

INSPECTION REPORT

OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL

Sleaford

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique Reference Number: 120609

Inspection Number: 188136

Headteacher: Mr A Weldon

Reporting inspector: Mrs M. Hirst

11177

Dates of inspection: 7th – 9th December 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707586

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
Type of control:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	The Drove Sleaford Lincolnshire NE34 7AT
Telephone number:	01529 304373
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Bertold Weidmann
Date of previous inspection:	18 th – 22 nd March 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs M Hirst Rgl	Science Design & technology Music	Attainment and progress Teaching Leadership and management Efficiency of the school Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community Curriculum and assessment
Mr G Braddick – Lay inspector		
Mrs G Dunkling – team inspector	Equal opportunities Under fives English History Geography	
Mr J Pryor – team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Information and communications technology Art Physical education	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

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MAIN FINDINGS

On entry to the reception class children under five attain standards that are above those expected for their age.

What the school does well

- By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils attain standards that are well above the national average in English, mathematics and science.
- By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils attain standards that are above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils attain above average standards in information technology, history, geography, music and physical education.
- Teaching is good or better in 80 per cent of lessons.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- The school develops very good attitudes to learning in its pupils and they behave very well.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership. This is a strength of the school.
- There is a very caring and supportive ethos and a commitment to providing the best for pupils, including a determination to achieve high standards.
- Relationships are very good and this promotes good progress.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. The curriculum for children under five is too narrow.

This is a very effective school with many strengths. The strengths far outweigh the weaknesses. It is a very happy and orderly community with no curriculum weaknesses in Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2. The weakness identified will form the basis of the governors' action plan which will be sent to all parents and guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made significant improvements since the last inspection. Pupils achieve the standards of which they are capable. Teachers set them challenging work, well matched to their abilities. They have reviewed strategies to extend the range of pupils' writing and standards have improved as a result. There is a positive team approach to decision making involving all staff in the management of the curriculum and its review. Effective procedures are in place for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. The school has improved the quality of education in art. Displays are interactive and colourful, providing an environment that is stimulating and a good resource for learning. With the appointment of a special educational needs co-ordinator all pupils have good provision and make good progress. Every pupil is well known to the staff and has individual targets. The most significant issue to be addressed is to provide a more suitable curriculum for children under five. The good quality of this school's management means that it is very well placed to continue to make improvements.

· **Standards in subjects**

· This table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1999 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools		Key
			<i>well above average</i>	<i>A</i>
			<i>above average</i>	<i>B</i>
			<i>average</i>	<i>C</i>
			<i>below average</i>	<i>D</i>
			<i>well below average</i>	<i>E</i>
English	A	A		
Mathematics	A	A		
Science	A	A		

The table shows that by the age of 11, pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science is well above the level found in schools nationally and is also well above the level achieved in schools with similar intakes. These results have significantly improved from the previous year. The school achieved beyond the targets it had set for itself. Inspection findings confirm these statistics. They also confirm that standards are above average in information technology, music, history, geography and physical education by the end of Key Stage 2. The very good progress made overall by pupils indicates that the school adds significant value to their primary education.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in	Under 5	5 – 7 years	7 – 11 years
English	Satisfactory	Good	Very good
Mathematics	Satisfactory	Good	Very good
Science	Satisfactory	Good	Very good
Information technology	Satisfactory	Good	Good
Religious education	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other subjects	Satisfactory	Good	Good

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. In 30 per cent of lessons seen teaching is very good or excellent, in 50 per cent of lessons seen teaching is good and in 20 per cent of lessons seen teaching is satisfactory. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is good or very good and in Key Stage 2 it is good, very good or excellent. Teaching of children under five in the reception class is predominantly satisfactory. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good. Adult helpers, who include both governors and parents, make a very good contribution to the work in classes. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good in both key stages.

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

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Very good at both key stages, in lessons and in all other activities. There is an atmosphere of orderliness, caring and learning.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance is significantly better than the national average.
Ethos*	Very effective at both key stages. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work. They are eager to learn. Relationships are very good. Good policies support the school aims. The school builds a strong community in which pupils are given a sense of self-worth and pride in their achievements.
Leadership and management	Very good. The headteacher provides a very strong and effective leadership. The governing body participate purposefully in monitoring school activity. Staff work as a team and make strong contributions to management. All this has an effective impact on standards overall.
Curriculum	The school provides a good broad and balanced curriculum for pupils in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The curriculum for children under five is also broad and balanced but does not sufficiently meet their needs. It does not take sufficient account of the desirable areas of learning in creative and physical development. At both key stages assessment procedures are good and the information is used well to meet individual targets of all pupils.
Pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school pays careful attention to meeting the needs of all pupils. It implements effective individual educational plans and reviews them regularly. It makes detailed assessment against identified targets on pupils' individual educational plans and uses these effectively to support the next stage of learning.
Spiritual, moral, social &	Throughout the school day moments for prayer and reflection

cultural development	contribute greatly to pupils' very good spiritual, moral and social development. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Good overall. There are a suitable number of qualified teachers with a good range of experience and subject knowledge. Support staff are fully trained and make an effective contribution to the good quality of education provided. The accommodation and resources are good and are used well throughout the school day.
Value for money	Very good. Standards are well above the national average by the end of Key Stage 2, attitudes to learning are very good and 80 per cent of teaching is good, very good or excellent.

**Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

· **The parents' views of the school**

What most parents like about the school

- II. Parents are pleased with the values and attitudes the school promotes.
- III. Parents support the high standards of good behaviour expected by the school.
- IV. Parents are very happy that the school enables children to achieve a good standard of work.
- V. Parents are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school.
- VI. Parents are very satisfied with the work that pupils are expected to do at home.

What some parents are not happy about

- VII. A minority of parents are unhappy about the

Inspection findings endorse the supportive views expressed by the parents but found no evidence to suggest that the school did not handle complaints fairly.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

1. To improve the creative and physical aspects of the curriculum for children under five by:
 - providing regular opportunities for children to develop their imagination, explore and use a widening range of materials to express ideas and to communicate their feelings in creative ways.
 - ensuring that there are regular, planned opportunities for physical development involving the use of the outdoor play area.

In addition to the key issue above, the following less important weakness should be considered for inclusion in the action plan.

- Review the length of the school day to allow more time for coverage of the curriculum.
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INTRODUCTION

- Characteristics of the school

- 1 Our Lady of Good Counsel Roman Catholic Primary School is situated on the outskirts of the town of Sleaford which is within the Lincolnshire Local Education Authority. The school serves the Roman Catholic parish of Sleaford and is very much a key part of the Catholic community maintaining strong links with the parish. Due to growth in the town the school is currently over subscribed. The school was built for a capacity of 120 children with four classrooms. This number has increased significantly and at the time of inspection there were 138 pupils on roll. To accommodate the increase in numbers of pupils the governing body has made interior alterations to create a fifth classroom. The school has plans to increase the school building still further by adding two more classrooms on to the existing building.
 - 2 Most of the pupils live in the town of Sleaford but some travel to the school from the outlying villages. There are no pupils eligible for free school meals. This is partly due to a Lincolnshire policy of not providing hot school meals but also reflects the better than average socio-economic background of most of the pupils. Two families are from non-white ethnic groups.
 - 3 The age range of the pupils is from four to 11 years, covering seven year groups from reception to Year 6. Pupils are taught in five classes, each of which contains two age groups. The average class size is 27, about average for most primary schools. The number of pupils to each teacher is 25 :1. This figure is slightly above the national average. Sixteen pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs. No pupils have a statement of special educational need. This is below the average for most schools nationally. Attainment on entry to the school is above average and most pupils have participated in pre-school education before entering school. Whilst attainment on entry is generally above average, this does not apply to every year group. A number of families are from the local RAF base and their children leave and join the school at different points throughout the school year. This fluctuation in numbers and in pupils changes the overall ability of different cohorts.
 - 4 The school has a mission statement which reflects a detailed set of aims. These encompass the values of the school and provide a good basis for the development of future improvement. The school has identified the following among its current priorities for development:
 - monitoring of the curriculum, teaching and learning and target setting;
 - monitoring class sizes and break down;
 - monitoring classroom assistants;
 - monitoring the religious education policy;
 - Strengthening home/school links;
 - supporting the parish to produce a 'Little Church' programme for the millennium.
1. The key issues for action in the last report were to:
 - improve provision and standards in art.
 - in the early stages of Key Stage 1 provide a curriculum and materials that are more appropriate to the ages and learning needs of pupils and in particular to provide planned opportunities for play and the development of their creative and imaginative skills.
 - improve the quality of pupils' writing by continuing to extend the range of purposes and audiences for writing; and also by developing teaching strategies which provide more

direct guidance and levels of support.

- take necessary action to help pupils develop a wider range of learning skills by taking greater responsibility for some aspects of their learning.
- develop whole-school approaches to decision making and involve staff, including curriculum co-ordinators, in managing and monitoring the practice throughout the school.
- provide a more stimulating environment by fully utilising the potential of the building and providing displays which arouse pupils' interest and act as a resource for learning.
- appoint on special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) who is responsible for ensuring that requirements of the Code of Practice are met throughout the school.

Key indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1¹

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1998	11	5	16

National Curriculum		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Test/Task Results				
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	11	11	11
	Girls	5	5	5
	Total	16	16	16
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	100(92)	100(92)	100(92)
	National	(80)	(81)	(84)

Teacher Assessments		Reading	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	11	11	11
	Girls	5	5	5
	Total	16	16	16
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	100(92)	100(92)	100(92)
	National	(81)	(85)	(86)

.....
1

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Attainment at Key Stage 2²

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	7	4	11

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys Girls Total	7 4 11	7 4 11	7 4 11
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School National	100(73) (65)	100(73) (59)	100(64) (69)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys Girls Total	7 4 11	7 4 11	7 4 11
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School National	100(73) (65)	100(73) (65)	100(100) (72)

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed				%
through absence for the latest complete reporting year:	Authorised Absence	School National comparative data		3.1 5.7
	Unauthorised Absence	School National comparative data		0.0 0.5

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:			Number
	Fixed period		0
	Permanent		0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	80
	Satisfactory or better	20
	Less than satisfactory	0

²

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

- 1 The attainment of children when they enter school is above the levels expected for four years olds. By the end of Key Stage 2 the school achieves very high standards for its pupils in English, mathematics and science. Over the past three years, the school has achieved high standards in English and mathematics but close to average standards in science. In 1999 there has been greater improvement in all three subjects but particularly in science where standards increased from average to very high. By the end of Key Stage 1 the school achieves very high standards in reading and high standards in writing and in mathematics. The very high standards achieved by the school are due to a combination of very good and sometimes excellent teaching, very good relationships and pupils' very good attitudes to work. The school achieves standards for its pupils which are high in relation to their abilities. In 1998 there was a significant difference in the attainment and progress of girls in science and this influenced the outcomes of National Curriculum test results. However, through careful analysis of test results and target setting for girls, the school has overcome this difficulty and achieved improvements. In 1999 National Curriculum tests there are no significant variations in the attainment and progress of boys and girls.

- 2 Children enter the reception with above average attainment and make satisfactory progress in most areas of the curriculum. By the age of five almost all are likely to exceed the expectations of the desirable outcomes for learning in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, personal and social development and in physical development. Although many children show high attainment there are very few opportunities for creative development. As a result children's progress is unsatisfactory and they attain standards that are below that expected for their age. All children know and can recognise initial letter sounds and they know the difference between words and letters. They can recall the story 'This is the Bear and the Scary Night' and describe their feelings. Most are reading simple reading books and know that print goes from left to right. Nearly all children can write their names and many are joining letters to form common words such as 'the' and 'cat'. In mathematics children count objects to twenty, know the names of common shapes and most understand language such as 'more than' and 'less than'. In knowledge and understanding of the world children understand the differences between sweet and savory food and know that fruit and vegetables are eaten to keep the body healthy. Although children make satisfactory progress in their physical development through activities using the school hall there are few planned activities to use the good quality enclosed outdoor play area. In creative development children's progress is unsatisfactory. This is due to a lack of planned practical opportunities for children to improve their skills in cutting, sticking, painting, construction and the use of sand and water. Attainment in personal and social education is above average and they make satisfactory progress.

- 3 At the end of Key Stage 1 attainment in reading is well above that expected nationally. Whilst progress for younger Year 1 pupils in the reception class is

satisfactory, progress for older Year 1 pupils and Year 2 pupils is good and often very good. They have a good knowledge of double sounds such as 'ou' and 'ow' and can make lists of words using correct spelling to differentiate the two sounds. Pupils understand rhyming words and know how to write their own poems using words that rhyme on alternate lines. Most pupils are forming opinions about authors and expressing preferences, identifying favourite parts of a story. They know how books work and their interest and enjoyment of books is evident. For example, one pupil brought a book from home called 'The day I fell down the toilet' and read a favourite section. This was well received by all the pupils in the class and the teacher.

- 4 In writing, pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 attain standards that are well above the national expectation. Progress for pupils in the reception class is satisfactory, however, progress for pupils in a mixed class of Year 1 and Year 2 is good and often very good. Pupils spell many common words accurately and use dictionaries effectively. They write stories in a familiar context and poems using alliteration such as 'Sampan'. Full stops and capital letters are used accurately and very able pupils include speech marks in their writing. Handwriting is joined, neat and letters are correctly formed. All pupils take a pride in their work and the presentation of writing is very good.
- 5 Throughout Key Stage 1 pupils develop very good skills in speaking and in listening and by the age of seven make very good progress. All pupils listen carefully and respond effectively to questions and to dictation. For example, pupils listen carefully to the teacher during a spelling test and respond by writing the correctly spelt word into a sentence. Pupils enjoy talking about their work and all aspects of the curriculum such as those experiences enjoyed whilst working on the computer. During assembly pupils have opportunities to speak to a larger audience and they develop skills of speaking and listening in daily plenary sessions of the literacy hour.
- 6 In mathematics standards of attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 are well above the national average and pupils make good progress, particularly at the end of the key stage. Pupils accurately add and subtract numbers above twenty and at least half can do this mentally. Pupils understand ordinal numbers and can order class birthdays into months. Pupils confidently use correct mathematical language such as more than, digit and count on and understand how to create and use a database. Pupils confidently tell the time to at least the quarter hour and they can add on one hour. All pupils have a good understanding of number and they successfully apply this when solving problems.
- 7 Pupils' attainment in science is above that expected for their age at the end of Key Stage 1. Throughout the school there has been a focus on science to improve pupils' experimental and investigative skills. As a result, by the end of Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress in all areas of their work in science. Pupils use their knowledge to plan and carry out investigations effectively recording what they discover accurately. They have a secure knowledge of living things and a good understanding of materials and their properties. They understand how sounds are made and know that sound is made by tapping, scraping, blowing and beating different materials such as paper, glass, wood, rubber bands and water. Pupils use appropriate scientific vocabulary well.

- 8 In English, attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 is well above the national average. Pupils make good progress in lower Key Stage 2 and very good progress in upper Key Stage 2. This good and very good progress results in standards in reading, writing and in speaking and listening that are very high and well above those expected for pupils' aged 11. Pupils read fluently and expressively and discuss authors and styles of writing such as adventure, science fiction and humour. Pupils choose their books with care and interest and express their opinions about authors clearly by reading the reviews on the back cover or recapping the 'blurb'.
- 9 In writing by the end of Key Stage 2 pupils achieve standards that are well above those expected nationally. Throughout the key stage pupils make good progress and very good progress in a mixed class of Year 5 and Year 6. Pupils write for a range of purposes and they develop skills of literacy through other areas of the curriculum such as history. Pupils examine the role of dialogue in an opening sentence of a story and successfully write their own sentences in order to maintain a similar impact upon the reader. By the end of the Key Stage pupils express opinions and discuss their feelings effectively in response to a text such as 'Bill's New Frock' using skills of inference and deduction well.
- 10 In mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment is well above the national average for their age. Throughout the key stage pupils' make good progress and very good progress in Year 5 and Year 6. Pupils have a well - developed facility with number, which enables them to select appropriate calculations and apply them to real life situations. Pupils combine relationships between multiplication and division to achieve correct mental calculations. Pupils use decimal notation for tenths and hundredths in calculations and they know what each digit represents in a number with up to three decimal places. For example, they count on and back from 25 to 0.2 to 0.25 and then to 2.5. Almost all pupils are able to determine the reasonableness of an answer and can explain why they think an answer is correct or incorrect.
- 11 Pupils' attainment in science is well above the national expectation at the end of Key Stage 2 and they make very good progress. This a significant improvement on the previous 1998 National Curriculum test results when pupils attained standards that were below the expected level for pupils aged 11 years. Pupils have developed good investigative skills and they have a clear understanding of a fair test. Pupils use their scientific knowledge and understanding to predict what might happen in their investigations and then use their practical skills effectively to test their hypothesis. Pupils have very good knowledge of solids liquids and gases and they explain clearly the reason for reversible and irreversible changes. All pupils have good knowledge and understanding of physical processes, living things and materials.
- 12 In information technology pupils' attainment at the end of both key stages is above national expectations and they make good progress. Since the school acquired resources and became part of the first phase of the National Grid for Learning, pupils have had a range of opportunities to use and apply skills, knowledge and understanding across the curriculum. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils use a variety of equipment and software confidently. They operate tape players and

computers to write stories, develop graphs and create musical scores. By the end of Key Stage 2 all pupils have an e-mail address logging on to the Internet to search the web for information to support all areas of their work. For example, to support work in science pupils search the web to find information about gases. Pupils use spreadsheets in their mathematics work, logo to draw shapes and a variety of simulation packages to find out more about historical events such as the Romans.

13 At both key stages pupils make good progress in history, geography, music and physical education. In geography pupils develop good skills in mapping as they compare similarities and differences between Kaptalamwa in Kenya and Sleaford. In music they develop good skills in singing and learn to play a range of instruments well. In dance pupils show good skills and creativity in their imaginative interpretations to the story of 'Scrooge'. Pupils develop good skills in controlling balls and they learn tactics in games. Pupils make satisfactory progress in art and design technology. Attainment in art has improved since the previous inspection which found that standards were unsatisfactory. Pupils use paint, pastels and pencils to create satisfactory observational drawings. The school uses displays effectively to celebrate pupils' achievements and to enhance the learning environment. In design and technology, pupils investigate and learn how products are made and use this in their own design and make tasks, improving their work through evaluation. For example, pupils design, make and evaluate a bag to carry shopping. They know that planning can effect the overall size of the bag and they make careful considerations during the planning process to find a suitable method for attaching the handle.

14 Throughout Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils' progress in literacy and in numeracy is supported well by the work they are required to complete in other subjects. Written tasks, the reading of worksheets, textbooks, reference books and computer research work make a very valuable contribution to pupils' literacy development. In reception, pupils in Year 1 are given fewer opportunities to extend their literacy development in a practical structured way and this prevents them from making the progress of which they are capable. A similar pattern occurs in numeracy. Pupils have plenty of worksheets to complete but very few opportunities to explore number and to work through practical experiences. However, older pupils in Year 1 and pupils across both key stages receive many opportunities to develop their numeracy skills in other subjects such as science, geography and design technology.

15 The school is rigorous in analysing all test results and assessments and this is a major factor in the very good progress that pupils make by the end of Key Stage 2. Teachers use the information gained to set individual targets for pupils and to plan work that builds appropriately on to pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. They use half-termly assessment tests to monitor pupils' progress and to help plan activities that closely match the needs of all pupils in their mixed age classes.

20 **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

1 Since the last inspection pupils' attitudes towards learning have improved and are now very good. Likewise, behaviour, personal development and relationships have

progressed and are also very good. These attributes are among the school's strengths.

- 2 All pupils show interest in their work and apply themselves determinedly to the task in hand. They listen well to their teachers and take a pride in their work. They show enthusiasm and enjoyment in learning and are able to sustain good levels of concentration. They readily involve themselves in lessons. For example, they eagerly answer questions, make good use of classroom resources and respond positively to new challenges. They pupils work well independently and collaboratively.
- 3 The behaviour of pupils of all ages is very good in class and around the school, which is an improvement on the good behaviour reported in the last inspection report. Teachers no longer waste time in constantly trying to establish discipline and good order. During the present inspection, the older children show a caring disposition towards the younger ones. At playtimes and lunchtimes the pupils play and behave sensibly together. Pupils respond well to the praise, stickers and head teacher's awards that reinforce the school's good procedures for monitoring behaviour. Once a month the school also awards a cup to the best team.
- 4 Pupils know right from wrong and respond positively to the school's high expectations. There was no inappropriate behaviour during the inspection and bullying is very rare. Should any such incident occur there are appropriate procedures in place to deal with matters promptly and efficiently. There were no exclusions during the last academic year. Pupils demonstrate very good levels of self-discipline. Parents are very satisfied with the standards of behaviour and the way the school promotes it.
- 5 Pupils are trustworthy and show respect for other people's property. They are courteous to each other and respectful towards their teachers and adults. Whenever pupils are near, they hold doors open for adults to pass through.
- 6 Pupils are keen to take responsibility whenever the occasion arises, for example, they are prefects, help with sorting the library, plan their own investigations in science as well as doing nineteen other separate jobs. This is a great improvement since the last inspection. Pupils showed concern for those less fortunate than themselves by collecting for charities. Pupils further enhance their personal development by participating in the life of the local community. For example, the school choir performs regularly at local, public functions.
- 7 Reception pupils respond well to the good induction procedures, and pupils with special educational needs show good motivation.
- 8 The very good attitudes of pupils towards learning and behaviour have a positive effect on progress and attainment and contribute to the excellent quality of life in the school

28 **Attendance**

- 9 The very good level of attendance has a positive effect on pupils' progress and attainment. In 1998/99 the school's attendance rate was 96.9 per cent. This is an improvement on the rate seen at the previous inspection and significantly above the national average. Unauthorised absence is minimal and well below the national average.
- 10 Pupils arrive punctually at school. Teachers call the registers efficiently, enabling classes to commence promptly and without any undue waste of time. If a child has not arrived, the school contacts the parents by telephone within a short period of time, usually between 9.20 a.m. and 9.30 a.m.
- 11 In recognition of good attendance, the school awards a certificate to pupils who achieve 100 per cent attendance during any academic year.
- 12 The attendance of children under five, although not a statutory requirement, is very good.

32 QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

32 Teaching

- 1 The quality of teaching is good overall. Teaching is at least satisfactory in 100 per cent of lessons, good in 50 per cent of lessons, very good in 21 per cent of lessons and excellent in nine per cent of lessons. All lessons seen in the reception class were satisfactory, and all the lessons graded excellent were in a mixed class of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils. The quality of teaching has greatly improved since the previous inspection, when 20 per cent of lessons seen were as good. This improvement is the result of careful monitoring of planning and classroom practice by the headteacher, rigorous use of daily and half-termly assessments, individual targets for all pupils and detailed analysis of statutory and non-statutory test results.
- 2 Teaching makes a strong impact upon pupils' progress in acquiring knowledge, skills and understanding. However, in the reception class, teaching often lacks enthusiasm and energy. Whilst the content of the planned curriculum is appropriate for able pupils under five it fails to provide opportunities to help children develop in maturity through the use of practical investigative and explorative activities. There is insufficient emphasis on learning through practical approaches such as play in water and in sand and on creative work. This prevents children making the progress of which they are capable. There is a friendly atmosphere and a good working relationship between the teacher and the learning support assistant. They both know the children well. Whilst there are a range of suitable resources for young children to use, opportunities to use them are very few. The classroom environment lacks colour and interest and does little to stimulate and promote children's learning.
- 3 Most of the teaching in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is good but the greatest concentration of effective teaching was in a mixed class of Year 1 and Year 2 pupils and a mixed class of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils. In a Year 1 and Year 2 class pupils' progress is consistently good and mostly very good. In the Year 5 and Year 6 class pupils' progress is very good or excellent. Almost all teaching throughout Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is at least good. High attainment and good and very good progress throughout the school are directly linked to the high quality of the teaching in all year groups and in all the subjects.
- 4 In Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching was good in 67 per cent of lessons seen and very good in 33 per cent of lessons. The teachers sets work to challenge pupils in different year groups and with different attainment and also provides appropriate work for pupils with special educational needs. She has very good subject knowledge, uses good searching questions to extend pupils' thinking and enables all lessons to progress at a brisk pace. She makes the purpose of the lesson very clear at the beginning and pupils are in no doubt what she expects of them. She makes very good use of a trained learning support assistant to work with groups of pupils on a variety of activities such as information technology.
- 5 In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is very good. In 65 per cent of lessons teaching is good, in 25 per cent of lessons teaching is very good and in 15 per cent of lessons teaching is excellent. In the best lessons the teacher has a very

powerful impact on pupils, excellent relationships, very high expectations and presents pupils with interesting activities that capture their enthusiasm and imagination. Teaching in English, science and music was particularly impressive. For example, in science pupils settle quickly and earnestly to the task, discuss at a mature level using good scientific language, carry out their test and confidently move to the computer to record and monitor their results using information technology. The teacher skillfully managed all groups showing very good understanding of the subject and knowledge of how to help pupils move forward. Homework provided a good extension of the work learned in school.

- 6 Across the school, teachers have good and often very good subject knowledge and they provide different work for the range of pupil attainment in their mixed age classes. Lessons have a good balance of different activities. This enables pupils to work in a variety of settings, sometimes as a whole-class group and sometimes in small groups or individually. Teachers plan their lessons well using the government's recommended guidelines as a measure of the expected levels and appropriate work suitable for pupils' age and attainment. They provide challenging work along with good encouragement to enable pupils to persevere and to reach a satisfactory conclusion. During lessons they guide and support pupils in their work which helps to raise pupils' self-esteem and a pride in their achievements.
- 7 Almost all teachers have high expectations of what pupils should achieve. They transmit these expectations well to pupils, setting challenging targets for work achieved in lessons. These high and realistic expectations enable pupils to achieve the high standards of which they are capable. All teachers know their pupils very well and through regular assessment have set realistic and challenging targets for them. They make the pupils fully aware of these targets, and the pupils work hard to achieve them.
- 8 Implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy is good. Teachers have a confident understanding of how to teach literacy and numeracy and they ensure that they provide many opportunities for pupils to use these skills in other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils use their knowledge of mathematics to mark and measure wood and card during the planning and making of a shelter in design and technology. Pupils use literacy skills to write a set of instructions of how to make the shelter demonstrating appropriate attention to spelling, punctuation and to audience. The quality of teaching of literacy and numeracy across both key stages is good and often very good. This helps pupils to achieve above and well above average standards in English and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2.
- 9 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good in both key stages. Teachers ensure pupils are able to participate in all lessons and make good progress. This is due to teachers' planning and to the good quality of the individual educational plans provided for each pupil. Teachers and trained learning support assistants make daily assessments of pupils' individual targets and use this information effectively to plan the next stage of learning. The support given to pupils by learning support assistants is very good and enables pupils to make consistently good progress across both key stages.
- 10 Teachers build very good relationships with pupils establishing an effective learning

environment. They conduct lessons with good humour and in a way that makes learning interesting. The high expectations teachers have of pupils' behaviour contributes strongly to the very good attitudes to work which pupils develop throughout the school.

- 11 Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. All teachers use encouraging and constructive remarks to help pupils to improve their work. Teachers use effectively other techniques of day-to-day assessment, such as questioning and observation of work, to help them in their future planning. Teachers build half-termly assessment tasks into their planning. These are very effective in helping teachers to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning. All teachers use this evidence well to build on to pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding when planning the next stage of learning.
- 12 The different types and forms of homework vary from class to class. However, it always relates to lessons, is appropriate and supports pupils' learning very effectively. The school encourages pupils to read at home and gives them homework in other areas of the curriculum such as spelling, comprehension exercises, mathematics and science. Older pupils have topics to research. Parents and pupils both support the homework policy.
- 13 Teachers plan together in teams, are fully committed to the school and work hard on the pupils' behalf. As a team they are mutually supportive of each other and of the aims and values of the school. This enables the pupils at the school to achieve very high standards.

45 **The curriculum and assessment**

- 1 The curriculum for children under five is not sufficiently broad and balanced. Although planning is based on the areas of learning which are described in the document "Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning", the children do not have full access to this curriculum. They are prepared for and participate in the Key Stage 1 curriculum, but this is at the expense of the early years' curriculum. There are inadequate opportunities for children to develop their imagination and express their own ideas and feelings in creative ways. The school has not yet fully resolved this issue identified in the previous inspection report. There are also insufficient opportunities for children to develop their physical skills through regular planned access to the outdoor play area.
- 2 The assessment procedures for children under five are satisfactory overall. The school uses baseline assessment to assess children under five after they start the reception class. It keeps appropriate records of individual children's development in most areas of learning. However, it does not always use these assessments effectively to ensure it meets that the needs of the younger children. It does not consistently suit tasks to the level of children's knowledge, understanding and maturity.
- 3 The curriculum provided for pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 is good, meets statutory

requirements and includes all required subjects. It is broad, balanced and well taught in a way that is relevant to the needs of the pupils. It allocates appropriate time to most subjects. The school has a very good programme for personal and social education, which includes a drugs awareness theme. Appropriately, sex education is provided through the science scheme with support from the school nurse. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have equal opportunity and access to the curriculum, reflecting the school's aim to enable pupils to acquire the widest possible range of learning skills from the National Curriculum.

- 4 The good quality planning of the curriculum ensures that it fully covers the National Curriculum, effectively identifies a clear progression in the development of skills and understanding and provides good continuity from year to year. The school uses the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies effectively as a basis for planning in English and mathematics. National schemes form the foundation for planning in other subjects. The school delivers the curriculum effectively through topics, which provide meaningful links across subjects. Detailed policies are in place for all subjects and the school has appropriately planned for the regular review of planning and curriculum policies in its development plan. Teachers work well together and plan effectively to ensure that pupils of the same age in different classes are being taught the same curriculum. Daily plans clearly identify learning outcomes and activities to be undertaken. They provide challenging work for all pupils. Teachers clearly identify extension activities to challenge the higher attaining pupils and additional activities to meet the needs of lower attaining pupils in each year group. Good links are made between subjects to reinforce prior learning. For example, in a geography lesson for pupils in Years 4 and 5, pupils were making very good use of their skills in using the Internet to support research in their studies of Kenya.
- 5 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and meets the requirements of the Code of Practice. There is an effective policy for the support of these pupils and the quality of individual education plans is good. They clearly identify appropriate learning targets and the school reviews them regularly. All pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning. The good support they receive from the special educational needs assistants enables them to work successfully alongside other pupils in the classroom.
- 6 There is good provision for extra-curricular activities. This includes, for example, netball, football, a wide variety of musical activities and a computer club for pupils in Key Stage 2. Regular visits to places of historical and cultural interest, such as Oxburgh Hall, the British Museum and Leeds Weather Centre and good use of the local area, enhance topic work. There is also a good variety of visitors who enrich the curriculum, including meteorological personnel from RAF Cranwell, a local writer and poet and environmental workers from the county council.
- 7 The school meets National Curriculum assessment requirements at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. It makes a thorough diagnostic analysis of all test results and uses the information gained, to set targets to further raise individual pupil's levels of attainment. Teachers know their pupils well. They keep up to date records of pupils' progress within their classes and assessments are consistently accurate. The comprehensive record of achievement folder, kept for each pupil, is an important document, which, besides being informative to parents, is a useful guide

to pupils' attainment as they move through both key stages. The school keeps moderated assessment portfolios for all five core subjects, which act as a good reference against which to assess individual attainment. In information technology, it uses assessment effectively in order to ensure that it plans work to build upon prior knowledge and understanding. The annual reports to parents are satisfactory but lack specific detail of pupils' knowledge and understanding. The school does not invite to add their comments to these reports. It has a detailed marking policy and there are many good examples, in both key stages, of helpful and encouraging comments that tell pupils how they might improve their work. An effective system of rewards encourages good work and behaviour throughout the school.

- 8 The school records well its assessment of progress of pupils with special educational needs on their individual education plans. It invites parents into school regularly to discuss pupils' progress and view work. It uses assessments of these pupils effectively to support teaching and learning.

53 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

- 1 In the previous report, the provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was 'generally good' in a school community 'where spiritual and moral dimensions of life are valued'. There has been steady improvement since then and the provision made by the school for these aspects of the pupils' development is very good overall. This has had a positive impact on the ethos of the school which is very good and on the equally good personal development of the pupils.
- 2 The provision made in the school for the pupils' spiritual development is very good. It is centred on the Catholic Christian character of the school which pervades everything that the school undertakes. The pupils receive many opportunities to explore values and beliefs from within the Christian faith through the collective worship provided daily and through the links that the school has with the parish. The school's pilgrimage to Walsingham, the retreat provided for the older pupils and the other cultural and educational visits all contribute significantly to the pupils' understanding of this dimension of life. The school caters very well for the less specifically religious aspects of spiritual development within the curriculum. It provides opportunities for pupils to explore their personal creativity in art and in music and to reflect on matters important to them through the discussion of texts in English.
- 3 The school's provision for the moral development of the pupils is also very good. They are taught the difference between right and wrong and how to make moral judgements through the religious education programme and in the implementation of the good behaviour policy. Topics in geography and history also provide them with opportunities to think about and discuss moral issues from the past, or current concerns about the environment. The high expectation that the staff have of the pupils' behaviour is also an important element in the provision for their moral development, providing them with high ideals to live up to. The school praises and gives recognition to good and supportive behaviour in the open awards assembly. The parents value the school's high moral standards.
- 4 The school successfully encourages the pupils to relate positively to other pupils, the staff and to visitors. The teachers and other adults provide them with good role

models. The provision for the pupils' social development is very good. The school is a significant focus for the Catholic community in the area. It encourages pupils to feel part of that community. Many of the school's activities such as charitable work support this. It also encourages pupils to take a pride in the school and in the locality and this develops a sense of community. Within the classrooms and about the school, it encourages pupils to undertake a very wide range of duties to support the running of the school. This they delight in doing, and it develops their sense of social responsibility. The older pupils look out for the welfare of the younger ones.

- 5 The school's provision for the pupils, cultural development is good. It enables them to appreciate their own cultural heritage through the work done in art and music where they study and copy the work of acknowledged masters. They learn about artists and musicians of the past. In literature texts and in the books provided for them to read, the school successfully introduces pupils to their own literary heritage. The same is true of dance and through traditional sports in physical education. It makes some provision through religious education, for example by the pupils studying a Jewish Seder meal, to introduce them to other religious cultures. However, it deals with this less fully than with pupils' own culture. While they studied life in Kenya in comparison with life in Sleaford for a geography topic, the school did not make full use of the topic in terms of the different cultures. There is no first hand link with cultures outside the locality.
- 6 Overall the provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and it contributes a good deal to the high standards of education offered by the school.

59 Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

- 1 The school makes good provision for the support, guidance and welfare of its pupils in a caring environment. The headteacher, staff and governing body are very conscious of their collective responsibilities for the protection of the health, safety and the wellbeing of the pupils. The teaching and non-teaching staff know the pupils well and relationships between the adults and the pupils are very good.
- 2 The good support given to children under five ensuring they settle into school happily during their first days has been maintained since the last inspection. They benefit from a planned induction programme, which involves the parents and gives them adequate information to help to prepare their children for school. The school has good procedures for the smooth transfer of its pupils to the high school. Reciprocal visits between both schools familiarise pupils with their future teachers and environment.
- 3 The quality of the school's behaviour policy is good. The use of stickers and certificates of merit to monitor and promote good behaviour and discipline are very effective. The school gives approbation and rewards for good work and behaviour at a special weekly assembly. Pupils know right from wrong and respond positively to the school's system of rewards and sanctions. Bullying is extremely rare. However, if any such incident should occur, there are well established procedures in place to deal with it promptly and efficiently. The school keeps a record on the pupil's file. The majority of parents agree that the standard of behaviour is very good. The very good arrangements for monitoring attendance and following up

absence contribute significantly to the high standards set by the school.

- 4 The school has effective measures to ensure the early identification of pupils with special educational needs. The teachers and support assistants provide good levels of support, which has a positive effect on pupils and enables them to make good progress towards achieving the targets set in their individual educational plans. The recommendations of the Code of Practice are fully met with regard to monitoring and periodic reviews. The school keeps parents and the relevant supporting agencies fully informed and involves them in the decision making process. It offers equal opportunities to all pupils.
- 5 The school has policies for pastoral care, sex education and drug education. The child protection policy is based on the local authority guidelines. The deputy headteacher is the designated person and has had recent training. The staff are fully aware of the procedures for identifying and reporting pupils who may be at risk. The school maintains good levels of contact with all the relevant external agencies.
- 6 The school has a satisfactory health and safety policy. The school does all it can to promote awareness of this subject among its pupils. It accomplishes this through the curriculum, for example in science, design and technology and physical education. Members of the governing body and the staff carry out a regular risk assessment of the premises, equipment and working practices. The school holds fire drills each term.
- 7 The school has two people trained in first aid. One is currently awaiting a refresher course. The rest of the staff has basic knowledge of the subject. First-aid boxes are strategically and accessibly placed about the school. The school stocks them suitably and checks them regularly. It logs accidents and has satisfactory routines for informing parents of any injury to their children. Parents are pleased with the way the school looks after the pupils when they are ill and appreciate that it will support those children who need to take medication during school hours.
- 8 The school gives good support to pupils with special educational needs and makes effective use of outside agencies.
- 9 The good levels of support and guidance provided by the school add significantly to pupils' wellbeing and contribute to a happy and safe environment.

68

Partnership with parents and the community

- 1 The school has successfully maintained its good partnership with the parents and the community since the last inspection. The school welcomes parents and encourages them to be partners in their children's education. It makes good use of pupils' homework books, which parents value. A school has implemented a home school agreement in fully consultation with parents. It is firmly based on the schools Christian values and aims. The school operates an 'open door' policy and is always ready to make an appointment for parents to discuss their children's progress in greater detail.

- 2 The parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting and those spoken to during the inspection were very happy with the information provided by the school. This is of a good quality and parents are satisfied with the range and frequency of the data received. The school communicates through newsletters, its brochure, pupils' and governors' annual reports, parents' evenings, policies and notice boards. However, pupils' annual reports are not yet sufficiently lucid and specific, particularly in respect of future targets needed to improve achievement. They do not provide space for parents' and pupils' comments.
- 3 The school has a good liaison with parents of children with special educational needs. It involves them and all relevant outside agencies and in formal reviews and assessments. This enables parents to help their children to attain the targets outlined for them in their individual educational plans.
- 4 The school encourages parents to take an active part in its life. Those who have the time respond enthusiastically. They give help in the school library, at sporting events, general classroom duties, lunchtime clubs and on educational visits. There is an active parent teacher association, which organises social events and raises substantial sums of money for the school.
- 5 Although the school is situated in a small village with limited opportunities, it has forged good links with the local church, the community and playgroup. It uses the church to celebrate the usual Christian festivals and the local priest comes into school every Thursday to celebrate Mass to which parents are invited. The school makes good use of the local area for educational visits. The school has made visits to Oxborough Hall in Norfolk in conjunction with their Tudor project, Leeds Weather Centre, York Jorvik Centre and many other places.
- 6 Pupils have the opportunity to join with other schools to take part in sporting activities. A variety of visitors come into school to work with the pupils, which enriches the curriculum and their personal and social development. These have included elderly members of the community who have related past experiences, also a lady talking about school life in Ghana, a meteorological person from R.A.F. Cranwell, the fire brigade on safety and the police. Two parents trained in cycling proficiency now instruct the children in this subject..
- 7 Though the school has no specific links with industry to support the curriculum, local businesses support the school with fund-raising and social events.
- 8 The general consensus of parents is that they are very pleased with what the school provides. Several parents who live outside the catchment area emphasised this point, saying they have chosen to place their children at the school because of its high standards and reputation.

76 **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

76 **Leadership and management**

- 1 The school has improved significantly since the last inspection. It has improved the standards in art and display around the school, implemented strategies to improve pupils' writing, taken the necessary action to help pupils develop personally, and appointed a co-ordinator for special educational needs. There is a strong team approach to decision making and this has enabled the school to manage and monitor standards across all areas including the provision for under fives. Although the school is aware that this work must continue the improvements made since the previous inspection are good, the very high standards achieved by the end of Key Stage 2 reflect this improvement.
- 2 The school benefits from the very good leadership of the headteacher who has a strong commitment to the caring, community ethos of the school and to the process of raising standards. The staff support him very well. Parents and the local community respect him. He has been instrumental in devising and putting in place excellent management systems that ensure the school helps every child to develop and improve.
- 3 The school functions with a common sense of purpose. Staff, governors and parents work together effectively and make a good contribution to the quality of education provided. The school has a broad set of aims that reflect the values of the mission statement. Good policies support these aims, allowing the school to build a strong community. The ethos of the school is very good. It provides opportunities for pupils to achieve high attainment and a sense of self-worth. There is effective provision for pupils with special educational needs ensuring equality of opportunity for every child across the school. The success of the school is shown in the improvements in pupils' attainment throughout the school, the very good attitudes, behaviour and personal development of the pupils and their very good spiritual, social and moral development.
- 4 The governing body is very proud of the school and all members take an active part in leading the school. They clearly understand their roles and participate fully in planning for the school's development. They maintain very good relationships with staff and there is good liaison with subject co-ordinators, who tell them about their needs and plans. This enables governors to make well informed decisions when allocating financial resources. The headteacher keeps the governing body very well informed enabling them to make effective decisions based upon sound evidence. The governing body meets twice a term and has agreed that instead of delegating responsibilities to separate sub-committees all governors will be involved in the decision making process. They discuss together and agree a way forward. They maintain a clear, overall view of the school's work, ratifying the school development plan regularly whilst setting priorities for future development. Feedback to the governing body by the headteacher is effective and has contributed to the school's significant improvement.
- 5 The governing body is aware of recent initiatives in education and has appointed governors with special responsibility for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs. These governors work effectively alongside teachers in classrooms and are well informed of procedures and the practice. The headteacher provides governors with careful records and statistics of pupils' achievements in different subject tests. This enables them to analyse the school's performance and to set targets for future achievements. Governors are fully aware of the school's targets and expectations for pupils' performance in the national tests in the year 2000 and

have identified areas for focused development.

- 6 The school development plan very effectively provides for curriculum development and also encompasses other aspects of school management such as the proposed future building programme to accommodate the growth in pupil numbers. In addition it outlines developments beyond the current year. This ensures that staff and governors are very clear about future developments and have systematically planned and allocated priorities. The school effectively monitors the progress of its development plan in order to ensure that it implements its initiatives successfully.
- 7 The curriculum co-ordinators and senior management team ensure that planning and curriculum developments are effective, developing amongst the staff a good sense of teamwork. All staff are clear about their role and responsibilities and are well supported by the headteacher and the local authority inspector. Whilst co-ordinators are given little time to monitor their curriculum subject across the school this is done very effectively by the headteacher. As a small school the staff agree a focus for each classroom visit. The headteacher records thoroughly the quality of teaching and learning, and feeds back to the staff in detail. This has led to a deeper understanding of the standards being attained throughout the school and to a recognition of what is working well. Staff are clear about where there are problems and they discuss and tackle these effectively. However, although informal monitoring does take place, there is not yet a rigorous system for monitoring by governors. Whilst they read monitoring records made by the headteacher and local authority inspector they do not receive full information about the shortcomings in the reception class.
- 8 The co-ordinator for special educational needs works well within the school and with outside agencies. She keeps careful records of pupils' work, liaises well with all class teachers. As a result the school manages its provision for pupils with special educational needs well. The co-ordinator keeps the governing body fully informed of pupils on the register of special educational needs. She also provides governors with an overview of the level of support for special educational needs in the school. The governor responsible for the overview of the provision for special educational needs attends school regularly and shows a keen interest in pupils' progress.
- 9 The day-to-day running of the school is smooth and internal communication is effective. However, the time allocated to teach all aspects of the National Curriculum is below the average for most primary schools nationally. This limits the opportunities for teachers to plan and extend learning activities in foundation subjects such as design and technology and art. Despite this shortcoming this is a good school with many strengths and a vision and a commitment to continued improvement. The school fully meets all statutory requirements.

85

85 **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

- 1 There were no specific references to staffing, accommodation and learning resources in the key issues for action identified in the previous inspection report. There were implications for the disposition of staff in the comments on the under-

developed role of the co-ordinators. There were implications for accommodation in the comments on the need for a more stimulating environment fully utilising the potential of the building. There were implications for resources in the need for an improved curriculum for the younger pupils.

- 2 The co-ordinators have an enhanced role, even though they do not yet have opportunities to monitor the teaching of their subjects. The school is making full use of its accommodation, except for the provision for outdoor play for the under fives in the reception year. It has made marked improvements in resources for learning in English, numeracy and especially in information technology for all the pupils, including those in Key Stage 1.
- 3 The staffing of the school is appropriate for the numbers on roll. The governing body based its decision to increase the number of classroom support staff rather than appoint a teacher to the deputy head's role on a careful analysis of the school's current needs. All the staff have suitable training for the work they undertake, and keep their skills, knowledge and understanding up to date with well directed in-service training. For example they have all undertaken training to support the developments in information technology. The co-ordinating responsibilities that they bear relate to their training, both initial and in-service, their competence, experience and interests. This has beneficial effects on the standards in the school. The staff complement each other well in terms of experience and service in the school. The system of appraisal is effective in identifying areas of development for individual teachers. The headteacher monitors the teaching effectively to ensure that the school not only maintains standards but improves them. New members of staff receive good support as they become familiar with the policies and patterns of the school's life.
- 4 The professional development of the staff relates to the school's development plan. This ensures that increased teacher expertise suitably supports the changes in the curriculum such as the literacy and numeracy initiatives, and changes in subject provision such as the developments in information technology.
- 5 The accommodation in the school is generous for current needs, the hall/gymnasium is well resourced and provides a good space for assemblies for collective worship, physical education including dance and small games, as well as for meals. It also accommodates other meetings and is a valuable asset to the school. The classrooms have good supplies of water and carpeted areas. The accommodation caters well for the full range of the curriculum.
- 6 The school grounds are spacious and well used. There is a lack of stimulus such as games markings or counting squares painted on the surface of the under fives' play area.
- 7 The resources for learning provided by the school are satisfactory in all subjects except for English, numeracy and information technology where they are good. They are sufficient in quantity, good in quality and readily accessible for the pupils. Storage for resources is satisfactory and their suitable placing around the school ensures they are readily available. The library provides a satisfactory resource for learning and there are plenty of books distributed among the classes.
- 8 The school has a sound level of resources, well managed by competent (some very competent) and experienced teachers and support staff. With suitably sized

and furnished accommodation they enhance the good quality of education in the school. This accommodation and resources provides effective support for the good progress found in Key Stage 1 and the very good progress in Key Stage 2.

93

93 **The efficiency of the school**

- 1 Financial planning is very good. Careful financial planning by the headteacher and senior management team and valuable help from the school secretary support educational developments and improvements from the previous inspection. The managers ensure that there are sufficient funds to maintain the aspects of the school that they consider to be important, make changes where necessary and accommodate major developments and government initiatives such as the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the National Grid for Learning. The school clearly links spending priorities to its detailed school development plan.
- 2 The school makes very good use of both teaching and support staff. It deploys teachers effectively and gives them opportunities to share their expertise with colleagues. For example, the co-ordinator for information technology has given tremendous support to colleagues in the implementation of the National Grid for Learning. The headteacher leads through example by taking a class for two full days of the week and a member of the senior management team uses her expertise to guide and support the staff in the teaching of music. The school receives a very small amount of income to support pupils with special educational needs. It makes good use of this money to purchase suitable resources such as reading books. It uses grants for staff development and training specifically for these purposes. Training and implementation of the literacy and numeracy hour have been very effective and contributed well to the improvement in standards achieved by the school. The particularly effective training of all learning support staff has made a significant impact on the quality of learning of pupils.
- 3 A decision by the governing body to appoint additional learning support staff to support teachers in the delivery of the curriculum is effective. Nursery nurses and learning support staff have all received training, are fully aware of curriculum requirements and understand their role of support to pupils in lessons. In this they make a significant contribution to the attainment and progress of the pupils, especially those with special educational needs. They are also effective in helping pupils learn good attitudes to work enabling them to work more confidently and independently.
- 4 Most members of staff use the accommodation well. However, there is insufficient use of the enclosed outdoor play area outside the reception classroom. Across both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 staff work effectively to make classrooms bright, cheerful and welcoming. They use the walls well to display pupils' work.
- 5 The school uses its resources well. It organises them carefully so that teachers and support staff have easy access to them. Staff and pupils take good care of equipment. The school has made good use of additional money provided to fund the implementation of the literacy and numeracy hour, providing resources to meet the needs of the school. Spending on information technology is very good. The school has used the funding for National Grid for Learning to purchase and install

appropriate equipment necessary to fulfil the curriculum and has taken an audit of resources in order to set priorities for future developments.

- 6 The school has been fully implemented the recent external audit recommendations. Day-to-day financial administrative routines are well established and unobtrusive. The headteacher manages them effectively, with very good support from the school secretary. This enables the headteacher to undertake a part-time but regular two day teaching commitment and to monitor the work of the school.

- 7 Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment above those expected for children under five. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils achieve standards which are well above the average in English, mathematics and science and above the average in most other areas of the curriculum. They make very good progress overall, behave very well and display very good attitudes to learning. The very good standard of teaching ensures that they maintain very good progress. This is achieved within the level of finance available to the school and at a cost per pupil which is below average for primary schools nationally. The school gives very good value for money.

100 PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

100 AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

1 The provision for children under five is satisfactory overall. Children are normally admitted to the school at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. On entry to school, children's levels of knowledge, understanding and skill in most areas of their development are above average. Baseline assessment, administered soon after the children start school confirms this picture. At the time of the inspection eight of the 29 children in the reception and Year 1 Class were under five years of age.

101 Personal and social development

2 The children make satisfactory progress in their personal and social development and by the time they are five attain standards of personal and social development which are above those expected for their age. They settle well into classroom and school routines and establish good relationships with other children and adults. The children listen carefully to one another when they have the opportunity and freely join in with question and answer sessions when encouraged. Older pupils in the class support the children well and encourage them to join in different activities. The majority of children behave well. However, when tasks do not match their needs well, a few children become restless and lose concentration.

102 Language and literacy

3 Most children make satisfactory progress in developing their skills and by the age of five, attain levels above average for their age in language and literacy. Most are keen to communicate and speak well. The teacher encourages all children to take part in discussions, such as when talking about a story such as, "This is the Bear on the Scary Night". They quickly learn to take turns when answering, asking and explaining their ideas. The majority of children develop confidence and contribute enthusiastically. However, insufficient opportunities are provided for children to develop their speaking skills, through role-play and other play activities.

4 Children handle books well, begin to recognise familiar words and letters and make a good start to reading. They learn to anticipate and to make use of the illustrations to gain meaning from books. Regular storytelling and reading from big books enhance their enjoyment of fiction. Children read regularly to adults and take their books home to share with parents, who provide very good support. They begin to recognise individual letters and most can read their own names. However, during the inspection children were not observed playing suitable reading games to provide reinforcement of word recognition skills.

5 Writing skills are developed through a range of activities. Many children formulate recognisable letters and write their own names. More able children are beginning to write in sentences. However, less confident children have insufficient opportunities to practise pre-writing skills and hand control.

6 The quality of the teaching of language and literacy is satisfactory. The teacher provides sound opportunities for children to improve skills in language and literacy through a modified literacy "hour". In a few instances, however, the teacher takes

insufficient time to reinforce and explain tasks and activities are not always appropriate to the needs of all the children. For example in a literacy session children were unable to read the words in the sentence they were copying. The teacher and the classroom assistant effectively encourage the children to join in conversation and discussion, which help them to listen and respond appropriately. They involve children in activities such as sharing books, encouraging awareness of the links between the sounds of letters to symbols and the sounds of patterns of letters in rhymes and other familiar words.

106 Mathematics

- 1 In the mathematical area of learning, the children achieve above average levels of attainment. They make satisfactory progress in developing their mathematical understanding. Most can name and understand the value of numbers to ten. Many count meaningfully beyond ten. They sing number rhymes such as “Ten green bottles” and have a good knowledge of the language of mathematics. The children count in sequence, name colours and shapes. Number work progresses to simple addition and subtraction, but there are too few opportunities for them to make comparisons of size and weight in a range of activities and handle a broad variety of materials and equipment.
- 2 The quality of teaching in mathematics is satisfactory. Lessons are generally appropriately planned, but challenges to children of all abilities through a variety of first-hand mathematical experiences are limited. The teacher makes effective use of the classroom assistant. All staff encourage the use of correct mathematical language and teach the children to read and record numbers and other mathematical information using pictures and numerals.

108 Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 1 By the age of five children make satisfactory progress and have above average knowledge and understanding of the world. When encouraged, children can talk about past events in their lives and can predict short-term future events. For example, they discuss what they will do when they go home after school. They are beginning to have a sound understanding of past and present and a sense of personal history when comparing toys of the past with those of the present day. They show good understanding of their own locality when discussing landmarks featured in the good classroom display of photographs of Sleaford. They are beginning to understand which foods are healthy and those considered to be unhealthy. They successfully join paper parts together to make people with moveable limbs. Children learn about their own faith and those of others, and begin to appreciate the meaning of religious festivals such as Christmas. In information technology, the children are becoming familiar with the use of the computer keyboard.
- 2 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. However, children are given few opportunities to improve their skills of cutting and shaping and improve their competence in using scissors and other tools. During the inspection there was insufficient opportunity to see children spontaneously using their environment to develop their knowledge and understanding.

110 Creative development

- 1 Progress in creative development is unsatisfactory. By the age of five children attain levels of understanding and skill which are below average for their age. The children enjoy listening to sounds and join in the singing of rhymes and songs with enthusiasm, keeping together and maintaining the tune. They can clap and use percussion instruments to play the rhythm of their names. Many children can explain how different foods look, taste and smell, but have few opportunities to explore colour and texture. The participation of the majority of children in imaginative activities through sand, water and role play is restricted. There are inadequate opportunities for children to develop their imagination and express their own ideas and feelings in creative ways.

- 2 The quality of teaching in this area of learning is unsatisfactory. The teacher provides a narrow range of opportunities in art, craft, and imaginative play, giving the children few opportunities to experiment and explore. The classroom fails to provide a stimulating environment for young children and classroom displays do not generally enhance children's creative appreciation.

112 **Physical development**

- 1 The children make satisfactory progress in their physical development. They enjoy physical activities and participate in physical education lessons with enjoyment. In a dance lesson in the school hall children demonstrate sound body control. They follow instructions with care and understand the difference between fast and slow movements. Many children have a good awareness of space and understand that they need to be careful and not bump into others. However, opportunities to extend such experiences and develop children's large motor skills in outdoor play are restricted as they have insufficient access to large outdoor apparatus and play equipment. Opportunities to use tools and scissors to develop their fine movement skills are also limited.

- 1 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The teacher satisfactorily builds on the children's experiences by providing safe activities, which encourage the children to develop confidence and increasing skill in indoor activities. There are, however, insufficient opportunities for children fully to develop their physical and social skills through regular planned access to the outdoor play area.

114 **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

114 **English**

- 2 Standards in English have improved significantly since the last inspection. National Curriculum assessments in 1999 for pupils aged 11 indicated that the percentage of pupils reaching the national expectation of level 4 was very high in comparison with the national average of all schools. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher level 5 was also above the national average. When these results are compared with those of schools deemed similar, the school is still achieving results which are above average when compared with these similar schools at level 4 and above the national average of similar schools at level 5 and above.

- 3 National Curriculum assessments taken at the age of 7 in 1999 showed that the

pupils' attainment in reading was also very high in comparison with the national average of all schools and above that of schools deemed to be similar. Attainment in writing was also well above the national average for all schools and above that for similar schools. Closer analysis showed that for both reading and writing 100 per cent of pupils reached level 2 and 44 per cent reached level 3 in reading.

- 4 Levels of attainment seen in all areas of English for the majority of pupils, particularly towards the end of both key stages, are very good and well above national expectation. Levels of attainment for the more able pupils are consistently high throughout the school. The school has set realistic targets to improve pupils' attainment further and has developed strategies to help achieve these targets.
- 5 Progress is very good. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are high in comparison to similar schools. By the end of Key Stage 1, attainment in speaking and listening is above national expectation. The very good opportunities provided for pupils to ask and answer questions in class enhance progress. For example pupils in reception offer thoughtful suggestions for spelling in class sentences. Pupils in Year 1 confidently emphasise the use of letter sounds and sound recognition in rhyming words and pupils in Year 2 enthusiastically discuss poems from other countries such as America and China.
- 6 By the end of Key Stage 2 standards in speaking and listening are well above average for the majority of pupils. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are very enthusiastic in their responses to questions such as "What skills did you practise for Sports Day?" Pupils in Years 4 and 5 listen attentively to text during shared text sessions such as "Bill's New Frock", thoroughly enjoying the humour when confidently examining the role of dialogue in opening passages of a story. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 have a very good understanding of emotive and sensational language and contribute very well when discussing the strength of language in different journalistic reports. Pupils listen carefully and seriously reflect on the contributions of others. Confidence and learning is reinforced at the end of the literacy hour when pupils discuss what they have achieved during plenaries at the end of the sessions.
- 7 Standards of attainment at the end of both key stages are well above the national expectation in reading. Pupils at Key Stage 1 read aloud with confidence and enthusiasm. They develop very good word recognition and phonic skills. By the end of the key stage pupils reach a good level of fluency. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, use an appropriate strategies, including picture and phonic clues to help them understand the meaning. Teachers use big books well to support pupils' understanding of stories, whilst drawing pupils' attention to the conventions of written English. A number of pupils in Year 2 expressed a particular love of poetry.
- 8 By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils read fluently, from a wide range of different texts. The systematic development of reading skills, including reading for information, reflects the good progress made by pupils, including those with special educational needs. Pupils develop very good levels of accuracy and fluency through individual and group reading activities. In their understanding of texts, pupils develop literal, inferential, appreciative and evaluative skills very effectively throughout the key stage. In their study skills, most recognise the classification system in the library and develop good use of books to locate information. By the

end of the key stage, a significant number are able to cross-reference sources of information, reorganise and present good examples of work. Very good use is made of the Internet to support reading for information.

- 9 Progress in reading throughout both key stages is very good. Pupils develop reading accuracy and fluency of expression through a range of increasingly difficult texts. The system for recording pupils' progress is consistently good throughout the school. The home-school reading arrangements support pupils very well.
- 10 In response to a key issue in the previous inspection the school has made significant improvements in the quality of pupils' writing by effectively extending the range of purposes and audiences. It has also developed a good variety of teaching strategies which provide more direct guidance and support.
- 11 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in writing is above the national average. Most pupils construct simple sentences and use punctuation correctly. Higher attaining pupils include speech marks in their writing. Pupils in Year 1 in the reception class effectively use word books and banks of words to write simple sentences such as, "Go and get your lunch box", to describe their preparations for lunch. In the Year 1 and Year 2 class younger pupils are able to write and compose their own poems using appropriate pattern. Older pupils make very effective comparisons of poems from other countries, such as "Nicely, Nicely", a poem with no rhyme from America, "Sampan", a poem that tells a story from China and a funny poem which is a variation of the traditional nursery rhyme, "Jack and Jill." At the higher stage of Key Stage 1, pupils' writing is well organised, imaginative and clear. Most pupils use a beginning, middle and ending in their stories. Average and higher attainers effectively extend their ideas in sustained narrative, choosing words carefully both for variety and effect. Teachers teach spelling and handwriting consistently well and standards are good.
- 12 By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in writing is well above average. Pupils write for a wide range of audiences in their English lessons and extensively across other subjects of the curriculum, using a broad and lively vocabulary. Pupils in Year 3 understand the use of commas and use them accurately in lists. They can write a reports such as "Sports Day Report", using sub-headings as paragraphs. Pupils in the Years 4 and 5 class evaluate books such as "Crummy Mummy and Me", by Anne Fine by referring to details and examples in the text. Higher attainers confidently examine the role of dialogue in opening passages of a variety of stories and are able to create other sentences that have similar impact, for example "When Jane Smith woke up in the morning she found she was a boy." Pupils in the Year 5 and 6 class have a very good understanding of the strength of language in different types of journalistic reports. Average and higher attainers use emotive and sensational language such as "irresponsible", "negligent" and "distraught" in their report entitled "Baby Sitters Best Beware!!" The classroom assistant supports lower attaining pupils well in selecting adjectives, adverbs and verbs, such as "excitedly chatting", which describe the baby sitters' actions. In handwriting pupils use a joined script which reflects their own style and is clear and well formed. Pupils take a pride in their finished work, which is very well presented. Throughout the school computers are used effectively to present a range of work, in a variety of formats.

- 13 In the vast majority of other subjects, skills and knowledge in literacy are taught well, emphasising the effective use of specific language and a mature level of discussion. For example, in geography, pupils in Key Stage 2 confidently describe the route between local places such as Heckington and Grantham, using technical language such as “scale” and “street plan” when referring to their maps. There are good examples of descriptive and report writing in history and science. In mathematics, appropriate vocabulary is planned and taught for every year group.
- 14 Across both key stages pupils, including those with special educational needs make very good progress in writing particularly towards the end of both key stages. Pupils’ writing shows very good improvement from communicating meaning through simple words and phrases to being able to present writing with sustained ideas in paragraphs with appropriate punctuation. The literacy hour has improved the range and quality of writing as well as extending the pupils’ understanding of a range of literature. These benefits have improved the quality of English across the curriculum.
- 15 Pupils’ attitudes to learning English are very good throughout the school and this contributes significantly to the high standards of attainment in literacy. They enjoy their work, sustaining interest throughout lessons. Behaviour is very good and pupils show initiative and the ability to work independently. At both key stages pupils take great pride in their work and are pleased to discuss and explain what they are doing. They make good use of information technology, dictionaries and reference books to support their work in all aspects of English.
- 16 The quality of teaching is very good overall. It is satisfactory in lower Key Stage 1 and very good in upper Key Stage 1 and throughout Key Stage 2. In an excellent lesson observed in the Years 5 and 6 class, all pupils, including the more able, were very well challenged. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to extend their own personal development and use their own initiative. There is a very good balance of explanation by the teachers and opportunity for pupils to undertake their own research and investigation. In the majority of classes teaching methods and strategies, both for promoting learning and for managing behaviour are very effective. The teachers intervene effectively and show sensitivity in asking questions and in guiding the pupils. Relationships are very good and help to create a positive learning atmosphere. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Class teachers have positive approaches to pupils with special educational needs and provide work designed to meet their individual needs.
- 17 The school has established very good programmes for developing literacy and the majority of teachers use a consistent approach aimed at raising standards. The subject is very well led and all staff contribute towards planning. Objectives are clear and work appropriately matches pupils’ needs. However there are missed opportunities for the subject co-ordinator to monitor teaching and learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge and manage most pupils well. In the best lessons, they use time efficiently and lessons proceed at a brisk pace. Teachers’ use of language is generally very good and they explain ideas carefully to ensure pupils of different ages understand what is expected of them. However, in a few instances, in the reception and Year 1 class, insufficient time is given for further explanation, particularly for pupils with lower prior attainment.

- 18 The school has carefully analysed and identified its provision for English, along with pupils' attainment. It has established clear priorities for improvement and has worked hard to develop the literacy hour. It has agreed a consistent approach for teaching and assessing pupils' progress and there is well focused support for areas identified as requiring improvement. It has set suitable targets to improve writing, in particular. The school assesses pupils' progress carefully and has determined effective ways in which to record ongoing progress.
- 19 Resources for English are good. The library provides a good resource for independent research, using a classification system, which is understood by the majority of pupils. A good quality reading scheme is in place, along with supportive computer programs. Computer software reinforces the subject well. The school has acquired good resources for the literacy hour, including audio-visual equipment, such as tape recorders for listening and reading, and overhead projectors for shared reading activities.
- 20 The accommodation is good for teaching English. However, in the reception class, there are restrictions for children to have regular access to some creative activities, such as role-play.

133 **Mathematics**

- 1 Results of the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 National Curriculum Tests show that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level was well above the national average. The proportion of pupil reaching the higher level was also well above the national average. When compared to all schools nationally and school deemed similar standards were well above the national average. There was no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
- 2 Results of 1999 end of Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests in mathematics show that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards was well above the national average. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level of attainment was also well above the national average. When compared to all schools and to similar schools, pupils' attainment is well above the national average. Although twice as many boys took the test than girls there was no significant difference between their performance.
- 3 Over the past four years the level of attainment in mathematics of the pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 has been consistently higher than the national average. These higher than average standards are to be found in each aspect of the mathematics curriculum. There has been overall improvement in the quality of mathematical education, except among the reception children where the standards have been static, since the last inspection.
- 4 In Key Stage 1 pupils are very competent in number work and are generally secure with multiplication by 2,5 and 10. They order numbers up to 100 and work with the patterns of multiples on number grids with confidence, discussing with each other and devising their own ways of finding out. They are familiar with simple two

dimensional shapes such as circles, squares and triangles, and three dimensional ones such as spheres, cones, cubes and cylinders, talking with confidence about them. They sort them according to their properties. The pupils use place value, and even or odd numbers. When sorting groups of figures, they discuss among themselves and use a variety of methods, such as block graphs, to present information.

- 5 In Key Stage 2 pupils are confident with negative numbers utilising them as well as positive numbers in creating number patterns on varied number squares, 10 x 10, 8 x 8, and 12 x 12 with equal ease. They understand about a wide range of plane and solid figures discussing their properties accurately and using them to create more complex shapes in, for example design and technology. They estimate mentally the order of magnitude of results they expect when working with calculators and check the results. They deal with questions of time and the use of calendars well. They construct and use frequency diagrams to sort and interpret data effectively and use a variety of methods to demonstrate their findings. They understand probability. They handle the addition, subtraction, multiplication and divisions of simple fractions and recognise relationship between decimals and fractions. They use both when engaging in tasks that require mathematics, such as measuring up materials for design and technology, or handling census data in history.
- 6 Children enter the reception class with above average attainment and make satisfactory progress. They start National Curriculum work slightly above the average expected for their age. There is a lower level of mathematical play, such as water and sand play to lay the foundations for the understanding of capacity and this inhibits progress in this area. This is made good by the attention paid to the use of mathematics in everyday life and through number songs and games in succeeding classes.
- 7 During Key Stage 1 the pupils make good progress. They develop their understanding of shape recognising a widening range of two and three dimensional shapes, using them to create more complex shapes of their own. They grow in understanding of the relationships between numbers and between the four rules of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. They collect and sort data from the variety of activities they engage in during mathematics and numeracy time, but also in other subject areas.
- 8 During Key Stage 2 the pupils make very good progress, particularly towards the end of the key stage. Pupils are challenged to discover mathematical relationships for themselves and to use this knowledge to solve problems. They successfully discover their own best ways of handling mathematical questions and they understand, and use, decimal fractions for example counting on, and backwards, in units of 0.2 or 2.5. They have a good understanding with large numbers and complex computations. The pupils have good knowledge and understanding of the strategies for estimating, rounding figures to the nearest ten or hundred and apply these with increasing ease.
- 9 Throughout the school teachers make good use of increasingly complex mathematical language so that the pupils can express themselves accurately and mathematically. Especially in the mixed Year 5 and 6 class teachers vigorously

challenge the highest attaining pupils to extend their thinking and to try out new ideas. This they do with very good success. The good proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment in tests is the outcome of this challenging teaching.

- 10 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in all aspects of mathematics. Carefully adapted individual education plans and the good quality attention they receive from the classroom assistants support them very well.
- 11 Throughout the school the staff successfully encourage good attitudes to work. The level of control exercised in the reception class inhibits the discovery of number patterns and personal exploration of mathematical ideas, but elsewhere in the school this is effectively encouraged. Pupils throughout both key stages work co-operatively very well. They listen to what other pupils have to say in discussion and share both ideas and resources with generosity and courtesy. The staff expect good behaviour of the pupils and managed them well so that the pupils live up to these expectations. The pupils are regularly considerate towards each other and towards adults. Teachers provide good opportunities for personal development through the tasks which the pupils undertake in the organisation of the subject and in the encouragement beginning in upper Key Stage 1 and most markedly in Years 5 and 6 to take some responsibility for their own learning.
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- 145 All the teaching of mathematics in both key stages was at least good and a sixth of it was very good. The teachers' knowledge and understanding of mathematics and of how pupils learn the subject is good, as are their teaching methods and the organisation of the topics to be learned. All the teachers make good use of the well chosen resources for mathematics, and teach almost all the lessons at a good pace with no waste of time. The teachers know their pupils well and plan the work for individuals and groups carefully based on sound day to day assessment, they provide them with challenging targets which the pupils live up to. The management of the pupils in the numeracy hour is good at Key Stage 1 but very good in the upper half of Key Stage 2. Homework is set regularly, carefully matched to the work in hand, followed up and marked sensitively. This aspect of the mathematics teaching has a good effect on the pupils' learning and attracts support from the parents. The teachers' planning in both key stages followed the pattern of the National Numeracy Strategy very well and was very effective.
- 12 The school makes good use of the support staff in both key stages. They are well trained and prepared and make a significant contribution to the quality of education provided in mathematics.
- 13 The school uses well and imaginatively the good quality resources provided for the introduction of the numeracy hour. The co-ordination of the subject is managed effectively, and the head teacher carries out the monitoring of teaching. The in-service training and support for the teachers is good and the subject has a high profile in the school.
- 14 Mathematics is consciously developed in other areas of the curriculum and is planned into a number of the topics, such as science and geography. The result is that throughout the school mathematics has become not only as a subject in its own right, but a powerful tool in the understanding of other subjects. The good

developments in information technology in both key stages have supported, and been supported by, its use in mathematics.

- 15 The good quality of the mathematical education in the school is due to the care with which the subject is presented, the support the staff have received and their enthusiasm for the subject which makes their good level of skills in teaching even more effective.

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Science

- 1 The results of National Curriculum tests for 11 year olds in 1999 show that standards of attainment are well above the national average at the expected level and above the national average at the higher level. Compared to similar schools, standards are well above the average. Results fell in 1998, but show a significant improvement in 1999. There is no difference in the performance of girls and boys.
- 2 Statutory teacher assessments for seven year-olds in 1999 show that at the expected level, standards are well above the national average and above the national average at the higher level. Compared to similar schools, results at the expected level were well above average and at the higher level were above average. At both key stages, there are no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls.
- 3 From observations of the pupils at work in lessons, and scrutiny of their previous work, inspection findings are consistent with the results of statutory tests and assessments. By the end of both key stages, standards are well above average. In the school's' previous report, standards were mostly average. Present inspection findings show very good improvement.
- 4 In the reception class, children under five and younger Year 1 pupils attain standards that are expected for their age. They know that living things require food to live and that some foods are sweet and some are savory. Pupils can list their favourite foods and most know and identify healthy and unhealthy foods. They can record their choices of food using a graph and most know how to group healthy and unhealthy foods into sets.
- 5 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are beginning to develop good investigative and experimental skills. They use their observational skills effectively when carrying out investigations and they record accurately what they discover. For example they tap glass bottles full, half-full and quarter-full of water and record their findings. Pupils have a secure knowledge of living things. They successfully name the main external features of the human body and they are able to identify the items needed to sustain life. Pupils' understanding of materials and their properties is very good. Pupils recognise and name common materials, such as metal, plastic and wood and they know that some are made whilst other are found naturally. Pupils know that materials undergo changes when heated and they understand that some of these changes can be reversed whilst others cannot. For example, they know that ice can be turned into water and the water turned back to ice but when an egg is

cooked the process cannot be reversed. They know that materials when tapped, scraped and shaken make different sounds. They understand that the sound is caused by objects vibrating such as a string on a guitar. Pupils know that the sound made through vibration can be changed by tightening a string or changing a variable such as the level of water in a glass bottle. Pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of physical processes and they are familiar with simple electrical circuits. Almost all understand that a circuit must be complete for a device such as a bulb to work.

6 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have well developed investigative and experimental skills. They handle equipment safely and carefully. Pupils fully understand the meaning of a fair test and why it is important that test should be fair. Pupils use their scientific knowledge and understanding well to predict what might happen in their investigations and then use their practical skills effectively to test their predictions. All pupils have good knowledge of living things. They know about and understand food chains and describe thoroughly the relationship between various living things. Pupils have a very secure knowledge and understanding of materials and their properties and link this knowledge to everyday familiar phenomena. They understand that some materials are used as insulators and these materials will keep hot things hot and cold things cold. Pupils recognise differences between solids, liquids and gases and know that liquids and gases will take the shape of a given container. They understand that some solids dissolve in water but others do not and they use scientific terms such as solution and saturated solution. Pupils confidently use their knowledge and understanding of reversible and irreversible changes to carry out investigations to support a hypothesis based upon work carried out previously. They make careful observations, recording changes as they occur and many opt to make full use of information technology to monitor and record their results.

7 All pupils, including those with special educational needs make good progress in their scientific knowledge and investigative skills in both key stages. Children under five and younger pupils in Year 1 make satisfactory progress. Pupils in Year 2 learn how sounds are made and they develop confidence in their ability to make predictions based upon knowledge and understanding of materials and physical processes. By Year 3, pupils use their investigative skills well, as when they tested the insulation properties of handles on a range of cutlery. They reinforced their knowledge of materials and made significant gains in their understanding of insulators and how important this information is when making appliances. By Year 5 pupils' scientific skills are good and they make very sensible predictions based upon a sound knowledge and understanding of scientific principles. For example, they know that gases although invisible are used as a valuable energy resource. In Year 6 pupils use correct scientific vocabulary, make very good predictions based upon good scientific understanding and present clearly recorded observations using graphs, charts and explanations.

8 Pupils' attitudes towards science are very good in both key stages and good in the reception class. Pupils enjoy carrying out investigations and are keen to offer suggestions and answer questions. When working in pairs and small groups, pupils co-operate and share resources very well. They respect other opinions and the behaviour of all pupils is consistently very good.

9 The quality of teaching is very good. The quality of teaching in lessons

observed during the inspection varied between satisfactory and excellent. Thirty four per cent of lessons were excellent, 16 per cent were very good, 34 per cent were good and 16 per cent were satisfactory. In the reception class the quality of teaching is satisfactory. The teaching is generally well prepared and the resources used are satisfactory for a whole group introduction. In this lesson pupils receive no opportunity to investigate sweet and savory tastes for themselves. This prevents them from gaining a secure understanding of the differences between these two categories of food. The quality of teaching in a Year 1 and Year 2 class is very good. The teacher gives pupils time to predict, to investigate and to work individually and in small groups. The pace of lessons is brisk and the teacher demonstrates good subject knowledge as she circulates round the class asking questions such as "Why do you think it makes that sound?" Expectations of what pupils are expected to observe and record are very clear. In Key Stage 2 where teaching is excellent the teacher used very effective questioning techniques to challenge the pupils to think about their investigation on reversible and irreversible changes and used assessment well to identify pupils' knowledge and understanding. The purpose of the lessons was made very clear to pupils and they were encouraged to plan their work to ensure that they used the time available as efficiently and effectively as possible. Relationships were very good. This enabled pupils to investigate, enquire and assimilate their thoughts in order to gain a greater understanding. The ethos for learning within the classroom was excellent. The teacher's planning was very detailed and this contributed significantly to the quality of learning and the progress made by the pupils.

10 The science curriculum is broad and balanced and schemes of work are based upon the recommendations provided by the government. It is well planned to provide a range of challenging topics that effectively build upon pupils' prior knowledge, skills and understanding. It makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual development through providing pupils with the opportunity to reflect on the natural world and life cycles. It promotes their social development through regular opportunities for collaborative working. It also develops literacy and numeracy skills well. Pupils use literacy to record observations and conclusions and to plan investigations. They use numeracy skills to make mental calculations of changes in temperature and density and also to record observations using graphs and tally charts. They use information technology skills effectively to record investigations and to monitor outcomes. Procedures for assessment of pupils' attainment and progress are very good. They use a half-termly assessment test effectively to plan work that meets the needs of all pupils and builds successfully on to their prior skills, knowledge and understanding.

11 The school is committed to achieving high standards in science and has worked hard to make improvements. In this the co-ordinator carries out her management role well.

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technology

Information

12 The previous inspection report described information technology as satisfactory. There has been considerable improvement in the provision for the subject and in the standards achieved. Standards in the subject are good and the pupils in both key stages make good progress in most areas of the subject. Only in modelling

does the school rightly recognise the need for further in-service training for the teachers to improve the quality of the provision. The school already has plans in hand to remedy this and has earmarked funds for it to take place.

- 13 Children under five are introduced to computers and become familiar with the ways in which the keyboard and mouse can affect what happens on the screen.
- 14 By end of Key Stage 1 the pupils have made good progress. Pupils start the machines and load the program discs for themselves. They can find the programs and begin to work with them. Pupils undertake word processing, writing their own stories and poems directly on to the computer. They work at language and number programs which provide them with challenging tasks. They use the creative programs to make pictures and designs for calendars for use at home or in school.
- 15 During Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress with pupils in Years 5 and 6 making very good progress. Pupils successfully use the word processing program to produce stories, book reviews and accounts of journeys among many other pieces of writing. They take a great pride in composing accurate and good looking texts to print off. They handle text with confidence, changing fonts, editing the text, saving their work, mixing text and pictures and cutting and pasting text from different sources effectively. The older pupils in particular make good use of the Internet to discover information, for example when comparing life in a village in Kenya with life in Sleaford. They make creative use of the graphics package to make pictures using a variety of techniques to edit their work. Pupils create databases and work with them using computers to make graphs and charts to present information in different ways. The major information technology project is the termly publication of a school magazine very successfully undertaken by the pupils. This uses a wide range of information technology skills as well as bringing together approaches from other curriculum areas.
- 16 All the pupils have equal access to the computers and other information technology resources. The work is so popular that they devote playtimes and lunchtimes to work on the machines. The pupils themselves have created and manage a rota to ensure a fair distribution of time. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, well supported by the staff, both teachers and classroom support assistants, who recognise the extra value for pupils with special needs that information technology can bring.
- 17 Throughout the school pupils make good use of the range of other information technology apparatus, for example tape players and recorders, disc players and videos.
- 18 No class teaching of information technology was observed during the inspection. From observation of teachers' support of pupils working on their own, the support offered by ancillaries and helpers, and from a scrutiny of the work produced by the pupils, the teaching of the subject throughout the school is judged to be good. The school has made very good use of the opportunities afforded by their involvement in the National Grid for Learning, and their connection to Netlinc. The staff have made effective use of the good opportunities provided for in-service training, so that they all have achieved the standard of Royal Society of Arts 'Clait' level 1 in word processing, database and spreadsheet work. This scheme has also provided

the basis of the scheme of assessment being developed for the subject. In addition three of the teachers have attended the Netlinc users' training course. This broad base of in-service training and skill development among all the staff supports the good quality of teaching overall. The teachers convey their high expectations to the pupils, fuelling their already high level of enthusiasm for the subject.

- 19 The teachers base their day to day planning effectively on the school's scheme of work. This is well conceived and closely related to the national Quality and Curriculum Agency (QCA) proposals linked to a commercial programme together with support from Netlinc. The scheme covers the National Curriculum comprehensively and provides a good level of support for the staff. Teachers maintain their generally high level of competence well within the context of information technology. The very good relations established between staff and pupils enables the latter to work with the minimum of supervision when they are consolidating their information technology skills and using it as a tool in other subjects.
- 20 The school makes very good use of the good quality resources for the subject during the whole of the school day and also for the after school computer club. This is so popular that pupils have to take turns to belong.
- 21 The pupils respond very well to work in information technology and are keen to learn new skills. They choose to work during break and lunchtimes, so keen are they that they have a rota for use of the machines. The pupils run this system very effectively.
- 22 Information technology plays a significant role in the provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is used in religious education for finding out about religions and their beliefs and practices. The production of the school magazine involves the pupils in interviewing the people of the parish and provides them with the challenge of important independent work. Pupils also use information technology effectively for gathering information about their own and other cultures.
- 23 The co-ordination of the subject is enormously enthusiastic. There is a very clear educational direction for the subject which has become a source of intellectual excitement in the school. Teaching and learning are well supported and monitored by the head teacher. The ethos for learning of this subject is excellent, the school has made it an exciting adventure in which all the pupils can engage.

172 **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

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Art

- 1 The previous inspection report identified standards in art to be well below average in Key Stage 1 and unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2. The school has made energetic and successful efforts to reverse this situation. Observation of those lessons available during the inspection confirms statements in the school's documentation that these weaknesses have been overcome. Evidence from the displays in classrooms and corridors and photographs of work undertaken in the recent past further support this judgement.
- 2 Standards in art at both key stages are satisfactory and the quality of art education is improving.
- 3 The children under five make satisfactory progress overall in those creative activities which lead on to art in the National Curriculum. A lower level of free experimentation and play in this class, than is desirable, hampers their development across the full range of creative artwork.
- 4 Progress in art through Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. By the end of the key stage the pupils are achieving standards of work in a range of activities such as drawing, painting and printing that are in line with what is expected of pupils of the age of seven. They paint with a good eye for colour and print effectively using a number of different materials to achieve a variety of effects. They draw and paint observational pictures, with the highest attainers drawing and painting what they actually see rather than what they think they ought to see.
- 5 During Years 1 and 2 the pupils not only record what they see with increasing confidence but draw imaginative pictures with developing skill. They explore a growing range of media, such as paints and coloured pens and pencils effectively. They talk with increasing confidence about what they have drawn. Pupils make use of information technology throughout Key Stage 1. They design pictures on the computer which are then printed off and used to make calendars. They work in cloth, exploring different textures as well as colours and design.
- 6 The progress pupils make through Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. At the end of the key stage they are attaining levels of competence that are at least in line with what is expected of pupils of the age of eleven and a significant minority are achieving levels in advance of that. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 in particular are exploring varieties of ways in which they can express themselves. During Key Stage 2 the quality of the pupils' painting and drawing improves markedly and they are more assured in what they attempt to record. In many cases their observational drawings are sensitive and accurate. They use their sketchbooks to record what they have seen, and they use them to record the first steps in their designs. The school treats art as complementary with design technology, and uses skills learnt in art in the making up of the pupils' designs. Pupils use information technology for more advanced work, adapting images captured from other sources and adapting them for their own designs.
- 7 One significant effect of the very informative new scheme of work has been to extend the range of media that is used and to encourage pupils to experiment with different ways of, for example, printing or decorating things they have made. The

skills developed in art are used for other areas of the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively by the well trained classroom assistants so that these pupils make good progress.

- 8 The teaching of art is at least satisfactory and in some cases, among pupils from Years 5 and 6, it is good. The knowledge and understanding of the subject is sound and the planning indicates a growing security in subject knowledge that is developing into more adventurous teaching. Planning in art pays appropriate attention to the development of skills. These are then available for use in connection with other subjects. The teachers' expectations for their pupils are growing as the pupils respond well to this expression of confidence in their skills. Teachers discuss pupils' work with them and assess it for reports to parents. They also use this assessment to develop both the programmes of study and the work of individual pupils. Standards are improving.
- 9 The pupils enjoy the work they are given to do in art. They are excited by many of the projects they undertake and take a pride in what they are doing. They work together well, and are sensitive in the comments they make about each other's work. The subject is well co-ordinated. The development of teachers' skills through the programme of in-service training includes art and has been effective. It is acknowledged by the school that more attention needs to be placed on three-dimensional work though firm steps to extend the curriculum further are awaiting the publication of the changes to the National Curriculum in the coming year.
- 10 Art makes very important contributions to the provision made for the pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It fosters spiritual development by the opportunities it affords for self expression and development. Through art the pupils are made aware of their own cultural heritage, though less is done to introduce them to the artistic heritage of other cultures.

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Design and technology

- 1 The previous inspection report indicated that standards were in line with those expected for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. Only one lessons was seen during the inspection week but scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work and discussions with pupils and the co-ordinator confirm that standards are in line with those expected for pupils aged 11 years.
- 2 In reception, pupils consider healthy and unhealthy foods and they observe and help to make a green salad and a fresh fruit salad. They mix different fruits together testing the finished result for flavour and colour. In Year 1 and Year 2, the pupils develop skills and techniques in joining materials together by a variety of means including glue, string, staples and paper fasteners. They use simple tools such as scissors with increasing confidence and accurately cut out figures of people joining legs, arms and head as a moving part using a split-pin. Older pupils are able to identify the materials and tools which they need and draw a labelled sketch. For example, they make plans of a variety of musical instruments. They use these successfully to make their instrument and then play them to assess the quality of sound. When playing and evaluating their instruments, pupils make some perceptive comments such as "I should have made the body deeper to get a better sound". Pupils use finishing techniques such as painting to enhance their

finished product.

3 By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils improve their making skills and measure, mark out and shape a range of materials, using additional tools and techniques at a suitable level for their age. They develop their design skills to an extent which enables them to identify in appropriate detail the resources required, describe the stages of construction and make critical evaluations of their designs and products. For example, when designing shelters pupils consider how to strengthen the corner joints applying a variety of ways. During construction the choice of joint is not always successful and pupils use good understanding of the design and make process, going back to their original design to reconsider the basic structure. In Year 3 and Year 4 pupils make good use of a mathematics net to design and make a shopping carrier bag. They make good reference to size and to a suitable method for attaching a handle. Pupils are fully aware that the accuracy of measuring and joining determines the success of the bag. In this they are very careful, using very good mathematical skills to mark, measure and cut and a shape that has well defined straight sides.

4 Across the school, pupils have positive attitudes to learning which impact significantly on the progress that pupils make. They work with commitment and understanding. In all lessons pupils cooperate well, take responsibility for their work and show respect for each other's work. All pupils handle tools and materials safely. Older pupils comment critically but supportively on the work of others in the class.

5 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In lessons teachers make good links with other curriculum areas. For example, Year 6 pupils made shelters as part of a topic on World War II. This type of link enables pupils to design and make a product for a purpose and gives good opportunities to evaluate and assess its effectiveness. Teachers' planning is good and teachers have clear ideas about what skills pupils need to develop.

6 The school has recently introduced the recommended scheme of work outlined by the government, and uses this as a framework for all planning. The school uses its good resources effectively throughout both key stages. It makes no formal assessment of pupils' progress currently although it encourages pupils to write their own evaluations. Teachers make effective use of portfolios of photographs kept by the school to illustrate pupils' progress in the development of skills, knowledge and understanding.

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Geography

1 There were few lessons in geography during the inspection. Evidence gained from plans, discussions with teachers and pupils and the scrutiny of pupils' work shows that pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress throughout the school.

2 Younger pupils in the school recognise similarities and differences between their own locality and others. They can identify compare features of an area, such as

those which are attractive or unattractive, and begin to note differences in land use. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils make their own clear maps of the area, and record their routes to and from school. They understand the value of using secondary sources, such as photographs and drawings for information.

- 3 At Key Stage 2, pupils use and interpret maps and globes. They learn about scale and can locate places and follow routes, using four figure grid references. For example, they locate local towns such as Sleaford, Heckington and Grantham. Most can use the contents and index pages of atlases and recognise different sources of evidence, such as pictures, books and the Internet when comparing differences and similarities between Kaptalamwa in Kenya and Sleaford. Older pupils understand the effects of weather and pollution on the environment. They can identify the capital cities of Europe, a number of oceans and countries of the world and talk confidently about river ports of the Thames, Rhine and Seine.
- 4 Pupils' attitudes to geography are positive. During discussions with Key Stage 2 pupils, they were eager to explain their work in detail. In lessons they co-operate well in groups, sharing ideas and resources responsibly. They present their work neatly taking pride in what they are doing. They enjoy visits to such places as the Leeds Weather Centre to support this aspect of the curriculum.
- 5 The geography teaching observed during the inspection was good. The comprehensive policy and national scheme of work provide good support for the teaching. Detailed long-term plans ensure continuity and progression throughout the school. The teachers are secure in their knowledge of what is to be taught and are well supported through effective in-service training. The planning offers a proper balance between knowledge, understanding and the development of geographical skills. There are high, but realistic, expectations of what the pupils will achieve. Associated fieldwork provides the pupils with an effective range of experiences, and plays a significant part in the development of the pupils as independent learners. Teachers plan a good balance of topics across the mixed aged classes and often make good links between geography and other subjects. Many plans provide good opportunities for reinforcing pupils' numeracy and literacy skills. For example, when studying the local area, pupils make a block graph showing the proportion of parents who work in local towns and villages. Within the same topic, they study local newspaper articles such as "Villagers of Heckington oppose plans to transform village showground."
- 6 Resources are good and meet the requirements of topics. The outdoor area provides a good resource for fieldwork and pupils regularly visit local places of interest as part of their studies. Visitors also make a good contribution to pupils' learning. For example, local individuals share their detailed knowledge of the local community and personal experience of third world travel.

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History

- 7 There were no history lessons during the week of the inspection. Evidence was gained from medium term planning, lesson plans, photographs, display, pupils' work and discussion with teachers, pupils and the subject co-ordinator. All pupils, including those with special educational needs make good progress.

- 8 In Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress and by the age of seven have gained a sense of chronology and a secure understanding of what history means. They know that history can be learned from first hand sources. Pupils examine major differences between their present lives and past times such as the childhood of their grandparents. They make comparisons with old and modern toys and learn how our toys are different from those in the past. They are introduced to the method of historical study using books, pictures and artefacts.
- 9 At Key Stage 2, pupils show good understanding of chronology. They have studied the Roman settlement in Britain and have looked at the society in Tudor times. Pupils in the Years 3 and 4 class learn about the key elements of Ancient Egyptian society. They research archaeological findings, especially in relation to Tutankhamun and have an understanding that this civilisation once flourished and then died. Older pupils have a good understanding of the effect that World War II had on the children of Britain. Pupils can discuss differences and similarities between different times and recognise the main events that influenced history. Well planned visits to places such as Oxburgh Hall enhance the study of history, and pupils learn about the differences between the lives of the rich and poor during Tudor times.
- 10 The pupils write interesting, careful accounts of the work they have done in history. That produced by the older pupils is of a high standard demonstrating their ability to describe events, for example, in their study of life during the Second World War. The pupils enjoy their studies in history. They work well together, listen courteously to each other's opinions and are sensitive to the beliefs and feelings aroused by studies in history.
- 11 A particular strength of the teaching is the enthusiasm for the subject, which the teachers share with their pupils. The pupils catch their enthusiasm and become independent learners increasingly assuming responsibility for aspects of their own learning as they move through the school. Teachers' knowledge of history includes a familiarity with the local traditions, places and people. They plan thoroughly and base it soundly upon historical skills and knowledge. There is a good policy and national scheme of work upon which they base their plans. The school is consequently meeting the National Curriculum requirements in full. Teachers carefully mark pupils' work in all classes. The enthusiastic co-ordinator leads the subject well. Teachers select the resources provided for history well and use them imaginatively. They make good use of all available accommodation and resources, both within and outside school.

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Music

- 1 Pupils' attainment is above average by the end of Key Stage 2. Throughout school, all pupils including those with special educational needs, make good progress in lessons and over time. They make good progress in listening and appraising and in composing and performing. The last inspection found music to be in line with standards expected for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Since the last inspection there has been an improvement in standards across both key stages. This is due to a combination of very good teaching including good use of specialist knowledge, very good resources and use of a

good scheme of work to support the non-specialist teacher.

- 2 In reception and in Key Stage 1 pupils sing a range of simple songs, nursery rhymes and action songs. They sing tunefully and enthusiastically and all enjoy the inclusion of actions as they sing. Pupils can identify the sounds made by different instruments in a piece of music and can explain whether a piece of music is “happy” or “sad”. By the end of the key stage they can name, play and explain the use of a variety of tuned and untuned instruments and describe their effects.
- 3 By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils understand musical terms such as “ostinato”. They sing tunefully and can hold a tune whilst others sing against them. Pupils’ knowledge of conventional musical notation is very good and their musical vocabulary exceeds that normally expected of 11 year olds. Pupils’ cultural understanding develops further as they listen to music from different eras and cultures. This is linked effectively by the teachers to the topic at the time. For example, Year 5 and Year 6 pupils listened and danced to the music of Glen Miller’s “In the Mood” as part of their history topic about the Second World War. They correctly compared this music to the song ‘We’ll meet again’ recognising differences between the variety of styles. Pupils know what makes the music different, and explain the feelings it evokes and explain what they like and dislike.
- 4 Progress is good at both key stages for pupils of all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs. Pupils in reception and Year 1 develop an understanding of pitch. They understand simple rhythm patterns and learn the names of a variety of musical instruments. They develop the ability to sing together in tune. Older pupils in Key Stage 1 develop good levels of musical appreciation. One Year 2 pupil explained that he liked singing “The Angel Gabriel came from Heaven” because it made him feel peaceful. In Key Stage 2 pupils learn to sing in round and to create music in different styles. Older pupils have developed the ability to recognise different musical time signatures, such as 4/4 time and understand the number of beats in a bar. Pupils in Year 6 can compose and play their own musical patterns and those who play recorders perform with very good knowledge, understanding and skill.
- 5 Attitudes to learning are very good at both key stages. Pupils respond very well to opportunities they are given to make music and to occasions for musical appreciation. They are very well behaved in lessons and work together very well in small groups at both key stages. They listen attentively and thoughtfully when others are performing and show appreciation of others’ good work.
- 6 The quality of teaching is good. Although some teachers have limited subject knowledge they use the scheme of work well, preparing thoughtfully prior to lessons. Teachers with very good subject knowledge are supportive of colleagues, helping them with planning and choice of lessons to suit the ability of the pupils they teach. The headteacher carefully monitors planning and this ensures that the music work is progressively more demanding as pupils move through the school. In the best lessons there was a brisk pace and a clear purpose. Teachers show enthusiasm and energy in the way they introduce lessons and provide pupils with very good challenges. They encourage pupils to improve their performance and composing skills by providing good opportunities for them to demonstrate their talents. All teachers use praise effectively to enhance pupils’ self-esteem. In Year

6 the teacher demonstrates an important understanding of the need for “musical noise” at certain times but her very good control and very good relationships with pupils enable her to bring them to silent order when necessary. Making music is great fun in these lessons and pupils respond in a very mature way. Resources for learning are used very well. It all results in progress that is often very good.

7 Musical activity extends to include several extra-curricular clubs such as those for recorder, guitar and choir. Around 50 pupils meet regularly for choir and recorder practice. These pupils have a wide range of opportunities to perform during school assemblies, in church and within the local community of Sleaford. Music plays a positive and significant part in pupils’ social and cultural development.

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206 Physical education

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1 The pupils’ progress in physical education was identified in the previous inspection report as good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. The teaching was satisfactory on the whole with some good teaching observed.

2 There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Progress in physical education by the end of Key Stage 1 is good, as is the progress of the older pupils by the end of Key Stage 2. The levels of attainment observed were in each case in advance of what is expected of pupils aged seven and eleven respectively.

3 The provision for physical development for the under fives is limited by the lack of opportunities for free play with appropriate outdoor equipment.

4 In both key stages pupils are aware of the place physical education plays in maintaining a healthy lifestyle and understand the need to warm up before, and cool down after, strenuous activity. They pay attention to instructions and are careful to observe rules, importantly those concerned with health and safety, even when excited by the game. Their behaviour is consistently good and they display good sporting attitudes learning to win and to lose with good grace. They develop skills in planning strategies in games well. They develop, very successfully, physical skills such as stick and ball control in hockey, or passing, throwing and kicking rugby and soccer shaped balls. They use these skills to good effect in the competitive sports in which the school successfully engages. They carefully and co-operatively plan sequences of movement in gymnastics and in dance and evaluate them so that they can improve the sequences in subsequent performances.

5 While no swimming was taking place during the current term records indicate that pupils make good progress in swimming skills. Almost all swim 25 metres by the end of Key Stage 2. A significant number of pupils either swim privately with their families or belong to the local swimming club. The school also takes part in local athletics meetings and has a good record of success. The pupils participate in outdoor and adventurous activities during their residential trips.

6 The school provides good support for pupils with special educational needs and they make good progress. Pupils with special skills receive good support and encouragement to develop their skills further.

- 7 The teaching of physical education is good. The teachers plan effectively, ensuring that they cover all aspects of the National Curriculum for physical education. They have a good knowledge of the subject and of how primary school pupils acquire skills in the various elements that make up physical education in school. The teachers expect the pupils to work hard and to perform well, and these high expectations are very largely met. The teachers' enthusiasms also support a good range of extra-curricular sporting clubs and team activities. The school has an enviable reputation in the district for its sporting prowess. This is achieved without an excessive concentration on the good performers, as all pupils are encouraged to take part. The teachers make good use of the wide range of resources and equipment. They make good use of a well fitted hall for gymnastics, dance and games.
- 8 The teachers have a good knowledge of the skills and abilities of their pupils, and they use this effectively to encourage improved performance and levels of skill.
- 9 The pupils' response to physical education lessons is generally good. They listen carefully to instructions and carry them out with a good will. They are supportive of each other and work well co-operatively. When pupils' enthusiasms run away with them, teachers quickly and effectively recall them to a more orderly state without stifling their enthusiasm. Boys and girls work well together and the school policy for mixed teams enables all pupils to participate in physical education activities effectively.

215 PART C: INSPECTION DATA

215 SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 1 A team of four inspectors undertook the inspection of Our Lady of Good Counsel R. C. Primary School. Over a four day period they completed a total of ten inspector days in the school.

Prior to the inspection:

- they held meetings with the headteacher, the chair of governors and the teaching staff;
- the Registered Inspector held a meeting with 15 parents;
- the team analysed documentation from the school.

During the inspection:

- they saw 34 lessons, representing almost 32 hours of classroom observation;
- they held discussions with the headteacher and the governing body;
- they held planned discussions with the teaching staff. These focused on subjects and whole school issues;
- the registered Inspector had daily meetings with the headteacher;
- inspectors examined the written work of many pupils. They scrutinised all the available written work of a representative sample of pupils from each year group and individual pupil record folders containing reports and samples of previous work.
- they heard a representative sample of pupils from each year group reading and questioned pupils on their knowledge and understanding of books;
- they spent time talking to pupils about their knowledge, understanding and skills in different subjects.
- they made observations of pupils arriving and leaving school on foot, by car and during breaks and at lunchtimes.
- inspectors observed several extra-curricular activities;
- they inspected attendance registers;
- they scrutinised teachers' planning documents;

- inspectors scrutinised pupils' school reports, reading records, homework books, newsletters and information sent home to parents.

• **DATA AND INDICATORS**

• **Pupil data**

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR – Y6	138	0	16	0

• **Teachers and classes**

• **Qualified teachers (YR – Y6)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	5.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	25:1

• **Education support staff (YR – Y6)**

Total number of education support staff:	2
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	15

• **Financial data**

Financial year:	1998/9
	£
Total Income	189,532
Total Expenditure	196,786
Expenditure per pupil	1,458
Balance brought forward from previous year	11,850
Balance carried forward to next year	2,600

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out: 188
 Number of questionnaires returned: 66

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	64	32	3	1	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	56	41	2	1	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	30	47	21	2	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	36	48	7	9	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	42	44	9	5	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	58	36	6	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	41	48	11	0	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	41	50	6	3	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	62	33	5	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	59	33	8	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	68	27	3	2	0

Other issues raised by parents

Parents did not raise any further issues.