for the library and headteacher is inadequate. In most of its work the school considers ways of achieving best value from what it buys or does.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school and make good progress. • Behaviour in the school is good. • Many are satisfied with the amount of homework pupils do at home. • The school is approachable and works well with parents. • The teaching is good and pupils are expected to work hard and achieve their best. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few believe too much homework is given. • Some parents do not feel they are kept well enough informed about their children's progress. • A few think some children are not set high enough academic targets. • Some believe the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

The inspection team found that pupils enjoy school and make good progress in most of their work because the teaching is good. Parents are right that behaviour is good, in fact it is very good, and that pupils are expected to work hard and give of their best. The school is approachable and has very good relationships with the great majority of its parents. Teachers set a reasonable amount of varied and interesting homework tasks. Parents are right that at times the school's expectations are insufficiently high for a few pupils, especially for the oldest higher attainers, in writing and ICT, and in some of the homework set. Reports explain what pupils are good at but, as parents have noted, they do not explain what their children need to do to improve. For a very small school there is a very good range of extra-curricular activities, including residential experiences for even the very young.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Achievement is good and standards are very high for children under the age of five. The vast majority of these children are on schedule to achieve or have already achieved the national standard in each of the required areas of learning, such as literacy, numeracy and The World About Us. More able children under the age of five make very good progress and those with special educational needs make excellent progress.

2. Achievement during Key Stage 1 is very good and standards are high in most subjects for most pupils. Achievement during Key Stage 2 is good overall but varies within and between subjects. For example, progress in reading is stronger than in writing, and progress in mathematics is good and better than in ICT. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. The achievement of more able pupils is very good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory during Key Stage 2. The school is on schedule to meet the realistic targets it has set for pupil achievement, and they give appropriate emphasis to improving the weaker aspects of pupils' learning.

3. Overall, pupils' achievements in English during Key Stages 1 and 2 are good and standards are high. Standards are high in reading and in writing skills, such as grammar and punctuation, and stronger than the standard of pupils' extended writing, in which pupils are expected to apply their skills to write stories or letters. This difference is most marked for more able pupils in Key Stage 2. Pupils on the schools' register of special educational needs make very good progress in both key stages. Pupils' performance in national reading tests at the end of Key Stage 1 has improved since the previous inspection. It has been consistently above the national average for all schools in recent years and in 1999 it was better than the performance of similar schools. In the 1999 national writing tests at the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' performance was in line with similar schools. Their performance has fallen in recent years when compared to the national average for all schools but remains similar to that reported by the previous inspection. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are on schedule to meet or exceed national expectations by the end of the key stage. The school has correctly identified that boys' writing is weaker than girls and has made this a priority in its development plan. Pupils make effective use of their literacy skills across the curriculum and make good progress in learning the important vocabulary of a range of subjects, such as science and mathematics. For example, pupils in Year 1 wrote sentences to explain how they made toys move and used words like 'push' and 'pull', and pupils in Years 4 and 5 summarised the findings of their historical research.

4. Achievement in mathematics is good and standards in mathematics are high at Key Stage 1 and Year 5. Achievement is good and there is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls, or more able pupils, or those on the school's register of special educational needs. Pupils' performance in national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 has improved since the last inspection. Results in these tests have been consistently well above the performance of all schools in recent years, and well above the standard achieved by similar schools in 1999. Key Stage 2 pupils are on schedule to meet or exceed national expectations by the end of the key stage. Pupils' achieve equally well across the different areas of mathematics, such as number, algebra and data handling. They are good at solving mathematical problems and applying their mathematical skills in other subjects. For example, pupils use measurement in geography and successfully present the results of their scientific investigations by plotting bar charts and line graphs, sometimes with two or

more sets of results on the same graph.

5. Standards in science are consistently high across the school and have improved since the previous inspection. Achievement is good for the vast majority of pupils during Key Stages 1 and 2, including more able pupils and those on the school's register of special educational needs. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of science and confidently make use of it to explain why things happen. They successfully plan and carry out their own scientific investigations and confidently use the correct scientific terms in their writing and talk. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls.

6. Standards in ICT are in line with national expectations at Key Stage 1 and achievement is satisfactory. Standards at Year 5 are satisfactory overall but vary between the different aspects of ICT. Pupils' achievement in word processing is satisfactory and standards are similar to national expectations. There is good achievement in the use of spreadsheets and in using sensors to measure, for example, temperature, and standards are high for most pupils in these aspects of ICT. However, standards in desk top publishing and drawing are below expectations and achievement is unsatisfactory, especially for more able pupils. Overall, there is no significant difference between boys and girls, and pupils on the school's register of special educational needs make satisfactory progress. The school has identified ICT as a priority in its development plan and there is already evidence that the actions taken are having a positive impact on standards.

7. Standards in religious education are in line with the agreed syllabus and pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils' achievement in geography is good. Achievement is satisfactory overall and good in part for art, design & technology, history, music and physical education. The recent introduction of new schemes of work for many of these subjects is having a noticeable impact on improving pupils' learning and achievement in lessons, such as for design & technology and geography.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils enjoy school and have very good attitudes to learning. They play and work very happily together throughout the school. For example, very young children mix with and play near the oldest pupils who take care to ensure they come to no harm.

9. Children under the age of five enjoy each other's company. They have a strong and friendly relationship with their class teacher and nursery nurse, with whom they spend much of their time on activities they find interesting and enjoyable. Even the youngest children work well when they are asked to work on their own, such as when mixing paint or printing patterns. Their behaviour is very good and they try hard in lessons even when tasks are very challenging, such as when four-year-olds were learning how to put on clothes for themselves.

10. Relationships between pupils in Years 1 to 5 are very good. Pupils also have very good relationships with teachers and other adults who work with them, such as a visiting teacher who runs a well attended lunch time French club. Pupils thrive on and enjoy challenges, such as during quick fire mental mathematics sessions, solving problems for themselves, or trying to sing 'creepy crawlies' very quietly during a whole-school assembly. Pupils successfully plan, manage and sustain their own project work, such as investigations and research, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. They enjoy learning and work on interesting tasks for long periods without seeking guidance. Most confidently volunteer questions during class discussions.

11. Pupils are well behaved around the school and play very well together. They try to avoid hurting each other's feelings; for example, they take care to spread out across the play ground so their games do not overlap. Behaviour in classrooms is very good, although a few boys in Year 2 occasionally need reminding to listen and concentrate during lessons. Pupils usually listen very carefully to each other, help each other when they can, and it is very rare for anyone to comment unkindly about someone else's ideas. No evidence of bullying was evident during the inspection and no pupils have been excluded.

12. Pupils willingly accept responsibilities within their class, such as being monitors, or fulfil whole school responsibilities. For example, a boy and girl from Year 5 successfully organised a road safety competition for all pupils in the school. Pupils' attendance is well above the national average, and has improved significantly since the previous inspection.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. Pupils are well and often very well taught. As a result, pupils are keen to learn and strive hard to meet the varied and stimulating challenges set by teachers. Overall, the quality of teaching is good and better than that described by the previous inspection. Teaching was very good or excellent in two fifths of the lessons observed and good in another two fifths. In the remaining lessons teaching was mostly satisfactory: very little was unsatisfactory. Teaching is very good for children under the age of five and in Key Stage 1. It is good in Key Stage 2 and generally good and often very good for pupils with special educational needs.

14. Children under the age of five benefit from very good teaching of literacy, numeracy and other areas of learning such as physical development. English, mathematics and science are very well taught in Key Stage 1. The quality of teaching of other subjects in Key Stage 1, for example, design and technology, geography and physical education, is good overall. In Key Stage 2 the teaching of English, mathematics, science and ICT is good. For the other subjects observed, including design & technology and art, teaching is mostly good but varies significantly from lesson to lesson. For example, while a history lesson was very well taught, a physical education lesson was unsatisfactory.

15. Imaginative and stimulating learning activities are common features of lessons throughout the school. This happens because teachers convey their enthusiasm for learning to pupils and have a good and sometimes very good knowledge and understanding of what they are teaching. For example, they have a good understanding of how to teach literacy skills such as phonics, and numeracy skills, and make effective use of the ideas promoted by the National Literacy Project and National Numeracy Strategy. A teacher's good understanding of mathematics was evident in a mixed Reception and Year 1 class when very strong and repeated emphasis was given to pupils learning and using mathematical vocabulary in a variety of tasks. Even the youngest worked hard to describe shapes by using terms such as rectangle and cuboid, and to pronounce 'sphere' correctly. When teachers lack sufficient subject knowledge, which was evident in one physical education lesson, it slows the pace of learning and reduces pupils' active involvement.

16. Teachers set high and sometimes very high expectations for academic achievement, work rate and pupils applying what they have learned. As a result, pupils are good at acquiring new knowledge and skills, and have confidence to apply them for themselves. Pupils are particularly good at working hard on their own in written, practical and creative activities. They enjoy being expected to think about ideas and to solve problems for themselves. These learning skills have been developed because teachers provide plenty of challenging opportunities for pupils to plan and manage their own work.

For example, a group of higher attaining Years 2 and 3 pupils tried very hard to plan their own investigation into magnets. They listened carefully when the teacher provided well timed guidance to help them unravel their mis-understandings about how to measure the strength of a magnet.

17. Teachers are mostly very good at questioning pupils to explore what they can and cannot do. Pupils' answers are effectively used to guide subsequent lesson activities. Very often teachers phrase questions carefully to encourage pupils to think deeply about what is being discussed and they place a high value on pupils' answers, even when they are wrong. Through this approach teachers successfully encourage pupils, including those with special educational needs, to talk confidently about their ideas and speculate about possible answers when they are not sure they are right. Pupils often raise interesting questions that are not directly related to the topic being discussed but have been stimulated by it. Pupils, especially the higher attainers, regularly explore their own thinking in this way because teachers take time to answer while keeping lessons focused on the main learning objectives.

18. Teachers begin lessons by clearly explaining what pupils will learn and complement this with very clear instructions about what needs doing and by when. As a result pupils know what is expected of them and work productively for extended periods without needing additional guidance. This worked well in a Years 4 and 5 mathematics lesson when pupils independently carried out an investigation into dice throws, tallied the throws and then plotted a bar chart. Because they have individual learning targets most pupils know what they need to do to improve their English and mathematics. There is a strong link between these individual targets and those identified in Individual Education Plans for pupils on the school's register of special educational needs. As a result, teachers, including visiting teachers, have a good knowledge of what pupils with special educational needs require which enables these pupils to make very good progress. Lesson planning is thorough and makes good provision for the needs of different groups of pupils, such as the slower and faster learners, which enables most pupils to learn well. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. When planning lessons for the children under the age of five and Year 1, the teacher involves the nursery nurse and classroom assistant. The high quality of this planning enables these children to make good and often very good progress because they are very effectively supported and taught by support staff.

19. In most lessons teachers do not need to prompt better behaviour overtly because pupils already know what is expected of them and respond to subtle reminders, such as a sideways glance from a teacher. However, a few Year 2 boys sometimes lack concentration when they are not directly engaged by a teacher, and their learning becomes unsatisfactory. Usually this occurs when tasks have not been made clear enough or when the teacher is not persistent enough in maintaining a high standard of behaviour. The small classroom for Years 2 and 3 pupils makes it very difficult for teachers to use a wide variety of learning approaches, especially during independent practical work and whole-class literacy and numeracy sessions. For example, in mathematics and science lessons it was difficult for the teachers to set more able pupils independent practical work and then continue working with the rest of the pupils in front of the white board.

20. Teachers provide a good range of homework, especially for English and mathematics. This work is well planned to reinforce or extend work covered in class. A particular strength of the work is the varied range of activities, such as games, problem solving and quick recall activities, as well as different work being provided to meet pupils' different needs. Some parents believe too much homework is set, while others believe it is too hard or too easy. The inspection has found that a reasonable amount of homework is

set and the school has been successful in modifying homework tasks so that most are suitably challenging. However, parents are correct that some of the homework, for example in mathematics, should be more challenging for older pupils who have already reached a high standard.

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

21. The school curriculum is very good in quality and range. All statutory requirements are met, including those for religious education and collective worship. The school fully implements the National Literacy Project and the National Numeracy Strategy and uses the ideas provided to support work in subjects such as science, history and geography. The curriculum is well matched to the needs of nearly all pupils and in most respects its breadth and balance are excellent, especially for children under five, pupils in Key Stage 1 and those with special educational needs. However, the provision for more able pupils sometimes leaves them unchallenged and they do not make progress as rapidly as they should, especially in ICT and writing in Years 4 and 5. Across the school there are not enough opportunities for extended writing, especially for older pupils, and the school's music policy and scheme of work have yet to be implemented in full.

22. The curriculum is well planned and covers the knowledge, understanding and skills required by each subject, especially for literacy and numeracy. The school makes effective use of recently published national schemes of work, such as for literacy, numeracy and ICT and curriculum liaison with partner schools. The curriculum is also well planned to ensure that boys and girls, and faster and slower learners, have equal access. Teachers check equal access is provided in practice by considering the needs of different pupils when they prepare termly plans and select resources and themes. Despite pupils being organised into mixed-age classes, care is taken to ensure that pupils are taught in year groups when this is appropriate, such as when four year olds learned rhymes, and work is planned to match the different needs of pupils, such as in literacy and numeracy. Effective planning enables pupils to learn how to concentrate, persevere and organise their own learning. For example, pupils, especially those in Years 4 and 5, develop their learning skills through planned opportunities to carry out research, such as seeking information about the life and times of the Ancient Egyptians from the library and computer programmes. There is excellent provision for pupils on the school's register of special educational needs. As a result these pupils are enthusiastic and clearly motivated by what they achieve.

23. For a very small primary school there is very good provision for extra-curricular activities. Pupils have the chance to join a lunchtime French club, take part in cross-country running, play football or netball, either to represent the school or for fun. Although there are no music clubs, pupils go carol singing at Christmas and many who began using keyboards last year have continued to do so at home and sometimes share their skills with others in school. During the last year, pupils joined other local schools to make a Millennium compact disk of their favourite songs such as "Spring Chicken".

24. The school make effective use of the parents' and community's willingness to work with pupils. During the inspection parents secretly provided a range of push and pull toys for a lesson in which excited young pupils were asked to sort and classify the toys and then work out the forces needed to make them move. Parents and grandparents have been invited to help pupils learn about life in the 1950's, and a parent governor visits each week to lead whole-school singing practice. The school provides homework that parents can use to support their children's learning in addition to a home reading scheme. The vicar leads an assembly each week and lends the Church for Christmas and Harvest celebrations. In return the school donates and delivers harvest produce to old folk in the local area, and provides the local May Queen and pupils for maypole dances. Pupils also raise money for charities such as Help the Aged and Barnardos.

25. There is very good provision for pupils' personal development that includes an

effective programme for pupils' personal, social, health, sex and drugs education, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. This programme is complemented by work in other areas, such as science and geography, and supported by the speaking and listening skills developed through the literacy strategy. The school provides a calm, well-ordered, caring and safe environment in which pupils' personal development is actively promoted through perceptive teaching and by adults who set high standards.

26. There is good provision for pupils' spiritual development. A good range of opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their sense of spirituality through school assemblies and religious education. For example, younger pupils were amazed and awe struck by the size of a hand-drawn map of the local area, and the accuracy and skills used to prepare it. Similarly, the sight of a blackbird bathing in a puddle reinforced work on the variety and range of creatures and their needs. Art work about the school shows an appreciation of colour, texture and form over and above the techniques of reproducing a copy. Historical artefacts, such as old toys, are treated carefully and with respect while photographs giving a birds eye view of the village captured the imagination of old and young alike.

27. Arrangements for pupil's moral development are very good and enhanced by discussions, stories and the very good role models provided by staff in the school. Pupils learn right from wrong through school and class rules that are carefully and consistently re-enforced by adults within the school. In circle time activities pupils learn about each other and how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Pupils learn to be responsible by undertaking jobs round the school, like being a cloakroom or milk monitor. These and other activities enhance the self-esteem of even the youngest children because pupils are trusted, for example, to deliver a message or make unsupervised use of books in the library. Pupils are clear about the good standard of behaviour expected and any challenging behaviour is dealt with sensitively and calmly which enables the majority to ignore the actions of a very small minority.

28. Very good provision is made for pupil's social development. Many opportunities are planned for pupils to work together or to take turns, such as in physical education and other practical sessions when they share equipment and resources. Social skills are further developed when the pupils, even the very young, go away on residential trips and have to live, work and play together.

29. The school makes good provision for pupil's cultural development, which focuses on helping them understand local, western and some non-western cultures. Books and artefacts, such as musical instruments, are used to introduce pupils to the world beyond Britain and these experiences are complemented by work about, for example, the Victorians, Tudors and the local area. Assemblies and religious education help pupils learn about the importance of differences between different peoples. Museum visits, and artwork and artefacts from different times, styles, religions and ethnic origins are used to expand pupils' cultural awareness.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

30. The school is effective in caring for its pupils and is very good at looking after their welfare. These features of the school make a very strong contribution to pupils' learning. This aspect of school life has been significantly improved since the previous inspection.

31. Teachers and other adults who work with pupils care about their wellbeing and provide effective personal and academic guidance and support when needed. The school

has a strong sense of community and staff have established an emotionally secure environment within which pupils feel respected and valued. There are effective procedures for child protection, which have been reinforced through recent staff training. There are very good arrangements for promoting good behaviour around the school, complemented by excellent procedures for monitoring and eliminating bullying, which ensure behaviour is not a concern for the school or parents. Staff give appropriate attention to health and safety, such as making clear to pupils how they should move around the hall during physical education lessons, and how to use equipment safely, such as sharp knives and the kiln. Procedures for monitoring attendance are clear, effective and well implemented, which is an improvement since the previous inspection.

32. The school has very good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress within English, mathematics and science that make good use of resources produced by the National Literacy Project and National Numeracy Strategy. These assessments enable teachers to agree with pupils target areas upon which they should focus in order to improve their understanding and skills. These targets work very well for younger pupils because they are very detailed and are changed frequently; for example, pupils are set targets to learn the spelling of problem words which are changed once progress is made. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 have more general targets linked to, for example, presentation skills or areas of numeracy. These monitoring procedures are also effective in supporting pupils on the school's special educational needs register, and contribute to the formation of the clearly defined and helpful individual educational plans which are regularly and appropriately reviewed.

33. Assessment information is used to guide curriculum and lesson planning, especially for English, mathematics and science. Teachers highlight assessment opportunities when planning and evaluate lessons regularly to identify the understanding and skills that have been successfully developed in addition to what pupils did. The co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science also make good use of the analysis of samples of pupils' work and their answers to national test papers. For example, the literacy co-ordinator sets a whole-school task each term, such as a specific piece of writing. Pupils' responses to these tasks are matched to national expectations to identify the weaker areas of their learning so that actions can be planned to improve achievement. This thorough analysis has enabled the school to identify that the standard of boys writing is relatively weak, especially writing extensively for a range of purposes, and enabled it to begin researching ways in which it can raise standards in this aspect of English. The use of assessment information to set high and challenging targets, especially for higher attainers, is not fully developed. The assessment of what pupils know and can do in other subjects, such as geography and art, is superficial.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

34. The school's partnership with parents is very good. They help in the classroom with a variety of activities including art and technology, and provide resources from home which are used effectively in lessons. Work at home is well supported by many parents, for example reading or regular homework tasks for English and mathematics. This involvement has a positive effect on pupils' achievement and personal development.

35. Arrangements for exchanging information between the school and home are generally effective and homework diaries are especially well used. Parents appreciate the personal and informal feedback and help provided by staff. They believe the recently introduced home-school agreement is helping reinforce an already strong partnership between home and school. Annual reports to parents about their children's progress meet

statutory requirements and give much detail about what pupils have achieved. However, reports do not provide sufficient information about what pupils need to do to improve or about their personal development. In this respect the inspection has confirmed the view of a significant minority of parents that they could be better informed about how well their children are getting on at school.

36. The Friends of Belton are very effective in arranging social and fund-raising events to support the work of the school. The governing body has a high proportion of parents who are enthusiastic and committed to the school, many of whom are new to the role of governor. The great majority of parents are happy with what the school provides and achieves and believe, as does the inspection team, that it is easy for parents to approach the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

37. The school is well led and managed by the headteacher. He has successfully established a strong team spirit among staff, all of whom make an effective contribution to school improvement. The Governing Body is very committed to the school and manages routine matters well but it is insufficiently involved in monitoring school improvement and helping guide its future development. The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection. However, it is insufficiently self-critical in some areas of its work and does not always focus with enough rigour on the actions that will have the most impact on standards of attainment.

38. The school staff are highly committed to raising standards in an already successful school. The headteacher works alongside staff as a member of a strong and mutually supportive team. This team has made significant improvements to the way the school manages and evaluates its own performance since the last inspection. Good systems are in place to identify the main strengths and weaknesses in pupils' work and other areas for school development. Staff implement these systems effectively, for example, when co-ordinating subjects, or the provision for children under the age of five, or arrangements for pupils on the register of special educational needs. The school's development plan identifies a wide range of appropriate improvement priorities for the school, some of which have clearly defined success criteria, such as raising standards in boys' writing. Staff regularly evaluate the outcomes of their actions. For example, they know the literacy and numeracy projects are being successfully implemented and know what to do to make further improvements.

39. The school mostly makes very good use of the resources available to it. For example, the provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent, professional development opportunities are exploited well, and the extensive finance provided by the Friends of Belton School is put to good use. Through an effective partnership between teaching and non-teaching staff, complemented by a supportive governing body and parents, the school is successful in meeting its own aims. For example, pupils attain high standards through hard work and so experience the satisfaction of achievement in many aspects of school life.

40. There are times when the headteacher is not sufficiently critical of the way the school is organised or works. For example, it is inappropriate that the largest class should be taught in the smallest classroom. The headteacher has very little non-teaching time and therefore insufficient opportunity to fulfil essential management tasks. For example, while teaching is monitored and teachers supported, especially through the expert advice provided by the literacy co-ordinator, the headteacher has been unable to provide sufficient

support to improve teaching in the areas he has correctly identified.

41. The school is effective in putting in place appropriate actions to secure improvement; for example, a staff training programme is beginning to raise standards in ICT. However, the school's priorities are not always evaluated in sufficient detail. For example, the staff know they need to improve standards in writing but have yet to identify in sufficient detail which aspects need working on. The strategies chosen to manage improvement are often effective but some do not focus strongly enough on the actions that will have the most impact. For example, the school has matched its actions to raise standards in literacy to the schedule of training available outside the school, rather than exploiting its own expertise and determining its own schedule.

42. The Governing Body is well organised, works hard, fulfils its statutory responsibilities and successfully supports the school. Governors have begun to extend their involvement with the school but they know they need to improve their contribution to school management, which is correctly identified as a priority in the school development plan. The Governing Body relies too heavily on the headteacher and is not yet sufficiently well informed or constructively critical of the way the school works. For example, while there is a strategy for monitoring literacy and numeracy, it does not extend to other subjects such as ICT, which is also a school priority. There is also a lack of understanding of what an effective school needs for it to become self-critical and self-improving. For example, even in a very small school the headteacher needs a significant amount of non-teaching time. Long-term strategic planning varies in quality. The Governing Body has a clear view of how it intends to improve school accommodation and is giving much attention to ways in which it can extend the age range to include Year 6, and so increase the number of pupils attending the school. However, the Governing Body has been slow to seek advice and plan how it will respond to the school's declining budget that has been caused by a steady fall in pupil numbers in recent years.

43. The school is making good use of its financial resources and appropriately considers whether it is achieving best value from what it buys and does. Although very small, the school benefits from a good number of teaching and non-teaching staff. Overall, staff working in classrooms are well qualified, and training opportunities are being provided to overcome the weaker areas of teachers' expertise, such as in ICT. Resources are adequate for most areas of the curriculum but those for ICT are not and this prevents pupils from using e-mail and accessing the internet. Much of the accommodation is good and well used. However, one classroom is too small for the number of pupils in the class, and there is no suitable accommodation for the library or the headteacher.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

1. The Governing Body should improve its contribution to the strategic management of the school (paragraphs 37 and 42) by further developing:
 - its understanding of what makes a school effective;
 - the way it monitors and evaluates school improvement;
 - its approach to planning how the school should respond to uncertain and changing circumstances;
through:
 - seeking further training;
 - making more use of the advice available to the school.
2. The Governing Body, headteacher and staff should:
 - a. further develop ways of identifying and making improvement by:
 - being more self-critical of what it does (paragraphs 37 and 40);
 - giving greater emphasis to the actions that will have most impact on raising standards (paragraphs 37 and 41);and apply these to improving:
 - pupils' knowledge and understanding of extended writing and ICT (paragraphs 93 and 94);
 - the standards achieved by higher-attaining pupils in Key Stage 2 (paragraphs 58, 83 and 94);
 - teaching strategies for managing challenging behaviour and the teaching of aspects of some subjects (paragraphs 58, 71, 84, 94, and 102);
 - annual reports to parents, especially to explain what pupils need to do to improve (paragraph 35).
 - b. improve the accommodation for:
 - pupils in Years 2 and 3 (paragraphs 19 and 43);
 - the library (paragraph 43);
 - the headteacher (paragraph 43).

Other issues that the school should consider are:

- improve resources for ICT (paragraph 96);
- further develop the range of assessments and the use of assessment information (paragraphs 68, 79, 84, 96, and 103);
- fully implement the music curriculum (paragraph 99).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	40
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	38	41	15	3		

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR– Y5
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	2.5	52
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR– Y5
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	9

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.4%
National comparative data	5.4%

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0%
National comparative data	0.5%

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999 (98)	7	5	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	6	7
	Girls	5	4	4
	Total	11	10	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (100)	83 (100)	92 (100)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	6	6
	Girls	5	4	4
	Total	11	10	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (100)	83 (100)	83 (83)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

Figures in brackets relate to 1998

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	52
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y5

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.3
Average class size	16.3

Education support staff: YR – Y5

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	28

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	16

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	150983
Total expenditure	152372
Expenditure per pupil	2796
Balance brought forward from previous year	17376
Balance carried forward to next year	15987

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

52

Number of questionnaires returned

44

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	50			
My child is making good progress in school.	48	48		2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	55			3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	45	39	12	2	2
The teaching is good.	44	47			9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	45	19	5	
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	57	36	2	5	
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	30	5		2
The school works closely with parents.	37	49	7	7	
The school is well led and managed.	35	53			12
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	34	49	5		12
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	42	16		12

Other issues raised by parents

Several letters were received from parents that overall reinforced or expanded on the views expressed by the Parents' Questionnaire. Some concern was expressed by parents at their meeting that more able pupils are sometimes not challenged sufficiently, and that parents are unclear how well their children are progressing compared to what is expected for children of their age. The vast majority of parents at the meeting are pleased with their children's school and believe the staff are easily approachable and welcome parental involvement in the school.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

44. The teaching of children under five is a strength of the school. Children enter part-time into the nursery class in the term after their fourth birthday, and bring with them a range of skills and abilities. They settle quickly into life at school and consistently make very good progress as a result of high quality teaching by the class teacher and nursery nurse, who provide an excellent range and quality of learning experiences. By the time the children are five standards are very high. Most children achieve national expectations in all areas of learning, such as literacy, numeracy and creative development, and the majority exceed this standard. Higher-attaining five year-olds make a seamless move into the work required for Key Stage 1.

Personal and social development

45. Personal and social development underpins all the work in the nursery and reception classes. Children successfully become independent of adults because teachers provide structured sessions through which they gain the skills and experiences necessary for them to do so. Children are confident and willing to take initiative to direct their own learning. For example, they confidently relate to each other and adults, contribute fluently to discussions, and select the resources they wish to use. Routines are well established and this helps the children know what is expected of them. Children share resources, concentrate and persevere for long periods on activities they find engaging. Such activities include singing, dressing and daily routines. They are learning to show respect for the beliefs of others and have an increasing awareness of what is right and wrong. Children are eager to explore and willing to have a go at new activities. The teacher and nursery nurse are good role models and they use their own speech carefully and very effectively to help children develop their own speaking and listening skills.

Language and literacy

46. Children achieve high standards and make very good progress in language and literacy. They are well on course to reach national expectations in their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills, as well as in their understanding of language. Their good English skills help them learn in all other areas of the curriculum. Children listen well and respond to stories with enthusiasm. For example, in the story of the Gingerbread Boy they quickly remembered the chorus “run, run as fast as you can.....” and joined in with vigour. Older children practise their reading skills using phonemes, phonics, initial sounds and number words. They also use their speaking and listening skills to discuss the pictures seen in books and compare them with the written words. Younger children are given tasks carefully matched to their current understanding, to help them practise, consolidate and then extending their learning. Role-play is well planned to provide complementary activities in which children practise their communication skills with each other. Older children are fluent language users and employ a range of skills to read print, and are gaining the writing skills necessary for them to communicate their ideas and understanding. Younger children listen carefully to instructions, quickly understand and then follow them. Personal and social development activities, such as when children add their own actions to “this is the way we...” help prompt the correct use of language and successfully prepare children for more formal learning later.

Mathematics

47. Children make very good progress in mathematics which is helped by their readiness to remember and pronounce mathematical vocabulary. Children recognise patterns and describe them correctly using words such as first, second, third through to last, as when they listed the order of activities necessary to get ready for school. In formal mathematical sessions based on the National Numeracy Strategy children achieve high standards and make very good progress. Older children rapidly count on and back and one high-attaining girl reached 20 on her own. Children identify two and three dimensional shapes and use the correct vocabulary to identify key features. For instance, one group of older children knew that shapes have different numbers of faces and corners, and that this can be used to group shapes as cuboids, cubes, triangles and spheres. Individual children are thoughtfully challenged by their teacher to go as far as they can and this helps them make rapid progress. Children work orally in mathematics and also learn how to record their number work through opportunities to write number sentences and stories. They are expected to make sure that numbers are correctly formed and they can record simple addition in written form. Younger children successfully develop their understanding of number through a range of sorting, matching and ordering activities with play things. They also experiment with weight, volume and capacity during work with water and sand.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

48. Children achieve well and develop a good knowledge and understanding of the world about them. In scientific tasks children achieve high standards, such as when they decided which toys needed pushing and which needed pulling and made observations about each. Older children made predictions and then checked whether they were right, and in so doing began to make simple decisions about whether their test was fair. Children succeeded in this task because their teacher, nursery nurse and classroom assistant helped them record their findings on thoughtfully prepared prompt sheets, and set clear and high expectations for the correct use of vocabulary. Similarly in geography, following a walk round Belton village to take photographs of important buildings, children recalled what they had seen and learned much about their local environment. On this occasion children identified places they had visited and suggested why the buildings were located where they are. For example, children tried to explain why the hotel is at the village centre while the stables are at the edge near fields.

Physical development

49. Children make good progress in developing their fine motor skills, for instance, in putting on and zipping up coats, in accurately using scissors, brushes and pencils. Children also develop their physical skills using large equipment and demonstrate good control such as when moving round the hall or balancing on a bench. Children strive hard to match the best performers in their class because teachers set high standards and work with them to improve. Children work carefully on equipment because teachers give clear non-threatening safety warnings, such as when learning a new sequence of actions using equipment or waiting to take turns. Children understand technical language, respond to instructions such as move under or over, and are starting to evaluate their own and others' work.

Creative development

50. Achievement is good because children are taught very well by the teacher and nursery nurse. Children successfully mix paints and know, for example, that red and white make pink, and use paint with care to represent their ideas. They compose pictures and

prints, for example to reinforce their ideas about thick, thin, long, short and fat, by using a variety of techniques such as printing with sponge, cutting and sticking different papers and fabrics, and using a range of media such as clay, playdough and plasticine. Children use a range of musical instruments to compose tunes and sound effects to illustrate stories and perform them for others. Children also have chance to take part in maypole dancing and acting out of stories.

51. The quality of teaching in the nursery and reception class is very good. Lessons are well structured to encourage children's personal and social development and good habits in working together. The teacher, nursery nurse and classroom assistant know their children well which enables them to reinforce and develop children's skills and give them confidence. A variety of teaching techniques is very effectively used to help children learn, which include questioning, answering children's questions, and direct teaching. Speaking and listening skills are given very strong and appropriate emphasis. Children are frequently told the key words that support tasks they are working on. They are then encouraged to use these words as part of more than one word answers or complete sentences. Staff give plenty of praise as children tackle and complete tasks but do not accept work that is of low quality.

52. The teacher and nursery nurse plan lessons together, which ensures tasks are well focused on what pupils need to learn next. Through her own speech and behaviour the teacher provides a good role model for children. She is especially skilful at refocusing children when their attention lapses and encourages them to persevere and raise their level of concentration. The teacher and nursery nurse set high and realistic expectations for the care and speed with which children should listen and work. They successfully reinforce previous learning, and develop and extend children's skills during pacy and stimulating lessons. Staff are good at looking after the children's welfare and set clear and high expectations for behaviour. They carefully select learning resources so that they interest children and are particularly effective in helping more able pupils learn well. By the end of lessons, the teacher makes sure children recognise the progress they have made.

53. The work of children under the age of five benefits from very good leadership and management. Initial assessments made when children join the school are used effectively by teachers to help plan an appropriate curriculum. Careful records of children's progress are kept. Regular assessment and frequent discussion with children enables teachers to identify small, individual targets that are shared with the children to help them contribute to their own learning.

ENGLISH

54. Standards in national reading tests at the end of Key Stage 1 have improved since the last inspection and have been consistently above the national average for all schools over the last three years. In 1999 pupils' performance in these tests was above that of similar schools. Standards in national writing tests at the end of Key Stage 1 have fallen in recent years from well above average to in line with the average performance of all schools. In 1999 the school's performance in writing was in line with similar schools and similar to that found by the previous inspection. Speaking and listening skills have remained constant and above national expectations in recent years with the skills of listening being stronger than speaking. School targets for pupils' performance in national tests in the year 2000 expect all pupils to achieve at least national expectations in both reading and writing and a third to achieve above this level. The standard of work seen during the inspection indicates good progress towards this target. Most pupils are on schedule to achieve an above average standard in reading and it is likely that standards in

writing will rise from in line with national expectations to above that level by the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in Key Stage 1.

55. The standard of work seen during the inspection indicates that pupils in Year 5 are on schedule to exceed national expectations in reading and at least achieve, and in many cases exceed, national expectations in writing by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils leave Belton Primary School before the end of Key Stage 2 and take the national tests in English in their next school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in Key Stage 2.

56. Pupils' speaking and listening skills throughout the school are good because their very good learning is supported by high quality teaching. For example, pupils in Year 1 are successfully developing logical and clear speech patterns that use a wide range of vocabulary which includes key words from the National Literacy Project. Overall, pupils in Key Stage 1 respond to questions with full answers rather than using a repetitive, limited vocabulary. They know they need to analyse a question to find the exact meaning before formulating an answer, and are consolidating this skill through practice. Pupils in Year 5 display fluency when discussing topics such as mummification in Ancient Egypt, and use a wide range of appropriate vocabulary when discussing experiments in science, describing land features in geography, or enunciating the words to a tune. Key Stage 2 pupils, especially those in Year 5, use a range of hidden and discrete clues to identify different types of book, such as book covers, publicity blurb, illustrations and titles. They read stories silently and out loud to find the answers to specific questions, and discuss the content and compare orally one text with another.

57. Throughout the school the systematic teaching of reading skills is leading to good attainment and very good learning. Year 1 pupils are taught to decode unknown words using phonemes, phonics and the context of the text, and by searching for key vocabulary, word patterns and compound words. These young pupils are good at finding patterns in their reading such as similar sounding words. For example, the word jump in a story led to a pupil giving the examples lump and clump to show he understood the pattern. Pupils know the meaning of words and can suggest alternatives. For example, one girl found the word plump in the story of the gingerbread boy and was able to give words such as chubby, fat and round to demonstrate she knew what plump meant. These young readers are confident, self-correcting and fluent, and they use expression when they read aloud. They are able to discuss story plots, identify common points, such as well known choruses' like "I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house down", and identify and discuss their favourite parts of a story. By Year 2 the standard of higher attainers' reading is above national expectations. These pupils are able to identify characters, describe them using vocabulary from the story and add their own description, and select adjectives from the text or speech to emphasise special features of a character. They have developed word-decoding skills such as the use of phonics, phonemes and the analysis of sentence structure. Higher attainers read on and back, and use other contextual clues such as exclamation, speech and question marks to help them read with understanding. Year 5 pupils have already reached the national expectations in reading for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. They use a high level of decoding and reading skills; for example, they use their good sight vocabulary that is based on the key words of the literacy strategy, and read for a wide range of purposes. They use advanced reading skills to research texts in the library in order to identify and précis the work of others. They read fact and fiction with equal fluency and can discuss and compare books with similar themes written by a range of authors. Pupils' good reading skills help them learn well in other subjects, especially in history, geography and science.

58. The standards of writing are in line with national expectations and overall pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. The standard of pupils' writing skills, such as grammar and punctuation, are higher than the standard of their extended writing, in which pupils are expected to apply their skills to write, for example, stories or letters. This difference is most marked for more able pupils in Key Stage 2. The school has identified that boys perform less well in writing than girls. Pupils successfully use their writing skills for a variety of purposes such as constructing sentences, making compound words, undertaking handwriting exercises and spelling checks. They also analyse factual texts, look for information and then summarise what they have found in paragraphs. Pupils write news for themselves, and retell stories, but do not have enough opportunities to undertake extended writing. In the work seen during the inspection there was little evidence of pupils writing a first draft, assessing it for spelling, grammar and content and then reworking and extending it so that it matches its purpose and target audience. A little of the work seen suggested pupils might have these the skills but do not make use of them regularly enough. For example, when given opportunity to plan their own extended writing, more able pupils in Years 4 and 5 attained high standards. Pupils make satisfactory use of ICT to present some of their writing, such as poems and historical research.

59. In most lessons pupils enjoy their English work and respond well to the tasks set. They settle quickly, listen carefully, work hard and sustain their concentration. They are enthusiastic, especially when correcting their teacher's "mistakes", and have good relationships with the adults who help them learn. Most are confident when talking to their teachers and when asking questions. They listen carefully to instructions and listen to each other politely. When working independently they stay on task and co-operate well when sharing resources or when working together on spellings and other group tasks. Pupils are not afraid to experiment with known or new vocabulary and willingly try out words to give expression to their thoughts. A few Year 2 boys lose concentration towards the end of lessons. At these times they chatter, do not listen well to each other, give repetitive answers to questions and sometimes disturb other pupils. Teachers are usually quick to respond to this misbehaviour but it does handicap the learning of these boys.

60. The high quality of teaching, especially the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, is impacting very positively upon pupils' learning. The quality of teaching is very good in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. No unsatisfactory English teaching was observed. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection. Throughout the school teachers are adept at organising the step-by-step reinforcement and development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills, such as book construction, text analysis and sentence construction grammar. They skilfully match tasks to meet pupil's individual needs and make a prompt start to lessons and set a brisk but appropriate pace throughout. Teachers have good knowledge of the English and literacy curriculum and set high academic expectations. By sharing lesson objectives with them, they make clear to pupils that by the end of the lesson they will know more or be able to do more such as, today they will learn how to predict from stories, construct compound words or produce character profiles. Teachers use interesting and effective teaching strategies, such as bringing characters to life as they read stories, and then encourage pupils to try for themselves different voices and speeds. The teachers' own enthusiasm encourages pupils to experiment with vocabulary, speak clearly, listen carefully and read with clarity and interest. Teachers make good use of adult helpers, such as the nursery nurse and classroom assistant, to improve the learning of younger and less able pupils. Even when working with small groups of pupils, teachers are usually very aware of how well the rest of the class is progressing. The best teaching occurs when teachers use pupils' everyday experiences to support language development, which happened when pupil's work, done at home, was used to create an enjoyable, impromptu language support session.

61. The implementation of the National Literacy Project is effective and English benefits from very good leadership and management. Overall the school has made good improvement since the previous inspection. The co-ordinator shares her skills with staff and is very effective in supporting the development of literacy within the school. Staff training has been successful and the co-ordinator has matched the good level of resources to the curriculum, and organised the library to support the development of pupils' independent researching skills. There are effective systems for assessing pupils' progress which enable realistic targets to be set for individual pupils and for the development of literacy across the school. The school has established good home-school links for literacy; for example, pupils and their parents are encouraged to undertake a suitable range and quantity of tasks at home to support but not necessarily repeat what is happening within class.

MATHEMATICS

62. Standards in mathematics are high throughout the school, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils' performance in national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 has improved since the last inspection. Results in these tests are consistently well above the performance of all schools in recent years, and well above the standard achieved by similar schools in 1999. The standard of pupils' work in Key Stage 2 is in line with expectations for their age and for many significantly above that level. Almost all pupils are on schedule to meet or exceed national expectations by the end of Key Stage 2.

63. Pupils' overall achievement in mathematics is good and there is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils on the school's register of special educational needs learn very well and make good and sometimes very good progress because teachers make sure work is matched to their needs and is challenging. Many pupils with special educational needs are near to or are achieving national expectations for their age. For example, one pupil was helped to tell the time using a range of different approaches through which he came close to achieving as well as others in his year group. More able pupils usually achieve well and sometimes very well in mathematics, especially at Key Stage 1. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. For example, several Year 1 pupils confidently identified and named three dimensional shapes by touch, such as cuboids and cones, and described their properties in terms of faces and points.

64. There is a no noticeable difference in pupils' achievement in the different areas of mathematics. Pupils achieve well using number, handling data, and working with shapes, and are able to apply these mathematical skills to solve problems for themselves. Key Stage 1 pupils have a good grasp of mathematical words and most are making good progress in learning how to add, subtract and multiply, and are beginning to use simple division. Higher attaining pupils confidently use multiplication and division with numbers up to and sometimes beyond 20. The majority of older pupils in Key stage 2 are able to, for example, divide thousands by single digit numbers, use simple fractions and recognise negative numbers, such as when measuring temperature. While pupils on the register of special educational needs achieve similarly, higher attainers confidently use more complex numbers and know, for example, how fractions are converted to decimals and use and multiply decimals to two places. The vast majority of pupils are on schedule to meet the National Numeracy Targets for their year group ahead of time, and a significant proportion are likely to achieve targets for older age groups.

65. Pupils have a good knowledge of the vocabulary of mathematics and this is particularly strong in Year 1. They are able to plot bar charts and line graphs with confidence, such as when low attainers in Years 4 and 5, prompted by their teacher,

successfully plotted how many library books has been borrowed on different days of the week. Most pupils are able to interpret graphical data. Pupils make good progress in data handling because teachers provide them with a good range of opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to present data in other subjects such as science and geography. Much of this work is successfully carried out using computers which are used effectively in mathematics to reinforce and encourage pupils' learning. Mental mathematics is good overall, although some lack confidence when asked to recall quickly tables or number facts.

66. The quality of mathematics teaching ranges from very good to satisfactory. Overall it is very good in Key Stage 1 and good in Key stage 2. Teachers are good at planning lessons to the National Numeracy framework, but they adapt it so that they meet the needs of different pupils while providing stimulating and challenging activities. High expectations of academic performance are set in all lessons and pupils thrive on the opportunities provided to talk about mathematical ideas and solve problems for themselves. This happened when Years 2 and 3 pupils discussed how to use Venn diagrams to explore patterns in even numbers when they are divided by different units. In most lessons teachers assume pupils will behave well and they do so without prompting. Occasionally the strategies used to manage the behaviour of a few Year 2 boys are ineffective for longer than a few minutes. Teachers set very high expectations for pupil independence and pupils respond well to this. For example, Years 4 and 5 pupils worked unprompted for an extended period to investigate the frequency with which dice numbers came up, tallied the data and then plotted an appropriate graph.

67. Strong emphasis is given to pupils using mathematical terms correctly and this gives them confidence to do so for themselves, such as when Year 1 pupils tried hard to describe a ball as a sphere, despite having obvious difficulty in pronouncing the word. Numeracy lessons make good use of the National Numeracy Strategy and some are very effective because teachers ask a varied range of probing questions in rapid succession, and listen carefully to and build upon pupils' answers. A good amount and variety of interesting homework is set with tasks for different abilities that reinforce and further develop pupils' mathematical skills. On occasions some homework tasks have been insufficiently challenging for higher attainers.

68. Mathematics benefits from good management by the co-ordinator and this has helped the school make good progress in implementing the National Numeracy Strategy. Good advantage has been taken of locally prepared interpretations of the numeracy framework to improve lesson planning. An effective system is in place for assessing pupils' progress and the information gained is shared informally with staff. Pupils' answers to national test papers have been carefully analysed to identify those aspects of mathematics they find difficult. This information has been used to inform lesson planning and enables teachers to set appropriate targets for individual pupils that in relevant cases link closely to targets in their individual education plans. As yet these procedures have not embraced the analysis of optional national tests used in Year 4, or the setting of individual pupil targets that include a mix of comfortably achievable targets and those which make very high demands. Resources for mathematics are sufficient to meet needs of the planned curriculum and have been recently enhanced by a substantial contribution from the Friends of Belton School. While staff share opinions about their success in implementing the National Numeracy Strategy, the co-ordinator recognises that there is insufficient opportunity for teachers to learn from observing each other teach.

SCIENCE

69. Standards in science are high throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, which is a significant

improvement since the previous inspection. The vast majority of pupils meet or exceed national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1 and those in Key Stage 2 are on schedule to do so by the time they reach the end of the key stage. Pupils on the school's register of special educational needs achieve standards close to those expected for their age. A high proportion of pupils achieve standards above what is expected for their age in most aspects of science.

70. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls and, overall, pupils make good progress in each of the areas of science. Pupils make good progress in learning a scientific vocabulary, especially in Key Stage 1, because teachers give great importance to this and use scientific words carefully themselves. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of science. For example, Year 1 pupils recognise that push and pull forces cause different things to happen, and can identify the similarities and differences between animals. Years 2 and 3 pupils know how to make simple series electric circuits and can represent them using circuit symbols. Most children on the register of special educational needs achieve at a similar level, while higher attainers, in response to teacher prompts, successfully extend their work, for example, into parallel circuits, which is well above what is expected for their age. Pupils are good at applying their scientific knowledge and understanding to explain their observations. This is because teachers begin each new topic by helping pupils learn the main scientific concepts and then give strong emphasis to the application of these ideas. For example, Year 5 pupils carefully and correctly worked out and wrote about why creatures live in their particular habitats. Pupils make good use of their writing skills in science, either to record their findings or explain their ideas, such as when Year 1 pupils wrote sentences about how their toy moved and why.

71. Pupils make good progress in developing investigation skills and in learning how to plan investigations for themselves, which is a good improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers expect pupils from an early age to observe carefully and record what they see. This enables, for example, Year 2 pupils to record the growth stages of a bulb using a series of accurate labelled drawings. Most pupils have a good awareness of what 'fair testing' means by the end of Key Stage 1 and then build on this in Key Stage 2. This awareness is achieved because teachers give pupils clear instruction and then provide time and encouragement for them to work out how to manage investigations for themselves. For example, Year 5 pupils can confidently identify what to change, what to measure and what to keep the same in order to make investigations fair, such as when investigating how sugar dissolves or how to find out which rock is hardest. Higher attaining pupils make good progress, such as in Years 2 and 3 when a group planned their own investigation into magnet strength, made predictions and prepared a results table before starting. While much of the pupils' investigation work, especially that of the higher attainers in Years 4 and 5, is of a high standard, some gives insufficient attention to describing the patterns shown in data and explaining why things happen.

72. Teachers plan good links between science and other subjects. This enables pupils to use mathematics and ICT effectively in science. For example, pupils often take measurements and then record and present their results as tables and in graphs. In Key Stage 2 pupils use computer sensors, for example, to record and graph the temperature of drinks as they cool in different surroundings.

73. While few science lessons were observed, these lessons and work samples show that the overall quality of science teaching is good in Key Stages 1 and 2, and sometimes very good. Pupils make good progress in science because teachers know the subject well and provide a good range of tasks that set high expectations for scientific knowledge,

understanding and investigation. Pupils enjoy their science lessons. They listen carefully to what they are asked to do and work hard at meeting the challenges set. For example higher attaining Years 2 and 3 pupils worked hard when planning their own investigations into magnets, while lower attainers, including pupils with special educational needs, collaborated well with the teacher to sort out how they would test the strength of different magnets.

74. Science is very well led and managed by the co-ordinator who has a good understanding of the science national curriculum. She is well informed of the many strengths and few weaknesses in science teaching and learning in the school. A helpful scheme of work is complemented by an effective system for assessing and recording pupils' achievement in individual portfolios. These are good improvements since the previous inspection. A very well presented and thoroughly assessed reference set of work samples has been prepared to demonstrate the high standards that the school achieves. Samples of work are analysed to identify what pupils can and cannot do well and the information gained is used well to inform lesson planning. There are sufficient resources for science but the small classroom for Years 2 and 3 pupils makes it difficult for the pupils and the teacher to organise and manage practical group investigations easily.

ART

75. Work seen during the inspection shows that pupils in Key Stage 1, including those with special educational needs, make at least satisfactory progress and many, especially younger pupils, make good progress. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils have sufficient manual dexterity to match what they do to criteria; for instance, they hold and tear paper into the shapes required such as long and thin, and short and fat strips. They use their knowledge of colour and texture to blend colours and paper to make interesting shapes. Pupils are developing patterning skills and can construct printing blocks and use them in their work on repetitive printing. Pupils successfully mix paint of different colours and match materials to produce a finished piece of work. Their painting often reflects the style of different painters or represents their own ideas based on themes from other subjects such as characters from stories. Pupils work in a range of materials including clay and dough, and, for example, use textiles, raffia's and straws in their collage work. Pupils also use pencil techniques for close observational study and drawing. They are encouraged to analyse their own work, and that of others in their classes, and appreciate the work of famous artists such as Picasso.

76. The work of Key Stage 2 pupils seen during the inspection shows they make satisfactory progress. Their sketch books show that they are developing fine control skills through using pencil sketching to practise shading and highlighting. Pupils know that blending colours can reproduce special effects. For example, when investigating the styles of Matisse and Monet, they found that the addition of black and white to colours can produce different tones and tints. Pupils use their knowledge from other subjects to support their artwork and apply the skills learned in art to other curriculum areas. For instance, in history pupils have studied the colours and forms used by ancient Egyptians, and have experimented with metallic paints in order to construct the required colours and textures for this period. Key Stage 2 pupils evaluate their own and others' work and successfully develop different painting techniques from watching others at work and experimenting for themselves.

77. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 concentrate well and, for example, younger pupils enjoyed being able to "make a mess". Pupils concentrate, persevere and take responsibility

for their own work and most produce work that matches what the teacher wanted. When required, pupils practise, experiment and problem solve sensibly without feeling the need to produce a finished product, and are proud of being able to complete tasks successfully. Most pupils use resources independently and, for instance, obtain what they need and tidy away appropriately. Older Key Stage 2 pupils in particular enjoy being allowed to work independently for long periods and show initiative, for example, when selecting colours, brushes and fabrics. Throughout the school pupils have good relationships with teachers and each other which makes it easier for them to be self-critical and be prepared to rework what they have done in order to improve.

78. Only two art lessons were observed during the inspection and, overall, these were satisfactorily taught. These lessons and samples of pupils' work show that teachers at both key stages carefully plan the step-by-step development of art skills as well as use art to support other areas of the curriculum. They demonstrate skills well and share their enthusiasm for art with pupils. Teachers use an appropriate vocabulary and give careful descriptions of what they want and what pupils need to do to complete their tasks and learn. Teachers give pupils opportunities to practise at each stage of their skill development and help reinforce skills by reminding of pupils how to do tasks. For instance, younger pupils were reminded how to use a glue spreader, while older pupils were shown the skills necessary for fine painting with metallic paints. Teachers make effective use of supporting adults because they brief them carefully about tasks and expected outcomes. They manage and organise pupils well by providing them with appropriate resources and encouraging them to gain confidence when working on their own. Teachers have a thorough knowledge of art and this enables them to adapt tasks to make them more challenging for faster learners who then skilfully move ahead of the majority in their class.

79. Resources for art are sufficient and well stored. A kiln enables pupils to work with clay, fire what they have made and try out a range of glazes for decoration. The art co-ordinator has a clear understanding of how art should develop and ensures that resources match the scheme of work appropriately. There is no formal system for assessing and recording pupils' progress in art.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

80. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 are making satisfactory and sometimes better progress in most aspects of design and technology. In lessons, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well because teachers have recently begun to make effective use of a national scheme of work. As a result, the standard of pupils' designing has improved rapidly compared to the skills shown by earlier samples of their work. Work samples also show that pupils are making better progress in developing their making skills in a range of materials, such as by giving more attention to measuring and marking out before cutting.

81. In Key Stage 1 pupils recognise that products are made for a purpose and that the materials they are made from must be suitable. For example, Year 1 pupils explored levers and talked about how they work, what they are used for, and why they need to be made of strong materials. Years 2 and 3 pupils have begun to appreciate that their designs should match what the product is intended to do. For example, most knew that their design drawings of vehicles should include the special features they had already identified. Older pupils can confidently state a few design criteria for products they are designing and making, but often these lack sufficient detail. For example, while Years 4 and 5 pupils knew that the boxes they were designing should hold coins pushed into them through a slot, they had not thought about how many coins the box should hold or how the hole size would

determine the type of coin they could store. The standard of design drawing has improved during the school year. Key Stage 1 pupils' drawings now more clearly represent their design intentions and reflect their chosen special design features and include labels. Many Years 4 and 5 pupils now make their ideas very clear through drawings and use several drawings to improve on their original design ideas. For example, several pupils added labels, dimensions and tabs to their outline scale drawings for a coin box net after first sketching what their box might look like. A pupil with special educational needs also created a plan for a net adding labels and dimensions, but did not use a ruler to make the lines as straight as they needed to be. Pupils' designing has improved since the previous inspection.

82. Pupils make products to a satisfactory and sometimes good standard using a range of materials, such as food, fabrics, clay and card. Pupils cut card with reasonable accuracy to create, for example, a bridge from card boxes and other materials, or sliders that can be used to display different weather conditions in a card window. Pupils know how to join materials and do so successfully, for example, by using tabs on card boxes or by hand sewing seams to make a fabric purse. Pupils, especially those in Years 4 and 5, have begun to list the resources and tools they need and plan the order of doing jobs before starting to make products. They are confident in using equipment such as craft knives, closely supervised by teachers, and know that they need to mark out where they need to cut before doing so. Pupils consider their design ideas and whether their designs match what they intended, and sometimes they suggest improvements to their products, such as how to improve the fastening on a purse. However, generally pupils do not give sufficient attention to evaluating their final product by comparing it with the design criteria.

83. Three lessons were observed during the inspection, the teaching of which ranged from very good to satisfactory. The overall quality of teaching is good in both key stages, which is similar to the previous inspection. Teachers make effective use of a national scheme of work to improve the quality of their teaching. Lesson tasks are made interesting to pupils and focus on key designing and making skills, such as improving the identification of design criteria and drawing. High expectations are usually set and good emphasis is given to pupils applying new skills for themselves. Appropriate opportunities are provided for pupils to plan and manage their own design and make projects, especially for those in Years 4 and 5, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. Occasionally teachers do not maintain consistently good behaviour among a small minority of Year 2 boys, or set insufficiently high expectations, such as in the detail of design criteria to be used by higher attaining pupils.

84. Design and technology is well led and managed by the co-ordinator who has enabled a range of improvements to design and technology teaching since the previous inspection. A new scheme of work is being successfully implemented across the school. This scheme is helping teachers improve their knowledge and understanding of the subject. However, further guidance is necessary, for example, to help teachers learn a variety of skills and techniques so that pupils can be given choice, such as when fixing wheels and axles to vehicles. While the co-ordinator is aware of many of the strengths and weaknesses in design and technology, the system for assessing and recording what pupils can and cannot do is confined to a portfolio of pupils' work. Resources for design and technology are satisfactory, but the accommodation for Years 2 and 3 pupils makes it difficult for the teacher and pupils to plan and manage independent and group practical work.

GEOGRAPHY

85. Overall, pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress. Strong emphasis is given to

the development of pupils' geographical language and the use of secondary evidence, such as photographs, to develop their observational and analytical skills. Pupils are able to recognise similarities and changes in land use by looking at photographs, and can locate landmarks from different perspectives. Pupils in Key Stage 2 make satisfactory progress overall, while some, especially younger pupils, make good progress. When carrying out research, these pupils combine the knowledge they gain from meeting local people with the information they extract from secondary evidence. They also look at the same physical features from different angles and planes and recognise changes that occur over time. Pupils consider the most appropriate method for communicating the information they have gathered and, for example, decide whether it is better to use oral, written or note format to recording their observations.

86. Pupils are keen to look at aerial photographs and maps. They enjoy identifying their school and homes as well as other features that they have only seen previously from ground level. Pupils willingly discuss what they have seen, for example, during a walk round Belton village, and ask questions and suggest answers to questions raised by others. Pupils are enthusiastic learners, quickly picking up new geographical language and they are proud of what they achieve. They work hard, take responsibility for their own work, persevere and concentrate well. Pupils co-operate well when using photographs and other resources.

87. Two geography lessons, for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 were observed during the inspection. The teaching of these lessons ranged from good to satisfactory and was good overall which is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers have a good knowledge of geography and Belton village and use this well to support pupils' learning, especially to develop their geographical language and observational skills. They set high expectations and plan challenging learning tasks that are based on a recently introduced national scheme of work for geography. Appropriate teaching strategies are chosen, lessons are brisk, and very effective use is made of discussion to help pupils learn. Most teachers manage pupils well, organise resources effectively and make good use of adults who work with them in the classroom. Teachers assess the quality of pupils' answers to questions and respond by formulating new questions to challenge them and match work to their individual needs.

88. Geography is satisfactorily led and managed and adequately resourced. The curriculum is appropriately focused on using practical activities to develop pupils' skills. For example, pupils' work shows they have begun to develop map reading skills, and they have carried out investigations into environmental issues, recycling and made and considered suggestions for improving the local area. Overall there have been satisfactory improvements in geography since the previous inspection.

HISTORY

89. Overall, pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress in history, and many make good progress. Pupils are developing their research skills, especially their ability to explore the differences between traditions passed on by word of mouth and those recorded by writing, photographs and artefacts. Pupils are learning what it is like to be an historian. Even the youngest pupils understand the value of secondary sources and recognise the bias that first hand accounts of events can give, and the need to consider other opinions as well. Pupils are able to link real events to fictional accounts. For instance they made connections between photographs and accounts of the second world war blitz to their reading book "Blitz" from literacy lessons. Pupils use artefacts and other resources to help them answer questions about the past. Older pupils make good progress in

understanding chronology, for example, by the recognising that past times have similarities as well as differences while learning about life in Ancient Egypt.

90. Pupils have positive attitudes to history. They work hard on the tasks teachers provide, concentrate well, persevere and stay on task for long periods. Pupils ask questions of teachers and actively seek answers in other ways. For example, they make sensible use of a range of resources to help them learn, and enjoy using computer programmes to seek additional information. Pupils reflect upon their learning and older pupils at Key Stage 2 check the accuracy of what they have found by returning to other texts to confirm or reject their hypotheses. Pupils work enthusiastically and take pride in achieving what they are asked to do.

91. Two history lessons for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 were observed during the inspection and both were taught very well. Teachers have a good knowledge of history and are clear about what the curriculum requires them to teach. They set high expectations and are effective in planning the development of skills and appropriate assessment opportunities. Teachers select appropriate learning approaches to match the different ages and prior learning of pupils. Most lessons have a brisk pace and teachers manage and organise pupils well. Teachers know how to phrase questions so that they challenge pupils, and how to help older pupils learn techniques to carry out historical investigations.

92. History is satisfactorily led and managed. The history curriculum is appropriately focused on developing pupils' research skills and knowledge of historical language. Appropriate emphasis is given to encouraging pupils to use a range of resources and artefacts to identify key elements of life in the past and compare them with life today. This broad and balanced mixture of skills and facts is well planned to support pupils learning and an improvement since the previous inspection.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

93. Standards in information technology are satisfactory and in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1. Overall, pupils in Years 3 to 5 are achieving what is expected for their age, and are on schedule to meet national expectations by the end of Key Stage 2. However, standards in Key Stage 2 vary between aspects of ICT. For example, standards in word processing are satisfactory and work using spreadsheets and sensors to measure temperature is of a high standard. In contrast, standards in drawing and desk top publishing, in which pupils are expected to combine text and images such as drawings or graphs, are unsatisfactory, especially for higher attaining pupils in Years 4 and 5. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Overall standards in ICT are little different to that described by the previous inspection.

94. Most pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 achieve satisfactorily in ICT, including pupils on the school's register of special educational needs. Overall pupils make stronger progress in Key Stage 1 and Year 3 than in Years 4 and 5. Much achievement in ICT is good, such as in lessons and work on spreadsheets and graphing. However, achievement varies between aspects of ICT in Years 4 and 5, and those of higher attainment do not make as much progress as they should. Pupils' progress in word processing is satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2 and they are able to lay out text to match its purpose. For example, Year 1 pupils write short stories and poetry while pupils in Years 4 and 5 record information they have researched in history. While there are examples of children combining text with drawings, such as when Years 2 and 3 pupils made Christmas cards, overall, pupils make insufficient progress in desk top publishing. In the main this is because teachers are still learning how to use this software and the computers available to Years 4 and 5 pupils are not well suited to this type of work. There is good achievement for the vast majority of pupils in using spreadsheets to record data and present it graphically. This happens because teachers are good at teaching pupils how to use spreadsheet software and they provide many opportunities for pupils to apply these skills in a range of subjects. For example, pupils in Years 2 and 3 have presented graphically the results of their bird spotting. Pupils effectively and independently use CD ROMs to locate information, such as for historical research. Years 4 and 5 pupils have begun to learn how to phrase questions to find the information they want from a database, such as whether there is any relationship between the eye colour and height of humans. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and Year 2 successfully create recognisable drawings using computers, such as pictures of the four seasons for a calendar. However, older pupils do not build on these skills and consequently make insufficient progress in this aspect of ICT. Key Stage 2 pupils confidently talk about how they have used sensors to measure and record changes, like the temperature of liquids as they cool.

95. Pupils use computers confidently and collaborate well in groups when doing so. They work for extended periods on their own without prompting or guidance in order to complete tasks set by the teacher. The school has correctly identified ICT as a priority for development and as a result teachers are learning new skills and basing their lessons on a new scheme of work, as suggested by the previous inspection. This approach is working effectively. Two ICT lessons were observed at Key Stages 1 and 2 and the teaching was of good quality and clearly made good use of recent training and guidance. Teachers phrase questions well so that pupils have to think carefully before answering, and they gradually make tasks more challenging as lessons progress. For example, Years 4 and 5 pupils began by recalling how to manipulate a database about people and their characteristics in response to the teacher's questions. They were then encouraged to ask simple questions, such as 'How many girls are there?' and then move on to explore relationships such as 'Do people with brown hair always have brown eyes?' More challenging questions were posed

for those who had already worked out answers to easier questions. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to use ICT to complement work in other subjects, and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. For example, a young pupil with special educational needs was allowed to use a computer in order to sustain his interest and motivation while older pupils were allowed to decide for themselves when to seek information from CD ROMs.

96. ICT is well led and managed by the co-ordinator and additional emphasis has been given to this subject as suggested by the previous inspection. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the strengths of ICT within the school and knows what needs to be done to improve standards. A well organised portfolio of pupils' work is being prepared which is helping focus improvement on the weaker aspects of their ICT. A system for assessing and recording pupils' progress is in the early stages of development and the co-ordinator recognises it needs further development. There are good arrangements for staff training which are already helping improve the quality of ICT teaching. A clear and well considered long term development plan for ICT is in place. This plan gives appropriate emphasis to improving the quantity and quality of hardware and software which is unsatisfactory because it is limiting the school's ability to implement its scheme of work in full. For example, the development of desk top publishing, e-mail and internet use is being impeded by a lack of sufficient and suitable ICT equipment.

MUSIC

97. Although no lessons were observed during the inspection, singing in assembly, school documentation, teachers' plans and discussions with pupils indicate that pupils are making satisfactory progress in music. Pupils are given opportunities to compose music using a range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments, and older pupils learn to play the recorder as a class. They study the various components of music such as pitch, harmony, tempo, and dynamics. Pupils listen to and appraise the work of others in their class and the music of famous composers such as Debussy. Younger pupils learn a range of nursery rhymes and action songs, and all pupils learn how to sing together.

98. Pupils are able to recall some of the musical activities they have covered previously; for example, they remember playing the recorder and using keyboards. Pupils reflect on their work, including how well they sang in class or as a whole school. They apply their understanding and recognition of pitch and tempo to other areas of music making. Pupils use resources appropriately and can identify a range of percussion instruments and talk about how they have used them in their own compositions.

99. There have been improvements in music since the last inspection; for example, singing is now taught regularly. The music curriculum is broad and balanced and provides opportunities to develop personal performing skills as well as acquiring knowledge and understanding of the performance and compositional skills of others. However, it has yet to be implemented in full.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

100. Overall pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 in the aspects of physical education observed during the inspection. However, their progress differs from class to class because of variations in the quality of teaching. Some pupils, especially those in Year 1, make good progress and reach standards above those expected for their age. The vast majority of pupils are able to swim 25 meters unaided by the time they leave the school. School teams meet with considerable success in local events such as cross-

country, football and netball competitions.

101. Many Key Stage 1 pupils, especially those in Year 1, listen carefully and respond very well to instructions and understand that it is important to warm up and cool down carefully when exercising. These pupils have developed good balancing skills and some develop their own imaginative and challenging balance positions, such as balancing on a bench with arms and legs out stretched. They are able to put together sequences of movements and are very good at watching others perform, learning from what they see when helped by teachers, and using these ideas to improve their own movement through practice. Years 4 and 5 pupils demonstrate similar ability to follow instructions and learn from techniques demonstrated by the teacher and develop their skills through practice. This happened when they improved their techniques for accurately placing balls and bean bags using hands, feet and hockey sticks, following demonstrations by their teacher. Most pupils work purposefully on their own or in pairs for long periods without teacher intervention. In contrast, while Years 2 and 3 pupils have some of the skills demonstrated by younger and older pupils, the quality of their performance is much lower and their concentration and work rate far less consistent. For example, some are slow to respond to instructions and a significant proportion do not put enough effort into improving their performance having observed others demonstrate, for example, a sequence of movements.

102. The quality of physical education teaching ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. Overall, it is satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2 and there are many features that have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils learn very well when teachers set high expectations in terms of their response to instructions, learning from observing what others demonstrate, and working hard on their own to practise their skills. This occurred for Year 1 pupils when the teacher set a brisk but appropriate pace throughout the lesson, helped them see the good things in the movements created by others, and gave them personal ideas about what to do to improve. Clear instruction, varied activities and good attention to the needs of low attainers and those with special educational needs are a feature of most teaching, such as when a nervous pupil held the teachers hand and took full part in a warm up activity. Most of the time pupils behave very well, show considerable interest in improving their performance, and work well with partners, such as when Years 4 and 5 girls kicked balls to each other through a narrow gap. Occasionally pupils lose interest, do not strive hard enough to improve and do not seem interested in achieving high standards. This occurs when the teacher lacks sufficient understanding of how to help pupils learn new skills, such as watching others work and using what they see to improve their own performance.

103. Physical education is satisfactorily led and managed and has improved since the previous inspection. The scheme of work meets National Curriculum requirements. It has been improved since the previous inspection and now makes clear what pupils need to achieve. There is a good range of extra-curricular sporting activity for a small school and a good proportion of staff and pupils are involved in them. A system is in place to assess and record pupils' progress in physical education but it has yet to be consistently implemented across the school. The co-ordinator knows the strengths and weakness in physical education and recognises that, while much training has been provided, more is needed to ensure all teachers know how to help pupils improve their physical education skills. While resources for physical education are good and they are well organised, their storage remains a problem, which has not changed since the previous inspection. The school has good accommodation for physical education, especially the school field, but the location of the library in the hall means teachers have to be particularly careful when managing energetic activity, such as when pupils run around to warm up.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

104. Pupil's learning in Key Stages 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall and younger pupils, especially those in Year 1, make good progress. Pupils in Key Stage 1 learn to consider and express their feelings towards those who look after them and know some of the stories and events in the life of Jesus. Older pupils consider concepts such as God as a caring Father and, for example, illustrate their understanding by using examples from their own lives of people caring for them. At both key stages pupils reflect upon the concept of living a faith. They consolidate their skills for using language to convey meaning and feelings, and give respect to names and characters such as their parents and God.

105. Pupils take their work in religious education seriously. They work hard and concentrate well so that they have good recall of what they learned in earlier lessons. Pupils enjoy practical tasks and take pride in completing activities, such as when Key Stage 2 pupils cut out hand shapes and wrote about those who are important to them. Key Stage 1 pupils proudly present their work to others in their class, especially those younger than they are. Pupils reflect on what they learn and enjoy considering the deeper meaning of what they study. They use resources independently and respect the work of others. A strong feature of lessons, which helps pupils learn effectively, is the positive relationships they have with teachers and other adults who work with them.

106. Only one complete religious education lesson was observed during the inspection and it benefited from good quality teaching. Lesson plans and pupils' work shows that teachers have a secure knowledge of religious education. Teachers take care to be accurate when telling faith stories and stress belief as well as the facts of a faith. They have a good understanding of how to structure lessons and tasks so that pupils of different backgrounds and prior learning are helped to think about their relationships with each other and with God. Teachers have high standards and expect pupils to develop sensitivity to each other's needs and beliefs. Lessons are securely based on the scheme of work, which meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Teachers ensure tasks remain firmly focused on religious education rather than, for example, giving too much emphasis to English or art, and assess pupils' progress against religious education criteria. Religious education is well managed, makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral education, and has improved satisfactorily since the previous inspection.