

INSPECTION REPORT

KNIGHTON FIELDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Leicester

LEA area: Leicester City

Unique reference number: 120066

Headteacher: Sue Houghton

Reporting inspector: Tony Painter
21512

Dates of inspection: 19th – 22nd March 2001

Inspection number: 188848

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Knighton Fields Road West
Leicester
Leicestershire

Postcode: LE2 7NP

Telephone number: 0116 233 0666

Fax number: 0116 233 0666

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Anne Clark

Date of previous inspection: 5th - 6th March 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Tony Painter 21512	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Music English as an additional language	What kind of school is it? The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Peter Oldfield 1112	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
John Evans 20404	Team inspector	English Geography History Physical education Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Heather Toynbee 11976	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Equal opportunities Science Art and design Design and technology Religious education	

The inspection contractor was:

Schoolhaus Ltd
Suite 17
BPS Business Centre
Brake Lane
Walesby, Nottinghamshire
NG22 9HQ

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33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	18
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	19
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	21
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	22
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	26

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is an average sized community primary school for pupils aged from three to eleven years with 195 pupils. In addition, a nursery class caters for seven full-time and 40 part-time children. The number of pupils in the school has been getting smaller over recent years. Substantial numbers of pupils leave and join the school during the year. Most pupils live in the urban area around the school, which is recognised as having many social priorities. The proportion of pupils eligible for free meals, at 36 per cent, is above the national average for this type of school. Pupils come mostly from white backgrounds and only four have English as an additional language. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is well below average. There are 74 pupils on the register of special educational needs, which is above the national average. Of these pupils, six have statements of special educational need.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school. The headteacher, senior staff and governors manage the school very well. They identify the priorities for improvement and tackle them well. This has raised the quality of education, particularly the planning of the curriculum and the good quality of teaching. As a result, pupils' attitudes to school are good and behaviour is satisfactory. The improvements are helping pupils to do better in their work, although the overall standards are still too low. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Good teaching and very good relationships are raising the standards of pupils' work, particularly in reading, mathematics and science.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress.
- Effective management of behaviour is raising standards and focuses pupils on their work.
- Strong and purposeful management creates very effective teamwork that leads to successful school improvement.
- Good evaluation of the school's performance is identifying appropriate priorities and helping standards to improve.
- The school provides well for pupils' personal development.

What could be improved

- Standards, particularly in English, mathematics and science, are not high enough.
- Children in the nursery need more opportunities to talk about their activities.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was inspected in April 1996, when it was found to be offering an unsatisfactory standard of education. It was subsequently monitored three times by Her Majesty's Inspectors, who found improvements so that the special measures were removed in March 1998. However, weaknesses were identified in many aspects of the school's work, including the standards achieved by pupils and the school's systems for monitoring and evaluating teaching and pupils' progress. Good improvements have continued to be made since that time in all areas identified and the quality of teaching has improved significantly. This has led to better standards in English, mathematics and science, although these have not yet shown in the results of National Curriculum tests. Teachers' planning has sharper focus and makes increasing use of the very good systems of assessment that have been introduced. Pupils' behaviour has improved as a result of a clear structure that is well understood by all pupils. The management of the school is much improved with very good leadership and effective involvement of the governing body.

STANDARDS

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

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

Pupils' results in these tests have been consistently very weak in recent years and shown no improvement when compared to all schools. In 1999 and 2000, they were in the lowest five per cent of the country in English and science. However, the attainment of children entering the school is very low. Most have extremely poor skills, particularly in all aspects of language, and this limits their rate of learning, particularly in the infants. Inspectors found signs of improving standards through the school, particularly amongst younger pupils who have benefited at an early stage from the improvements in planning and teaching. Pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests at age seven are better than those at age eleven. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and this helps them to make good progress. Pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory, given their very low start, although overall standards in the school could be higher. Improvements are the result of clearer planning of the curriculum and more consistently good teaching. As a result, the trend of standards is now rising and should lead to improved results in the future. When pupils begin the National Curriculum, attainment is still well below national averages. Pupils at the age of seven and in their final year at school show attainment in mathematics and science that is below national averages. Their performance in English, however, remains well below that expected with particular weaknesses in writing. This detracts from their standards in other subjects and attainment is below average. However, pupils achieve average standards in music, physical education and art and design. The school is setting ambitious but attainable targets for pupils' attainment and using very good assessment systems to track their progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes. They like school and are keen and eager to take part in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Most pupils behave well at all times. A few sometimes behave badly but the school has good systems to deal with this.
Personal development and relationships	Very good relationships throughout the school contribute effectively to pupils' personal development.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory, although the school has worked hard to address this.

Very good relationships and a clear strategy for managing pupils have led to improved behaviour through the school. The school has set up good systems for checking pupils' attendance and only a few pupils have poor attendance.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching was satisfactory or better in 95 per cent of lessons. More than two thirds of lessons were good or better and 35 per cent were very good or better. The five per cent of unsatisfactory teaching was not located in any particular subject or age group. The consistency and quality of teaching is much improved since the last inspection and as a result pupils' learning is improved. Teaching meets the needs of all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs, for example, have clear targets to help them improve that teachers use effectively and this helps them to learn. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is particularly strong in the reception class. Effective teamwork and a well-planned approach help children to settle quickly into the nursery. However, teachers are not clear enough about what children will learn from all activities. There are too few opportunities for children to talk about these activities with adults. Teaching in the rest of the school is good. Teaching of both English and mathematics is good and teachers make effective use of national advice on teaching literacy and numeracy. Teachers give pupils many good opportunities to use their developing literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.

Very good relationships form the foundation of the good teaching, and lessons are often lively and good humoured. This gives pupils confidence and makes them keen to learn. Teachers make good use of resources to interest and motivate pupils, so that they develop greater understanding and knowledge. Teachers help pupils to learn by good use of homework. Marking is often supportive and helps pupils to build confidence. It is less effective in identifying clearly what pupils need to do next in order to improve their work. Useful opportunities to help pupils to do better are therefore sometimes missed.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school has made substantial improvements in the curriculum and guidance to teachers since the last inspection.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good identification of concerns and clear targets help all these pupils to make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	No pupils are at an early stage of learning English and all are effectively supported where necessary.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good provision is made, with particular strengths in helping pupils to gain social skills. A strong moral framework is established and this is helping pupils to improve their behaviour. Pupils have many opportunities to learn about people of different backgrounds.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are good arrangements for ensuring the day-to-day welfare, health and safety of pupils and making them feel secure.

The school makes good efforts to involve parents in their children's schooling and gives good information. However, the effort is not always rewarded and attendance at some parents' meetings is often low. Very good systems for assessing and evaluating the attainment of pupils have been introduced. These are used well to make sure the curriculum is challenging and are increasingly used by teachers to ensure an accurate match of work to pupils' needs.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher gives very strong and positive leadership, and subject co-ordinators play an active role in developing their subjects. Effective teamwork is leading to good improvements in teaching and learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are increasingly involved with the school and are aware of the strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very thorough evaluations of teaching, performance and other information are used to improve the school well.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of all resources available to the school. Systems for financial management are good.

Good levels of staffing and resources are used effectively to promote the learning of all pupils. The accommodation is satisfactory but the lack of a field restricts the range of opportunities for pupils. The clear and positive leadership has been an important factor in the school's improvement. Good measures are taken to ensure that all decisions offer good value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers and other staff are friendly and supportive. Good teaching helps pupils to work hard and learn well. Children enjoy coming to school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The homework that pupils are set. Pupils' behaviour. The range of after-school activities. The management of the school

Very few parents returned the questionnaire or attended the meeting before the inspection. The inspection team agrees with the positive points raised by parents but does not support the negative ones. Teachers set appropriate homework that is used effectively to help pupils to learn. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory and most have good attitudes to school. The range of extra-curricular activities has improved and is now good. Very good management is making a significant impact in improving the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests at ages seven and eleven have been consistently weak in all assessed subjects. In 2000, the results at age seven were well below national averages in English, mathematics and science and below those found in similar schools. At age eleven, results were in the lowest five per cent nationally in English and science and well below average in mathematics. When compared to results in similar schools, the results were below average in mathematics, well below in science and in the bottom five per cent in English. The results seem to show a slight decline through the school and over the years. This is mainly attributable to the substantial movement of pupils into and out of the school and the changing abilities of pupils in the school. Many pupils leave before completing their education and a similarly high number arrive close to the National Curriculum tests at age eleven. During the last year, for example, 56 pupils left and 48 pupils joined in addition to those starting at the normal times. The school's very detailed analysis of pupils' attainment clearly shows that pupils leaving the school perform better than those joining the school. Similarly, the analysis shows that pupils make overall progress within the school that is at least in line with that expected nationally. Many pupils lack confidence when facing test papers, despite the school's effective support. Girls have performed less well than boys in the National Curriculum tests, particularly at age eleven. The school's analysis is being used effectively to understand this and to provide support to raise their attainment.
2. The inspection findings show that effective teaching throughout the school is having a beneficial effect on standards. This improvement is reflected in the higher targets that the school has set for pupils' attainment in future years, particularly from 2002. The overall standards for the current eleven year old pupils are below average by the time they leave the school. However, attainment in English is still well below the levels typical for their age. There are weaknesses in pupils' literacy skills that affect their ability to write creatively. However, skills in English are improving throughout the school, largely as a result of the well-planned and carefully targeted action that teachers have taken. This is giving teachers a clearer structure and helping them to plan to develop skills well in literacy lessons. Pupils' reading is improving substantially although it is still below the national average at age eleven. There are signs of better writing in lessons although the gains that pupils make in exercises in English lessons are not always shown in pupils' own writing. For example, pupils' spelling and use of simple punctuation in science reports is often weak. A number of well-targeted initiatives, such as Chatterbox, are effectively helping to improve the speaking skills of pupils and leading to higher standards.
3. Pupils' numeracy skills are improving as a result of effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. In particular, teachers have focused effectively on improving pupils' mental arithmetic skills and developing specialist vocabulary. Pupils have good opportunities to use their developing skills in other subjects, such as design and technology and information and communication technology. The school is gathering good information on pupils' attainment, particularly in English and mathematics. This is being used effectively to set appropriately challenging targets and raise attainment.
4. Around a third of pupils have special educational needs, particularly in literacy. Teachers use a variety of effective methods to successfully boost their confidence and raise their achievements in reading and writing. Under-achieving pupils, for example, improve reading and comprehension skills through well-targeted support. This enables pupils with special educational needs to make good progress and achieve in line with their capabilities. A very small number of pupils speak English as an additional language. None of these pupils is at the

early stage of language acquisition and they are given all necessary support to make good progress with the other pupils.

5. Children enter the nursery with attainment that is well below average, particularly in their communication, language and literacy and social skills. As a result of good teaching and planning in all the areas of learning¹, all children make good progress through the Foundation Stage². By the time they begin Year 1, however, their attainment is still well below average. Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They settle into routines, gain confidence and begin to show interest in what is going on around them. Very poor language skills restrict their achievement in many areas of learning. In the nursery, few children show confidence in speaking to the class or groups. Adult-led activities are often effective in improving speech and giving confidence. However, many opportunities to talk about the range of other activities are often missed. Children in the reception class enjoy listening to stories and the most able develop recognition of letters and words. Children develop their counting skills and extend their mathematical vocabulary well, particularly in the reception class. They make sound progress but attainment is still well below the nationally expected standards. Children make good gains in their knowledge and understanding of the world from a very low base. Observation skills improve soundly and children use simple tools and materials with growing confidence. Children develop physical skills soundly overall although fine skills, such as using scissors, are less well developed. Children use a range of media to make pictures and sing simple songs enthusiastically.
6. In English, pupils achieve standards that are well below the national averages at ages seven and eleven with the greatest weaknesses in writing. Infant pupils listen carefully to the teachers and follow spoken instructions accurately. Many are confident at speaking but a small but significant number needs much encouragement. They read a range of common words and begin to discuss the plots of stories and the differences between characters. Many below average pupils, however, still need much support. Most pupils write simple accounts in phrases, often without basic punctuation, but these are logically ordered. Spelling is weak and pupils do not use the knowledge of sounds and letters they have from their reading. By the age of eleven, most pupils respond appropriately in conversations but many still lack the vocabulary to express themselves clearly. They read accurately and with developing confidence. When talking about their books, higher attaining pupils clearly explain what has happened, referring to the text when necessary. Other pupils still have limited understanding of their reading. Writing is fluent and joined, using full stops and capital letters correctly. Although most spelling is logical, there are still many inaccuracies. Stories are often limited in their scope and few show imagination and inventiveness.
7. Attainment in mathematics is below average by the age of seven. Pupils have increasing knowledge of number to 20. Some higher attaining pupils are developing quick mental arithmetic skills such as doubling and halving. All pupils understand simple addition and subtraction and use their developing skills in problems, such as those involving money. In the juniors, pupils increase their understanding of shapes and their properties. They learn their multiplication tables and use these to solve problems of increasing complexity. Most use fractions with confidence and gain speed in their calculations. They collect information systematically and display this in graphs. By the time they are eleven, many are close to the expected levels but few are consistently above this.
8. Standards in science are below average by the age of seven and eleven. Infants understand how plants and animals grow and correctly identify the main parts of a flower. They understand basic properties of electricity and magnets. Learning is often restricted, however, by their poor language skills. In the junior classes, pupils use measuring instruments such as

¹ These refer to personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

² The Foundation Stage begins from when children reach the age of three and the last year of this stage is often described in schools as the reception year.

thermometers with increasing confidence and accuracy. They understand a range of properties of materials and use this knowledge effectively to identify usefulness for different purposes. Pupils develop sound understanding of many aspects of scientific testing such as making predictions and drawing conclusions.

9. New resources, including computers, and new curriculum planning is helping to improve standards in information and communication technology. However, pupils' attainment is still below that expected nationally by the ages of seven and eleven. Although pupils are gaining relevant skills, many still lack confidence and the knowledge of how to apply the techniques they are learning. Infant pupils use computers with increasing skill and understanding. They have basic skills in word processing and in operating computers. In the juniors, pupils make effective links with their work in other subjects and this adds relevance to their learning. By the age of eleven, pupils take digital photographs and access information from CD-ROMs and the Internet. They combine pictures and text in presentations with increasing confidence, using information gained from their work in other subjects.
10. Pupils achieve below average standards in religious education by the ages of seven and eleven. Infant pupils have knowledge of Creation stories from different cultures. They have some understanding of the beliefs and traditions of Christianity but their knowledge of other religions is limited. Junior age pupils' learning is sometimes restricted by their limited literacy skills. However, by the time they are eleven, most have detailed knowledge of different religions, particularly when learning has been informed by visits. They know and enjoy many stories from the Bible.
11. Pupils' attainments in design and technology, history and geography are below average by the ages of seven and eleven. Attainment is often restricted by pupils' weak literacy skills. This is particularly apparent when pupils need to describe their own ideas when limited vocabulary and writing skills reduce achievement. For example, few pupils use the word 'attract' when talking about magnets. Pupils lack understanding of a range of effective ways to express themselves in speech and writing. Infant pupils make many objects in design and technology, using different materials, but have few opportunities to use their own designs. They recognise objects from the past and suggest ways that they might be used. Whilst pupils identify some other countries, few have clear understanding of what life is like there. At eleven, pupils have understanding of the designing and making process but their skills are still limited. They have sound understanding of some ancient civilisations and find out information about the past through effective use of books and the Internet. Pupils identify and locate countries on a map and explain differences in climate, food and services such as water and electricity. There are limitations, however, in the detail of pupils' knowledge in both history and geography.
12. Standards in art and design, music and physical education are average at the ages of seven and eleven. Infants create pictures and objects that are often effectively linked to their learning in other subjects such as science. They sing a range of common songs that often relate well to their learning in other parts of the curriculum. Eleven year olds create artwork that is often linked to that of famous artists or other cultures and this shows sound growth of skills. They use a wide range of musical instruments and are set good challenges to develop musical knowledge and understanding. In dance, pupils have sound control but lack imagination while they develop secure games skills, such as in short tennis.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils have good attitudes to school and this has a positive impact on their learning. Children in the Foundation Stage settle quickly to school and soon begin to enjoy the routines. They are enthusiastic about their work and begin to develop some independence and initiative. Children are generally well behaved and form good relationships with each other and with adults. Infant and junior pupils enjoy school and are interested in their lessons. Teachers' very good management skills and high expectations contribute to pupils' enjoyment of lessons. They plan enjoyable learning activities and pupils respond well. Teachers are quick to praise and

appropriately reward those who work hard. Pupils' positive attitudes are also demonstrated by their willingness to talk to visitors. The vast majority of pupils move calmly and sensibly within the school and playground, showing good levels of co-operation.

14. Behaviour is often very good in classrooms and most pupils' behaviour is satisfactory at all times. The school is generally orderly and calm, with older pupils responding very well to the school's requirements. A few pupils find it difficult to behave responsibly at lunchtimes despite the school's clear expectations. The occasional lapses are generally well handled by staff and support staff. Pupils know the school rules on behaviour and most respond well. Clear sanctions are operated when necessary to ensure that the rules are enforced. These include removal from the classroom or playground and a visit to the headteacher. The school uses exclusions effectively when alternative approaches have been unsuccessful. This has led to some high levels of exclusion in the past years. There has been a very steep reduction in the number of exclusions in the current year as the school rules become known and successfully accepted.
15. Pupils, when well supervised, play happily at break times. Lunchtimes are pleasant occasions where pupils chat together. A few parents expressed concerns about behaviour, which was described as bullying. The inspection reveals that the school treats these matters seriously. The school works very hard to support a few very challenging pupils through well-structured and agreed systems.
16. Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils respect feelings, values and beliefs of others. This is strongly underlined in the good personal, social and health programme. There are very good relationships in the school and these create a caring and supportive atmosphere. Teachers are well respected and valued by pupils. Pupils' relationships with each other are generally good and they often work and play well together. In assemblies, pupils listen very well and appreciate the social and educational advantages they may enjoy. They compare themselves to young children in some foreign countries and recognise the advantages they have.
17. In lessons there are some good opportunities to work in groups or in pairs and this develops pupils' ability to co-operate well. Pupils are eager to help in such tasks as taking out playground equipment. Pairs of older pupils, for example, use their time willingly to pick up litter at lunchtime and Year 6 pupils carefully supervise younger pupils in the dining hall. The school council makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. They debate matters that are important to them and gain greater understanding of citizenship and responsibility.
18. Pupils' attendance is below the national average. Levels of attendance have remained low for some while but the school's strategies have had a limited but positive impact. In the current school year, however, attendance has been badly affected by many absences from a very small number of pupils. It remains at over 90 per cent and the attendance of most other pupils has improved significantly. The level of unauthorised absence is acceptable as parents generally respond well to supplying reasons for absence. Very few pupils arrive late for school. The school works very hard to obtain attendance levels satisfactory for most pupils and rewards them with certificates for good attendance.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching in the school is at least satisfactory in 95 per cent of lessons. Two thirds of all lessons were good or better and 30 per cent were graded very good. Teaching is good overall in each of the key stages and throughout the school. This overall quality of teaching is an improvement since the last inspection. The five per cent of unsatisfactory teaching was not linked to any one subject or teacher. The weaknesses in these lessons centred mainly on insecure behaviour management and an unsatisfactory match of task to pupils' attainments. Pupils became restless and lost concentration with the result that little learning took place. The quality of teaching of literacy and numeracy is good. Teachers use the national advice for these subjects successfully and this contributes to the improving standards in English and mathematics. Teachers' subject knowledge has improved and consequently they teach literacy and numeracy skills effectively. The consistently good teaching in most subjects throughout the school is leading to improving standards. It ensures pupils learn soundly as they move through the school and develop good attitudes to their work. When necessary, teachers effectively support the few pupils who speak English as an additional language to enable them to take part in activities and make good progress.
20. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. All teachers are attentive to the individual needs of the pupils in their class. In most classes, well-trained support assistants work very effectively with teachers. They give good help to pupils with special educational needs to focus their thoughts and make good progress with their learning. They use praise well to build all pupils' self-esteem. Pupils are therefore given the confidence to join in small group discussions and answer questions. This enables them to join successfully in class activities and helps their learning. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Years 5 and 6, the teacher and support worker assess pupils' needs carefully. They use this information to target the difficulty of work accurately, responding quickly to pupils' increasing understanding.
21. Teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is good with particularly good teaching in the reception class. The strong teamwork between teachers and support assistants makes effective use of all staff's skills. Teaching in the nursery is sound and gives children a secure start to their schooling. Clear daily routines help children to settle to their learning. Good attention is paid to developing their personal and social skills through a wide range of opportunities to play and learn together. Many activities led by adults are effective and give children good opportunities to talk and gain knowledge. However, the work that children do more independently, such as building and role-play, does not always have a clear purpose and consequently pupils do not learn as much as they could from it. Too few opportunities are taken to talk to children about what they have done and found out. As a result, children do not make all the development in their language skills that they are capable of. In the reception class, the teacher makes good use of elements of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to plan work for children. Some very good teaching is based on careful assessment of children's needs and helps higher attaining children to gain basic understanding of sounds and letters. Children also make good progress in developing mathematical language through well-structured activities when measuring and comparing.
22. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and this is a strength throughout the school. They praise pupils' efforts well and this motivates pupils to learn and try hard giving them confidence. This helps them to concentrate hard and increases the rate of learning. Teachers' marking is generally supportive and successfully boosts pupils' confidence. It is less effective, however, at indicating clearly what pupils need to do next in order to improve. As a result, pupils lose some opportunities to reflect on their work and to see how they are able to do better.
23. Effective classroom management and pupil control in most classes encourage pupils to behave well in lessons. Pupils increasingly understand what is expected of them and settle quickly to activities. Most pupils listen quietly to their teachers and learn appropriately. In the very few lessons where this is less secure, pupils call out and teachers do not always ensure

they have the attention of all pupils before speaking. Pupils talk to each other and miss learning points or instructions and consequently learning slows.

24. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils. They set appropriate but challenging tasks and use probing questioning to deepen pupils' understanding. Lessons often begin briskly by reminding pupils of what they know and informing them of what they are to learn. Clear, confident and enthusiastic explanations ensure pupils know what they have to do and how long they have to complete it. Teachers often use a good and varied range of resources to enliven their lessons. As a result, pupils work hard and learning is good. In both infant and juniors, teachers use homework well to support pupils' learning. Regular reading and spelling tasks consolidate learning in English. Activities, questions and other tasks support learning in other subjects.
25. Lessons are well organised due to good planning that provides a sound structure to teaching and focuses clearly on what pupils are to learn. This makes good use of teachers' good subject knowledge and understanding of how pupils learn effectively. Planning that links with other subjects makes learning more relevant. This interests pupils and causes them to tackle work with confidence and enthusiasm. For example, junior pupils use the Internet confidently to find information to use in their history lessons. However, learning from literacy lessons is not always consistently built upon when pupils write in other subjects. For example, pupils' writing in science often contains basic errors of spelling and punctuation that pupils get right in English lessons. This is not sufficiently commented on by the teachers.
26. Teachers use effective questioning techniques. Pertinent, carefully targeted questions allow pupils to gain confidence and to experience challenge at an individual level. This leads to a good balance between teacher and pupils' talk. Teachers value pupils' responses and this builds self-confidence further and promotes effective learning. The pace of lessons is good. The teachers often set very clear time limits, particularly for group work, and this encourages pupils to work hard and complete tasks. They concentrate effectively and make good gains with their learning.

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

27. The school provides a very good range of well-planned opportunities for pupils to learn. Carefully organised teaching arrangements, such as grouping pupils by ability for literacy and numeracy, ensure that the curriculum is equally accessible to pupils of all abilities and backgrounds. Those few pupils with English as an additional language are effectively supported when necessary to make the most of all learning opportunities. Lessons thoroughly cover all subjects of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The school's arrangements for the daily act of worship meet legal requirements. A good range of extra-curricular activities, including sports, art, music and information and communication technology supports the classroom curriculum. This is helpful in extending pupils' skills and knowledge and in promoting social skills. Teachers use homework to promote pupils' learning effectively. Pupils in all year groups take their reading books home frequently and their progress is recorded in the home-school reading record. This process establishes a valuable partnership between pupils, many parents and teachers, which encourages progress.
28. The school gives priority to the teaching of literacy and numeracy. National advice for these parts of the curriculum is used well and is beginning to improve standards. National guidance in many subjects has greatly improved the quality of teachers' planning. It promotes thorough coverage of each subject and helps teachers to sequence tasks for the best possible progress. Teachers monitor the progress of each pupil very carefully and analyse the school's standards over time in great detail. They use this information very effectively to guide curriculum planning and counter identified weaknesses. This approach has resulted in significantly improved standards in some identified areas, for example, in reading. Some

useful links between subjects are established, for example between science and literacy in infant classes. This helps pupils to develop their scientific knowledge and provides opportunities for them to consolidate their vocabulary and practise writing about factual matters. However, the link between pupils' developing skills in literacy lessons and their use of these skills in other subjects is not consistently made. Many teachers use information and communication technology constructively, for example, to record in English and mathematics and to research in history.

29. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school's arrangements meet the requirements of the current special educational needs Code of Practice³. Procedures for identifying and reviewing pupils' needs are thorough and secure. Pupils' individual education plans specify clear, manageable targets that are carefully matched to identified needs. However, while the progress of each pupil is meticulously tracked, it is not always described in a way that helps to determine concise, future targets. This is of particular relevance to some pupils with learning difficulties, who would benefit from more frequent review and sharper targets designed to enable clearer assessment. Support arrangements for pupils with special educational needs are very effective. Teachers and support staff work closely together. This helps to ensure that tasks and expectations are flexibly matched to each pupil's needs and abilities, promoting good progress.
30. There is good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, including attention to drug misuse. There is a suitable policy for sex education. Provision for health education is extensive, carefully planned and closely integrated with the subject curriculum. Teachers promote pupils' personal and social education through the study and discussion of issues such as friendship, keeping safe and fairness. The warm and constructive relationships that prevail in all classes make a strong contribution to this aspect of pupils' education. Several valuable initiatives have been introduced to improve pupils' social skills, including the Chatterbox scheme. These are particularly helpful to pupils who are reluctant to speak or who find difficulty in expressing their thoughts and feelings in acceptable ways.
31. The school has established good links with the local community. For example, constructive links with Leicester University provide opportunities for teachers to extend their professional skills. Contacts with local faith centres broaden pupils' awareness of a range of different beliefs. There are active links with the local secondary school that include weekly teaching from a member of the physical education staff. This is a useful addition to the curriculum and is generally helpful to Year 6 pupils in their transition to secondary school. The school makes good use of funds from local industry to provide equipment for science.
32. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. School assemblies encourage pupils to reflect on issues such as the meaning of passing a gift within the family, or consideration for others. Music in assemblies is carefully chosen to support an atmosphere of calm reflection. Visits, for example, to the local church and Hindu temple, give pupils further insight into the nature of prayer, personal faith and shared belief. Teachers in their day-to-day management of pupils convey to pupils a sense of their unique worth as individuals. They are careful to commend the contributions pupils make. This helps to give pupils a positive view of themselves, encourages them to value their own considered insights and to respect those of others. The provision has improved from the unsatisfactory position noted in the last report. However, teachers could be more consistent in giving pupils time for reflection in lessons.
33. Provision for pupils' moral education is good. Teachers successfully promote among pupils a secure sense of the difference between right and wrong. There is a clear set of rules that pupils fully understand and teachers consistently apply. These arrangements are effective in

³ Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

promoting good behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to think before they act and to weigh choices. For example, during a junior age assembly, pupils took part in an 'auction', comparing the values of being rich, having many friends, being good at sport and being honest. This was very effective in allowing many pupils to understand the consequences for themselves and others of choosing one option over another. The Chatterbox scheme promises to improve the quality of some pupils' moral development and behaviour by teaching them to express their feelings in effective, more socially acceptable ways.

34. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. Several of the influences that are so effective in promoting pupils' personal and moral development also contribute strongly to the provision for social development. This applies particularly to teachers' sensitive and positive management of pupils and to the various initiatives, such as Chatterbox. These effectively promote pupils' self-esteem and teach them to interact effectively with others. The strong sense of teamwork that prevails among teaching staff, the constructive working relationships modelled by teaching and non-teaching staff and the high overall quality of relationships make a powerful contribution to this aspect of provision. The School Council is a useful introduction for some pupils to the idea of citizenship and some of its social implications. Participation in local events, such as sports fixtures, enables pupils to meet with their contemporaries from other schools. Residential visits for Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6 provide very valuable additional opportunities for social development.
35. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils learn about their own and other cultures through a wide range of planned activities. Teachers introduce pupils to well-known examples of Western music during assemblies and through organized performances by visiting musicians. In lessons, pupils learn stories and rhymes from the European tradition. Through lessons and occasional workshops they improve their knowledge of artists and the techniques identified with particular stylistic traditions. For example, they study Indian block printing, learn about Punjabi writing and investigate the art of the Native Americans. Through religious education lessons, pupils gain an understanding of different religions such as Judaism, Hinduism and Sikhism. This is supported by visits to different places of worship including the local Anglican and Methodist churches and a Hindu temple. From these experiences pupils gain insight into some features of their own culture and begin to understand how it differs from others. They learn that people subscribe to a variety of differing beliefs that are to be valued equally for their contribution to the wider community. This understanding is facilitated by teachers' own attitudes to pupils, in which acceptance and respect strongly feature.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. The school provides a safe and caring environment. The headteacher and other teachers offer a warm welcome to pupils and parents at the entrances at the beginning and end of the school day. Good procedures are in place for ensuring pupils' day-to-day welfare. All appropriate testing, including risk assessments, has been done, for fire fighting and electrical apparatus. Details of first aid records are kept and treatments are very appropriate. There is a high number of staff with first aid training. Staff know pupils well and show concern for all, whatever their needs. Most classes have support staff who work well with individuals or groups to promote their learning. The headteacher is the designated person for child protection and maintains appropriate records. She is fully aware of the requirements of the Local Area Child Protection Committee and has allocated valuable time for the updating of training.
37. Good procedures for monitoring attendance are in place. A computer-based record allows staff to keep a detailed attendance record for all pupils. This forms the basis of letters sent to parents if prolonged absence does occur. Teachers complete registers carefully and very promptly at the beginning of each session. This gives a good start for the school day and results in very few pupils being late upon a regular basis. Good liaison is maintained with the educational welfare officer who makes home visits when necessary. Good attendance is

rewarded and this reinforces its importance. Despite these measures, however, the rate of attendance is low. In order to improve this, the school must consider further measures to track the attendance of the small number of poorly attending pupils.

38. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are satisfactory. The vast majority of pupils respond well to the clear standards set by the school. They are encouraged by the good systems to recognise good behaviour and work. Many classes, for example, have wall charts for pupils and staff to see at a glance how many 'rewards' have been given. When teaching is strong, pupils' behaviour is consistently good. Staff focus very well on raising pupils' self-esteem. This helps to encourage tolerance and a positive effect on the quality of relationships and on pupils' learning. Pupils know the school rules because these are displayed in classrooms. Support staff play an important role, working very well with teachers. They also form very good relationships with pupils that reinforce the school's messages and support learning. There are satisfactory procedures for monitoring incidents of oppressive behaviour whether in classes or in the playground. Lunchtime supervisors record any incidents and report these to the headteacher. Pastoral care is strong.
39. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good. Teachers assess pupils on entry to the school and this continues throughout school life. Teachers know the pupils well and have good understanding of their strengths in different subjects. Regular staff meetings including discussions between teams of teachers underline this support. The school has very good systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. Throughout the school, pupils' progress is carefully recorded. This is particularly necessary because so many pupils leave and join each year. The system allows teachers to measure pupils' progress throughout their time at school. There is a very good analysis of the information gathered that gives a clear view of individual pupils or groups of pupils. This information has been very effectively used to highlight areas of the curriculum that need additional emphasis, such as speaking and reading. It is contributing to greater accuracy in teachers' assessments in all parts of the curriculum. Pupils' achievements outside of school are also celebrated.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

40. The links with parents are satisfactory and contribute soundly to pupils' learning. Very few questionnaires were returned and the attendance at a meeting before the inspection was small. A number of negative views of the work of the school were expressed. More parents' views were additionally gathered by informal discussion during the inspection. Parents here made many positive comments and were particularly sure that their children like school. Parents feel welcome at the school; they believe teaching is good and they have confidence in the way that the school is led. Some parents had concerns about pupils' behaviour. However, the inspection evidence shows that poor behaviour is confined to a few pupils, generally in the playground at lunchtime. It was by no means rife at the school. Homework is regularly set and a lunchtime homework club has been introduced. These measures are having a beneficial effect on pupils' learning.
41. The quality of information provided for parents is good. The school sends out a weekly newsletter that contains full information about events and the life at the school. Parents interviewed feel aware of events and what their children will be learning during the term. The school has produced an informative leaflet for parents to assist with reading at home. Many parents value the opportunity to listen to their children reading at home but some do not regularly complete the record sheet. Parents are invited to assist in classes but very few do so on a regular basis.
42. Parents are very keen to learn of the progress of their children and the termly parents' meetings with teachers are well attended. Reports of pupils' progress are detailed and give a clear picture of work done and targets sought and achieved. The school values the support of parents and encourages them to play an active role in school life. However, the last annual

open meeting of the governing body had no parents (other than parent governors) attending. The parent-teacher association has a few hard working members and has given the school good financial support.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

43. Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher provides very strong and positive leadership giving the school very clear educational direction and purpose. This has been effective in tackling and eliminating many of the weaknesses identified in the 1996 report. There is greater involvement from the governing body than there was at the last inspection. A clearly defined school development plan, which is effectively monitored and regularly evaluated, reinforces this direction. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection. The overall quality of teaching has improved substantially as a result of new initiatives such as the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. More effective monitoring of all classes is supporting these improvements and giving a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This is leading to improving standards although the fruits of this are not yet apparent in the school's National Curriculum test results. Targets for these tests, however, are considerably higher for pupils from 2002. The school's aims and values are wholly appropriate and are promoted carefully in all its work.
44. Teamwork is excellent and all staff are committed to continued improvement. The senior management team, in particular, is very effective and has a strong understanding of the school and how it must improve. Good structures and procedures are in place to monitor standards. Subject co-ordinators have clearly defined areas of responsibility and play a greater role in the development of their subjects. All are involved in monitoring and supporting planning and in organising resources. Some effective monitoring of teaching has taken place, particularly in English and mathematics. This is helping to share the good teaching throughout the school and to raise the standard of teaching.
45. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs conforms fully to the Code of Practice. There are clear strategies to identify pupils' needs at an early stage. Targets relate appropriately to identified needs and are set out in pupils' individual education plans. There are good systems for regularly reviewing and updating these. The school special needs co-ordinator is effective and well informed. Support arrangements are carefully designed and timetabled. Teaching and non-teaching assistants are suitably trained and work closely with class teachers to maximise each pupil's progress.
46. The effectiveness of the governing body in fulfilling its responsibilities is good and improved through a more effective committee structure. There have been substantial recent changes in the membership of the governing body. Governors now have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The headteacher and teaching staff give the governing body good information. Governors have a strong commitment to the school and confidence in the headteacher to whom they give good support. They play an active role in monitoring standards within the school. For example, they monitor the impact of the literacy and numeracy strategies on the school and discuss pupils' annual performance in the national tests of attainment. As part of this process of monitoring some governors visit the school and observe lessons. The chairperson of governors is a regular visitor to the school. There is effective governor involvement in the management of the school that is helping the school to identify where improvements are needed. Most governors are in a good position to make strategic decisions because they know and talk about relevant issues with confidence and good understanding. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities.
47. The schools' system for financial planning is good with the school managing its available resources well. Budget setting is guided by priorities outlined in the school development plan. Funds are appropriately allocated and spending is kept under constant review. The school uses funds designated for particular purposes well. For example, effective use is made of support staff in all parts of the school. Governors evaluate the effect of the school's spending

decisions on standards. They have secure plans to further increase their involvement in the process of financial planning.

48. Effective routines are in place for the day-to-day running of the school. Administration staff are efficient and well organised, ensuring that the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Good use is made of information and communication technology in the administration of the school and the process of developing this is proceeding at a good pace. Very good use is made of computers, for example, to analyse the substantial range of information on pupils' attainment. This is being used effectively to indicate priority areas for development. The school has good procedures to ensure the cost effectiveness of the goods and services it purchases.
49. Teachers and support staff are well qualified, enthusiastic and committed. There have been many changes of staff in recent years and this has presented substantial problems for the management of the school. These have now been mostly successfully resolved and the staffing is more stable. Some staff are new to the school this term but they have settled quickly into routines. The headteacher and all the staff are supporting them effectively. All teachers teach every subject competently and confidently and they use good strategies to make the best use of individual strengths. All staff attend courses to develop their individual needs and as defined in the school development plan. There is a good programme of staff development and staff meetings, which have been carefully planned to link in with the school's aims and priorities. Funds used for professional development contribute to an improvement in the quality of teaching. For example, focused training in English and mathematics has helped raise the quality of teaching in these two areas. This has been a contributory factor to the good implementation of the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies. Support staff are very well qualified and take active roles in the classrooms, often showing very good initiative with individual pupils. Teachers work very closely with their assistants, ensuring they are well briefed. Midday supervisors are well trained to interact with pupils and to follow the school's discipline code. The caretaker maintains the school to a high standard of safety and cleanliness.
50. The school is big enough for the number of pupils and available accommodation is used well. Displays are used very well in classrooms to enhance the learning environment. The hall is large enough to take all the school for assembly and for whole-class physical education and games to be taught in safety. The headteacher has imaginative ideas to improve use of available space. All subjects have good levels resources and these are often imaginatively used to improve the quality of teaching.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

51. The school has made good improvement in the quality of education provided and there are some signs that pupils' attainment is improving, particularly amongst younger pupils. In order to consolidate and develop this improvement, the governing body, headteacher and staff should now:

- (1) Improve pupils' standards of attainment, particularly in English, mathematics and science by:
 - increasing opportunities for developing pupils' range of accounts and descriptions including extended and imaginative writing, especially in Key Stage 2;
 - ensuring that vocabulary and grammatical points learned in language study are more successfully transferred to pupils' writing in all subjects;
 - making sure pupils use appropriate specialist vocabulary correctly in their discussions and written work in all subjects;
 - making more effective use of marking to identify what pupils need to do to improve their work.(Paragraphs 1-11, 22, 25, 28, 60, 63, 67-9, 77-80, 92, 108)
- (2) Ensure that all activities in the nursery have sufficiently clearly identified purposes and include opportunities for children to extend their learning through talking with adults,
(Paragraphs 5, 21, 52-9)

The following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- (a) Improve attendance by exploring further ways of tracking pupils' absences.
(Paragraphs 18, 37)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	40
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	25	37.5	27.5	5	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	27	195
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	71

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	72

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	48
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	56

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.8
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.7
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	20	13	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	11	20
	Girls	7	7	11
	Total	21	18	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	64 (58)	55 (73)	94 (69)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	20	12
	Girls	7	11	6
	Total	20	31	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	61 (58)	94 (69)	55 (81)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	20	21	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	14	14
	Girls	6	9	11
	Total	12	23	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	29 (21)	56 (35)	61 (38)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	9	9
	Girls	7	5	7
	Total	14	14	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	36 (48)	36 (42)	41 (58)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	4
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	157
Any other minority ethnic group	9

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	4	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	17	2
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.7
Average class size	27.9

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	217

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	25

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13.5
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	496638
Total expenditure	502674
Expenditure per pupil	1995
Balance brought forward from previous year	16018
Balance carried forward to next year	9982

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	450
Number of questionnaires returned	34

Percentage of responses in each category⁴

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	47	41	9	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	29	62	6	3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	26	35	15	12	12
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	12	38	31	6	12
The teaching is good.	38	50	12	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	50	21	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	50	47	0	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	35	9	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	26	50	18	0	6
The school is well led and managed.	24	44	15	9	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	24	58	9	3	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	24	24	0	21

⁴ The figures in each row may not add up to 100 because of rounding errors.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

52. There are two classes in the Foundation Stage. The nursery teacher is at the moment on long-term sick leave and two part-time supply teachers, ably helped by an excellent nursery nurse, have taken her place. The accommodation for this class is spacious and the secure outside play area similarly large. The reception class is housed in an ordinary classroom and there is particularly good teamwork between the teacher and the classroom assistant. There is good liaison between these two classes and the rest of the infant department. This ensures that children get to know other teachers and routines, and smoothes transition from one class to another. The school has generally maintained the quality of provision for children in the Foundation Stage.
53. Children are admitted to the nursery after they reach three years of age and they initially attend for either a morning or afternoon session. When they enter the nursery, their attainment is well below average. Many have a restricted vocabulary and poor listening skills and a significant minority has poor social skills. Most reception age children benefit from a period of up to 18 months in the nursery. Testing shortly after entering the reception class shows that children make positive gains during their time in the nursery, but are still attaining well below what is expected for their age. Children with special educational needs receive good quality support in both classes but only take small steps towards success. By the time they are ready to start Year 1, most children have only just begun on aspects of the National Curriculum and, particularly in writing, reading and speaking, their attainment is still well below the nationally expected levels.
54. Many interesting activities are planned and resourced in the nursery for individual or group play and enjoyment. Insufficient thought, however, is given in planning to what children are expected to learn from carrying out these various tasks. The planning for independent tasks, in particular, does not identify sufficiently clearly what children will specifically learn. Teaching is often focused on one or two groups in the classroom and opportunities are missed to talk with other children about what they are doing. As a result, children often do not get as involved in activities as they could and they learn less than they could. In the reception class, the planning and organisation of the curriculum provides a good stepping-stone between nursery activities and the more formal approach in Year 1.

Personal, social and emotional development

55. Teaching in this area is good but children still achieve below average standards. The school places great emphasis on building positive relationships with parents before their children start school and has developed a good induction programme. This results in parents feeling confident about placing children in the school and the children settle well. Staff are effective in creating a caring and stimulating learning environment in which children develop good attitudes to learning and quickly understand routines and the structure of the day. In both classrooms there is a balance between teacher-directed activities and those when children are able to choose their own activity and play without direct adult supervision. The younger children in the nursery find it difficult to concentrate on a task for any length of time, but as they grow older they show a growing independence and initiative when presented with choices. One group of children playing in the home corner was quite comfortable about an inspector joining them and offered her a cup of tea and a cake. Children are generally well behaved and form good relationships with each other and with adults.

Communication, language and literacy

56. Standards by the end of the Foundation Stage are well below those found nationally. Teaching in this area of the curriculum is satisfactory in the nursery, but opportunities are missed to develop the children's range and use of vocabulary, particularly through talking to individuals and groups about their work. Children handle books carefully and know the difference between pictures and the written word. Very few have started on the actual reading process for themselves. Most recall stories by looking at the pictures and enjoy listening to stories read to them by adults. Older nursery children and those in reception take part in the 'Home Reading' scheme and take home books on a regular basis. Many reception children cannot write their own names and their writing is at a very early stage. There is very good teaching in the reception class. This results, for example, in higher attaining children learning about words that end in 'at' and developing good understanding of sounds and letters. Others copy out sentences written for them by the classroom assistant, as they are unable to write the words for themselves. The reception class teacher carefully assesses individual and group progress in this area of the curriculum.

Mathematical development

57. Standards are well below those found nationally. Mathematics is satisfactorily taught in the nursery and counting is made fun through number songs and rhymes. Effective use is made of good quality equipment that interests children and encourages sorting, classifying and pattern making. Children make sound progress in their shape and colour recognition. Children enjoy playing games with dice and working on the computer with the help of a parent. They fill containers in the sand and water trays and talk about these being full or empty, bigger or smaller. In the reception class, good teaching ensures that most children can count up to 20 and back. They are introduced to an appropriate mathematical vocabulary, including tallest and shortest. The teacher and classroom assistant match the work well for different groups of children. Working with a partner, some measured the height of a table using linking cubes, whilst others made appropriate drawings of a flower. However, although the children made good progress in this lesson, their overall attainment was still well below that expected for their age.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

58. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children achieve standards that are well below the national levels. Children enter the school with a very poor general knowledge. For example, when the teacher led a group playing a simple game of 'Old Macdonald', some children found it difficult to identify even common farm animals consistently. Teaching in this area of the curriculum is satisfactory in the nursery, but again opportunities are missed to extend children's knowledge and understanding further. For example, although children enjoy whisking up bubbles in the water tray, there is too little discussion with them about what has caused these. Many children enjoy playing with construction kits and are keen to talk to an adult about what they have made. The teaching in the reception class is good. Several children are already able to use a simple computer program. They confidently use the mouse to move the cursor and 'click on' to achieve a correct selection of items on the screen. In both the nursery and reception the children learn about minibeasts, and use egg boxes, paint and paper to model caterpillars and butterflies. There is evidence of a developing understanding about other cultures in their work on display. This includes decorated fans, lanterns and Chinese lettering, as well as puppet dragons made by the reception children.

Physical and creative development

59. No physical education lessons were observed in the nursery. Planning indicates that sound use is made of the secure play area outside. Children take great care to colour pictures in between the lines and many are successful in doing this. Most use screwdrivers with developing skill to take old machinery apart. They trace letters accurately but their use of scissors is less well developed. In the reception class, the teaching and learning in physical development is good. Children have a good awareness of the space they need in which to work and move around. They show good co-ordination when undressing and dressing themselves before and after physical education lessons. They control their physical movements well and can work effectively as a team, making sure that the large parachute lifts and falls as they operate it in unison. Many children are developing an appropriate pencil control, but still find it difficult to produce neat and well-formed letters. The teaching of creative development is satisfactory but children's standards are well below the national expectations. In both classes, children have satisfactory opportunities to paint and draw, often appropriately linked to their learning about the world. No music sessions were seen during the inspection, but there is evidence in planning that children play instruments and learn a suitable range of songs.

ENGLISH

60. Standards in English seen in the inspection are well below the national averages by the ages of seven and eleven. These findings are in line with the results of the most recent national tests that show that, at both ages, pupils' attainment is well below that found nationally and in similar schools. These findings are also broadly in line with those of the previous report but there are some significant improvements. Standards in reading, in particular, have improved since the last inspection. This results from the well-planned and carefully targeted action that teachers have taken. Some weaknesses identified during the previous inspection remain. For example, standards in writing remain well below average. However, here too, there are signs of improvement. Good teaching and secure planning are producing a gradual upturn in overall achievement. This is clearly seen in lessons, though it has yet to affect published results.
61. Teaching is good. In the infant classes, all the teaching seen was either good or very good. In the juniors, 60 per cent of teaching was good or very good and the remainder was satisfactory. This is a very considerable improvement from the previous report. At that time, many teachers were unclear about what they should teach and had limited expectations of what pupils should do. As a result, work set often failed to match pupils' needs and abilities. This is no longer the case. Improvements in subject management and the successful introduction of the National Literacy Strategy have helped resolve the difficulties in planning and organisation that were previously identified. Very precise and secure arrangements track each pupil's attainment. These enable teachers to plan confidently and effectively, matching tasks with suitable accuracy to each pupil's needs. Teachers are sure of the ground they are to cover and are well informed about the order in which knowledge and skills are to be taught.
62. Teachers have consistently high expectations. They are sensitive to the needs of individuals and thoughtful in recognising each pupil's achievements. This gives pupils confidence and satisfaction in their learning. Teachers' very effective grouping of pupils and modification of tasks enable them to match work precisely to pupils' abilities. Concise, personal targets are determined and shared with each pupil. These promote progress by increasing pupils' understanding of their own learning and encouraging personal responsibility. In most lessons, these arrangements are further enhanced by carefully targeted support. As a result, many pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in lessons. Lessons are taken at a good pace with imaginative use of resources. This helps to gain and hold pupils' interest. As a result, pupils respond enthusiastically to their lessons and concentrate well. The good behaviour seen in all lessons reflects the high quality of teachers' management.

63. Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is well below the average. By the age of seven, pupils listen carefully to the teacher and follow spoken instructions accurately. Most pupils are confident in speaking and willingly contribute their ideas to class discussion. Teachers pitch their questions carefully. In doing so, they take account of pupils' differing personal needs and verbal abilities. They are warm in their acceptance of pupils' answers, encourage pupils and make sure that their responses are valued. This builds pupils' confidence and gives them the security to express their ideas. This is especially important for the small minority of pupils who are reluctant to speak. Teachers are very sensitive in meeting the needs of this group and successful in gradually building their confidence. By the age of eleven, most pupils listen with suitable accuracy and are responsive in conversation. Higher attaining pupils explain themselves clearly and engage in discussion at an appropriate level. However, throughout the school, many pupils lack the vocabulary needed to express their thoughts and feelings effectively. Most draw on a narrow range of words and phrases and find it difficult to speak at any length or explain complex ideas at a level appropriate for their age. These weaknesses limit pupils' capacity to engage in discussion or respond imaginatively. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to practise speaking and improve the quality and range of their language. For example, in a very good infant lesson, the teacher targeted questions accurately to extend each pupil's language. She introduced carefully chosen vocabulary and encouraged pupils to use this in their answers. The school is developing a very good range of language-based projects to supplement ordinary lessons, including the Chatterbox initiative. These arrangements are valuable in helping certain pupils, including girls, to learn to communicate more effectively.
64. Pupils' attainment in reading is below average. Pupils of all abilities clearly enjoy their reading and enjoy talking about their books. Teachers have responded very effectively to the findings of the previous report by raising standards in many aspects of reading. They have succeeded in improving the accuracy of pupils' reading by increasing the number of words that pupils recognise and teaching pupils to approach unfamiliar words systematically. Careful encouragement, regular practice and attention to detail have strengthened pupils' confidence in reading. The home-school reading record is useful in enabling parents to be closely involved with this aspect of their children's learning and this helps pupils to progress. Teachers introduce pupils to a wide range of stimulating fiction and non-fiction books and present them skilfully. They motivate pupils of all abilities by successfully conveying the pleasure that reading can bring.
65. By the time they are seven, pupils of average ability recognise a range of common words and read familiar texts with growing confidence. Most introduce some appropriate expression into their reading. They use their knowledge of letters and sounds to read unfamiliar words, sometimes using their developing skills to correct their own mistakes. They begin to discuss the plot of stories at a simple level, to grasp the sense of stories and recognise some differences between characters. The relatively small percentage of higher ability pupils reads fluently, with relevant expression and can predict the possible course of a story. Below average pupils read very hesitantly and need much encouragement and support.
66. By the time they are eleven, pupils have made satisfactory gains in reading. Pupils of all abilities enjoy reading, name their preferences among fiction and non-fiction books and identify favourite authors. They read accurately and are confident in using their knowledge of letters and sounds to read unfamiliar words. Higher attaining pupils read widely and fluently, using suitable words to describe characters, referring to qualities such as heroism or shyness. They are sensitive to some finer points of meaning and bring their reading to life by means of relevant expression. The most able pupils confidently explain events in a narrative or justify a point of view by pointing to evidence in the text. Average and lower ability pupils use little appropriate expression and show insufficient understanding of what they have read. They are less perceptive in their understanding of character, mentioning characters' more obvious qualities and describing them in relatively simple language. Many find it difficult to recall, without prompting, the detail of what they have read. Their understanding of stories is often

limited and they do not generally grasp shades of meaning. Pupils of all abilities have suitable experience of reading for information and most know how to locate a book in the library and use the contents and index.

67. Pupils' attainment in writing is well below the national average. By the time they are seven, most pupils write in simple phrases and sequence their ideas logically. However, their writing contains many inaccuracies and is narrow in range of vocabulary and expression. Only a few pupils write a legible, joined script, while the handwriting of most pupils is often inaccurate in shape, size and spacing. Most pupils do not use full stops and capital letters correctly to show sentences. Many pupils approach spelling in an unsystematic way, applying their knowledge of letters and sounds incorrectly. This is very much at odds with the effective way in which they successfully apply related rules in their reading. More able pupils show much greater consistency in their approach but still misspell some commonly occurring words. Pupils generally draw on a limited range of words and phrases. Their writing is confined mainly to simple accounts based on direct experience and stories retold. Lower attaining pupils are unable to write independently.
68. By the time they are eleven, most pupils write a suitably fluent joined script, but some still show many irregularities of size and form. Most pupils use full stops and capital letters correctly in their sentences but only the most able consistently use other types of punctuation such as commas and speech marks. Pupils' spelling is more logical, usually following spelling rules, but there are many persistent inaccuracies, particularly in pupils' independent writing. Most pupils use a relatively limited number of words and expressions and find it difficult to write sentences of suitable complexity. Few pupils can sustain or develop an idea effectively and only the most able show imagination or inventiveness in their writing.
69. Teachers plan opportunities, particularly during literacy lessons, to improve the quality of pupils' writing. In a very good infant lesson, for example, the teacher used a range of resources to clarify the structure of words, linking groups of letters to sounds. These were presented in different contexts and involved all pupils through skilful questioning and shared activity, improving the quality of pupils' reading and spelling. In a successful junior lesson, the teacher enriched the quality of pupils speaking and writing through a study of similes. Pupils in a lower ability group identified and discussed similes in a poem before devising similes of their own. Teachers effectively introduce pupils to a range of texts and draw pupils' attention to features of language that can enrich their own speaking and writing. However, many such features are insufficiently consolidated and pursued. As a result, they are not reflected in pupils' independent writing. For example, an exercise on paragraphs had little effect on the use of paragraphs in pupils' subsequent writing. Teachers' marking is consistently positive and encouraging in tone but does not always show pupils what action they should take to improve. In too many of the exercises seen, the words and phrases required for the correct answers were already supplied and had only to be transcribed to the pupils' own work. This is ineffective as a means of improving the quality of pupils' writing. Regular daily writing practice is effective in encouraging pupils to write more quickly, but there is generally too little emphasis on developing the richness, variety and extension of pupils' writing.
70. The newly appointed subject co-ordinator provides a good example of successful practice in her teaching. She has a clear idea of the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attainment through monitoring and very good systems of assessment. Teachers have made a detailed analysis of the school's performance and of pupils' attainments from year to year in the different aspects of English. This has been valuable in enabling them to target areas of weakness and plan for improvement. These evaluations have been used to form a clear, practical action plan designed to raise standards. The results of this process are evident in measurable improvements in standards of reading through the school.

MATHEMATICS

71. Pupils' standards in mathematics in the most recent National Curriculum tests are very low. This is broadly similar to the findings in the last report when underachievement was identified,

particularly in the infant classes. However, the school has made good progress in improving pupils' mathematical skills, although these are not yet apparent in the National Curriculum tests. The inspection finds that there have been improvements in standards at ages seven and eleven, although these are still below those found nationally. The improvements in standards are due to improved teaching throughout the school that leads to good learning for all pupils.

72. Standards seen in lessons and pupils' work are often higher than those shown in the most recent National Curriculum tests and suggest that attainment is rising. Good use of the National Numeracy Strategy has helped teachers to plan effective lessons with secure structure that focuses on what needs to be learned. This is bringing positive improvement to the quality of teaching and raising pupils' standards of achievement. There are no marked differences in the attainment of boys or girls in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in their lessons. Very effective use of support staff questions pupils purposefully and promotes their enthusiasm and speed of response. Pupils successfully use mathematics and their developing numeracy skills to help learning in other subjects. For example, pupils use their knowledge of shape and measuring in design and technology. The use of information and communication technology to develop pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding is being developed well. For example, teachers use computers effectively to aid demonstrations and pupils confidently gather data to create graphs of their results.
73. Pupils learn well in the infant classes as a result of good teaching. They gain greater confidence in recognising numbers and their names, counting accurately forwards and backwards. They recognise the relationship between doubling and halving and most recognise even and odd numbers. Many lower attaining pupils become confused, however, with numbers above 20. Higher attaining pupils have quick recall of many number facts and the teachers' effectively challenging questioning develops their pace of answers further. All pupils talk in everyday language about what they are learning, for example in estimating the weights of objects. Some higher attaining pupils recognise and use standard measures such as gram and kilogram, understanding the relationship well. Pupils use a range of coins confidently in money problems. By the end of the infants, most pupils can put numbers in the correct order. They have increasing understanding of simple addition and subtraction problems within 20. Higher attaining pupils recognise and use numbers up to 100.
74. In the junior classes, pupils' rate of learning is good. Pupils respond well to good levels of challenge although their limited skills sometimes restrict their learning. In Years 3 and 4, higher attaining pupils begin to use their understanding of two-digit numbers and tables in multiplication problems. Pupils make gains throughout the juniors in their mental arithmetic skills and the necessary language to explain their thinking. Lower attaining Years 3 and 4 pupils, for example, have greater familiarity with numbers to 99 and use these in increasingly quick calculations. Lower attaining Years 5 and 6 pupils confidently use simple fractions in mental arithmetic problems and develop greater understanding. All pupils increase their understanding of the properties of shapes such as symmetry. Higher attaining pupils solve a wide range of challenges using all four rules of number and make good gains in the speed and accuracy of their mental arithmetic. Pupils collect and illustrate data on graphs, explaining what their graphs show. By the end of the juniors, many pupils' attainment is close to the nationally expected levels. However, few pupils show consistent achievement at higher levels.
75. The very good relationships between teachers and pupils established throughout the school are a feature of all mathematics teaching. These help pupils to feel secure in their learning and to have the confidence to try their best. As a result, pupils are largely well behaved and apply themselves well to their activities. In the best lessons, teachers are enthusiastic and make sure that pupils work at a fast pace. They are clear about how much time pupils have to complete tasks for example, and this sets a good atmosphere of challenge. Pupils respond well to these challenges and the rate of their learning improves. In many lessons, teachers make good use of praise to motivate pupils and promote pride in their learning. Many lessons make very effective use of a wide range of resources to interest and motivate pupils.

76. Leadership of the subject is good and effective support is given to teachers. Well-targeted training has supported teachers in gaining new skills and this is effective in improving the quality of teaching. Systems of monitoring teaching have been established and these are proving effective in sharing the good practice in the school. Very good new assessment systems have been introduced and increased analysis of school results is tracking pupils' gains in their attainment. This is particularly effective in identifying the most important priorities for the school and has contributed well to the school's improvements.

SCIENCE

77. Standards in science observed during the inspection are below those expected nationally by the time pupils reach the ages of both seven and eleven. These standards are higher than those shown in the 2000 results of teacher assessment at seven, and the national tests at eleven. Compared to similar schools, pupils do very badly in these assessments. However, a higher percentage of pupils than before are now attaining an average level. This shows an upward trend and some improvement since the last inspection. Limited literacy skills and lack of confidence when faced with formal test papers disadvantage Year 6 pupils. Many pupils are working at standards just below typical levels for their age. In order to boost their knowledge and understanding before they take the national tests, these pupils are receiving effective extra tuition from the co-ordinator and they are given the chance of improving their performance.
78. The co-ordinator teaches half the lessons from Years 1 to 6 and plans the work for the parallel classes. In this way she maintains a good consistency in coverage and approach. Considerable measures have been taken to improve the provision for science including improved resources. A specialist science room allows pupils' investigations, such as those to judge the best conditions under which seeds germinate, to remain undisturbed from one lesson to the next. A new scheme of work is soundly based on national guidelines, and takes good account of the mixed age classes in the school. Very good assessment systems have been set up to track pupils' progress and identify priority areas for development. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is usually positive and helps to build confidence. It often does not, however, identify where the work has weaknesses and what pupils should do to improve their work. The subject encompasses aspects such as sex education and there are good links with the Healthy Living project run in the school. Provision is enriched by visits to the Space Centre at Leicester University, outings to the local environment, and residential trips that include scientific activities such as bug hunting, pond dipping and stargazing. All of these initiatives contribute to a marked improvement in the subject since the 1996 inspection. The quality of teaching has improved since the last report and is now generally good. This is raising attainment, particularly of younger pupils, and suggests that standards will rise further.
79. Although they have poor skills when they enter Year 1, all pupils make good progress in the infants. Good teaching is helping pupils to learn important skills, such as note taking, and apply these to their work. Effective resources, such as a video of a butterfly emerging from a chrysalis, focus pupils' attention and engage their interest well. This encourages them and improves their learning. By the age of seven, they identify parts of a flower and begin to have sound understanding of how plants grow. They make simple circuits using batteries and investigate the properties of magnets. Their learning is often restricted by their limited language skills. Few pupils, for example, use the word 'attract' when talking about magnets. Teachers make effective use of different ways to record what pupils have done to help those with limited writing skills and enhance literacy skills. However, pupils do not make effective use of specialist vocabulary in descriptions of their work and weak spelling and punctuation often mar these.
80. In the juniors, pupils build on and extend their skills and knowledge and make satisfactory progress. The large numbers of pupils joining and leaving the school, particularly in the older

classes, restricts progress as many arriving have weaker skills than those leaving. Pupils use a range of measuring instruments with increasing confidence, for example reading temperature with a thermometer. They know a wider range of properties of materials and identify which are most useful for different purposes. Pupils develop sound understanding of many aspects of scientific testing. They make appropriate predictions of what will happen and increasingly draw conclusions from what they have seen. Pupils are effectively supported in this work by new recording sheets that are suitably matched to the wide range of abilities in each class. They particularly help lower attaining pupils overcome the problems of poor literacy skills. However, pupils of all abilities often write subject-specific words incorrectly and this shows a lack of care in the presentation of their work.

81. Pupils' attitudes to their work are at all times good. They enjoy their science lessons, become involved in practical sessions and show an interest in their work. Older pupils, in particular, work well as a group or on their own. There are good relationships between staff and children and because of this all pupils try hard and behave well. In both key stages, boys tend to do better than girls. In two lessons observed, boys monopolised question and answer sessions restricting the opportunities for girls. The school has recognised the need to improve girls' confidence and assertiveness and has established the Chatterbox club for this purpose.

ART AND DESIGN

82. The attainment of seven and eleven year olds is in line with that expected for their age and all pupils learn soundly through the school. This is the same judgement as that made in the previous, 1996, report. However, pupils' work produced in the intervening years shows that many have the ability to produce work of a better standard. Examples of this include colourful batik pictures and large murals incorporating clay fish. These are of a high quality and were produced through the teaching of an expert art teacher who has now left the school.
83. No art lessons were seen in the infants and it is not possible to make an overall judgement about teaching in these classes. Much of the artwork of these pupils is linked to the topics they are covering in other subjects. This includes, for example, aspects of their work on Chinese New Year or their study of minibeasts. It is often too directed by the teacher and does not allow pupils the freedom to express their own ideas or to choose from a suitable variety of materials. Where pupils are allowed to work creatively, as for example when painting pictures of people at traffic lights, the results are individual and good.
84. It was not possible to see the present art specialist teaching the junior classes, due to her absence on ill health. Junior work on display indicates a satisfactory quality but often lacks originality, with all pupils using the same techniques and materials. This is the case in their work on 'Winter Trees'. There are some pieces of a higher standard, including good pastel pictures based on the work of Van Gogh and, on display in the hall, a beautiful tissue paper collage depicting the Snow Queen. During the inspection, the art specialist's classes were taught by the headteacher, whose knowledge and understanding of this subject is extremely good. In such lessons pupils are given high quality resources with which to work. They make very good progress both in their understanding of the art of other cultures and in their use of the skills needed to do their own work.
85. There is little evidence of pupils' close observational skills being built upon and extended throughout the school. Pupils look at the work of an extensive range of other artists, such as Miro and Barbara Hepworth. They learn about the art and craft produced by people of other times and cultures. The school has a kiln and clay work is produced on a regular basis. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, create carefully copied patterns, based on Native American designs, in order to decorate the pots they make. This subject area is much enriched by visits to local art galleries and workshops and by visitors to the school, who share their expertise with the pupils. A specialist art room is used well by teachers, as all materials

and equipment are now to hand and children's work can be left undisturbed until the following session.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

86. Seven and eleven year old pupils reach standards in design and technology that are below the expected level for children of their age. These standards are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection in 1996. Pupils satisfactorily build and extend their skills throughout their time in the school. Most pupils begin the school with poor skills. Although they make good, and sometimes better, progress in individual lessons, standards remain below average. Classroom assistants and other adults give good support to those pupils needing extra help. This enables them to achieve well in the practical activities involved.
87. Much improved guidance for teachers is helping to produce good teaching. This now ensures that statutory requirements are fully met. The keen subject co-ordinator has worked hard to raise the standing of the subject within the school's curriculum. He leads and manages the subject enthusiastically and keeps a watchful eye on what is happening around the school, mainly by looking at teachers' planning and through discussion with colleagues. Carefully annotated samples of pupils' work are kept for future reference. However, there have been many changes in staffing and large numbers of pupils joining and leaving the school. The new curriculum and good management of the subject have not yet, therefore, resulted in improved standards.
88. Pupils in the infant classes are introduced to a wide range of making skills, including folding paper to make dragons and fans for their display of Chinese traditions. They cut out and decorate snake masks and paper lanterns and learn to cut and stick materials in different ways. As part of their project on houses, Years 1 and 2 pupils learn how to make different mathematical shapes using perforated cardboard strips and split paper fasteners. They show an understanding of words such as rigid and, after experimentation, know that a triangle makes the strongest structure of all. Good teaching has concentrated on children improving their handling of materials and equipment. As yet, there is little evidence of pupils using their own ideas or suggestions at the start of the activity. It is planned to place more emphasis on this aspect as the children's basic practical skills improve.
89. In Years 3 and 4, pupils have very inventive ideas about making pop-up books with sliding pictures. Again the initial design is often teacher-led and does not encourage pupils to use their own ideas. Teachers are effective, however, in supporting pupils to evaluate their work and make improvements without losing confidence in what they are doing. Very knowledgeable teaching in Years 5 and 6 ensures that all the subject requirements are being met. Simple designs are made for slippers and different materials joined and stitched. Many Year 6 pupils have limited sewing skills and require a good deal of support in even threading a needle or sewing in a running stitch. Teachers provide carefully prepared resources and give clear explanations about what the pupils are to do. For example, a teacher made effective use of a computer program to demonstrate a step by step approach to the work. Good teaching ensures that the class as a whole follows the design and making process in a logical way.
90. There are good links to other subjects. For example, food technology elements are allied to issues of healthy living and aspects of mathematics, art and cultural awareness are introduced. All pupils are enthusiastic about their work, particularly in carrying out practical activities. For example, when making pop-up books, there was a real sense of excitement about what they were doing. Even the most challenging pupils were concentrating on producing something they thought special and were eager to share their results with others.

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

91. Pupils' attainment in history and geography is below average by the ages of seven and eleven. Teachers focus on either history or geography at different times of the school year. During the week of the inspection, the focus was on history and thus no geography lessons were seen. The teaching of history is good overall with many very good aspects in the junior classes. No judgement could be made on the quality of teaching in geography although teachers' planning and records suggest that provision is at least satisfactory. A limited amount of recent work was available for analysis in both subjects. This was supplemented by discussion with pupils.
92. By the time they are seven, pupils show an emerging sense of the passage of time. They recognise, for example, some items of domestic equipment as belonging to the past and being different from those in use today. With the teacher's support and encouragement, they devise plausible accounts of how items, such as a candlesnuffer, might have been used. They identify and comment upon attributes, including weight, decoration and construction. In an effective infant lesson, teachers made very good use of a range of such resources to gain and secure pupils' interest. Skilful questioning and careful guidance enabled pupils to understand some basic features of domestic life in the late 19th and early 20th Century. Pupils responded with great interest and enthusiasm. They were excited to handle the different artefacts and studied them with great care. Teachers often make suitable modifications to the written tasks to allow for pupils' differing abilities. This allows pupils to engage in the lesson but has only limited impact in improving pupils' literacy skills. Few pupils are able to write about their experiences at an appropriate level. Although pupils have learned some important aspects of vocabulary and grammar in literacy lessons, these are not consistently used in writing in history and geography. Pupils identify other countries but few have clear ideas of where they are located. Whilst they recognise that life in these countries is different, few have ideas of how or can express themselves clearly.
93. Two very good lessons were seen in junior classes in which teachers set high standards of behaviour. These were consistently achieved because teachers managed pupils very effectively and set tasks that fully engaged their interest. Pupils in Year 4 made good gains in their knowledge and understanding of Henry VIII. The teacher questioned effectively, extending pupils' thinking and enabling them to discuss Henry's motivations for his different marriages. Pupils in Year 6 made a very good study of evidence to discover features of the Indus Valley civilisation. In this lesson, relevant and effective use was made of information and communication technology to extend pupils' research skills. In both lessons, teachers emphasized the accurate use of specialist vocabulary, contributing well to pupils' literacy skills. This encouraged pupils to think with precision and made a useful contribution to their approach to speaking and writing.
94. In discussion, eleven year olds show a sound understanding of the past. For example, they could discuss with the aid of a time-line the overlap of different civilizations such as those of the Indus Valley and Ancient Egypt, or of Ancient Egypt and Rome. Higher attaining pupils understand, for example, the central importance for life in Ancient Egypt of the River Nile. Most pupils discuss archaeological evidence with some understanding of its limitations. However, few pupils can explain the difference between direct evidence and second-hand accounts.
95. In discussion, pupils in Year 6 locate countries they have studied, such as India, on a world map and recognise the major continents. Most understand that climate varies from place to place and can identify on a map countries where it is hot or cold. Higher attaining pupils understand that the sun appears higher in the sky nearer to the equator and begin to explain why this should be so. Many pupils recall significant differences between life in Britain and in another country they have studied. They point to differences in food, the availability of clean water and electrical power, differences in crops grown and in the construction of buildings. Some mention cultural differences, referring, for example, to different deities. Pupils are enthusiastic about their studies and keen to discuss them. However, all but the most able are

slow to recall factual knowledge, remember little detail and have only limited geographical understanding.

96. The subject co-ordinator is currently absent with a long-term illness. There is thus no systematic monitoring of standards, which limits the scope for improvement. The school now follows national guidelines for the teaching of both subjects. As a result, teachers are clear about the ground that is to be covered and the order in which aspects of each subject are to be taught. When fully implemented and supported by suitable monitoring, this guidance should help to promote thorough coverage and consistent progress through the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

97. Pupils' attainment is improving but remains below that expected nationally by the age of eleven. This is partly because most are still catching up with skills not securely acquired earlier. Since the last report there has been substantial improvement in the resources available for the subject. These are helping teachers to improve their teaching and to fully meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. The school is now undertaking the necessary task of improving pupils' attainment throughout the school. However, many pupils have low skills and the limited resources and weak teaching identified in 1996 have not given them sufficient opportunities to improve. Good systems of co-ordination, monitoring and staff development have begun and these have been effective in improving provision.
98. The standards seen represent an improvement since the last report. Infant pupils have an increased awareness of word processing and computer operation. They have limited experience of controlling objects through simple computer instructions. Younger pupils show developing control of the mouse when they move objects around the screen in a matching program. No direct teaching of the subject in the infants was observed but examination of planning and pupils' work indicates that satisfactory provision is made.
99. In the juniors, teachers set good examples by making effective use of computers in their own presentations to help pupils understand important points. They link pupils' work well to other aspects of the curriculum and give them good purpose in computer activities. This improves the relevance of activities and motivates pupils well. Pupils throughout the school, for example, take photographs with a digital camera and use these in their records of their work. Years 3 and 4 pupils in a history lesson confidently collected data on the wives of Henry VIII from an Internet site. The teachers' clear instructions and time allocation ensured good pace to the learning and effective use of the short sessions.
100. Pupils compose writing, such as persuasive letters, in pairs using the computer. They work together well and share their ideas and understanding willingly. Higher attaining pupils show good understanding of how different types of font influence the way writing is seen by others. Years 5 and 6 pupils show increasing confidence with data collection and analysis. They enter personal information, for example, with a view to creating graphs. Most understand the process well and recognise what they need to do to use the program successfully and enter the information accurately. Pupils combine pictures and text into presentations in order to show others what they have done. Higher attaining pupils, in particular, show understanding of how different forms of presentation affect the impact of their work. They achieve standards that are average nationally. Although all pupils' skills are improving at a good rate, their overall attainment remains below that expected nationally as they are building from a low stage of development.
101. A well-structured approach to teaching is helping all pupils to make good gains through the school. Teaching in the juniors is good with good relationships used to create effective learning environments. Teachers' use of real data and realistic problems sets up a good sense of challenge in many lessons. It is effective in giving meaning to the lessons and encourages pupils to use computer programs with increasing confidence. Pupils respond

very well, often working together effectively, sharing ideas and information. Pupils are often very supportive of each other and willing to help, which further promotes the good relationships. Teachers' planning is well structured and there are clear statements of what pupils need to learn. These give purpose to the lessons and help teachers and pupils to assess clearly where progress has been made. Most teachers are aware of those pupils whose skills are greater than the rest and make some provision for extension to lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively and make good progress. Developing assessment systems are being introduced but these are not used effectively to match tasks to pupils' needs. The effective use of assessment data will be needed to identify where pupils are able to use the technology independently and to make substantial progress in overall attainment.

MUSIC

102. Due to the arrangements of the timetable, few music lessons were observed. However, examinations of planning and informal observations show that satisfactory provision is made throughout the school. Regular opportunities are taken to provide music lessons that make effective use of national advice. Teachers provide a satisfactory range of opportunities that link well with pupils' work in other parts of the curriculum. Pupils use a range of percussion instruments, sing songs and listen to music in many contexts. Effective use, for example, is made of music to create a quiet and reflective atmosphere in assemblies. Staff often make good use of these opportunities to talk to pupils about what they have been listening to. This encourages pupils to express their views and promotes their language development.
103. The standards achieved by pupils are around those found nationally and above those found at the time of the 1996 inspection. They are similar to those found at the time of the review by Her Majesty's Inspectors. The school has placed a great emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy skills but has managed to retain a secure attention to the subject. Singing, however, often lacks volume and expression, due to less emphasis being placed on practice for this. Younger pupils sing a range of common songs that often relate well to their learning in other parts of the curriculum.
104. Junior age pupils have good opportunities to learn in all aspects of the subject. Lessons are taken by the headteacher in order to help all staff to gain necessary skills to take their own classes. This is an effective strategy that contributes well to teachers' personal and professional development. Teaching is good with clear planning and effective use of resources and this enables all pupils to learn well. Pupils use a wide range of musical instruments and are set good challenges to develop musical knowledge and understanding. For example, pupils listen carefully to simple chords and identify those that harmonise and those that do not. They quickly use new terms such as 'discord' in their discussions of their work. Most pupils work effectively together and this also contributes to their learning. Years 5 and 6 pupils listen carefully to pieces of music and give good comments on what they hear. They draw on their earlier knowledge effectively to describe their ideas although their general vocabulary is often limited.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

105. Only two physical education lessons were seen during the inspection, both in junior classes. Examination of curriculum planning and records suggest that satisfactory provision is made for physical education throughout the school. This generally maintains the standards shown in the last report. The physical education curriculum is varied, interesting and broad. A good range of after-school activities and participation in team competitions usefully extends it. Teachers and pupils support these enthusiastically. Almost all pupils by the age of eleven can swim. There are constructive links with local secondary schools. Visits by teachers from these are valuable in widening pupils' experience and providing additional opportunities for skill development. The school rightly values the contribution made by physical education to pupils'

personal and social development. The subject co-ordinator provides useful advice and support to colleagues. However, there is no consistent monitoring of standards and subject management remains relatively underdeveloped. National advice is beginning to improve the effectiveness of planning by promoting consistent coverage and providing guidance on the order in which different skills and activities are to be taught. This should enable teachers to plan for secure progress.

106. On the basis of the lessons seen, pupils' attainment by the age of eleven is average and teaching is satisfactory. In dance, junior pupils vary the vigour and extension of their movements, for example to reflect the movements of a dinosaur. They show suitable fluency and bodily control but their imagination in varying and the development of their movement is limited. When learning short tennis, most pupils learn to grip the racket correctly and adopt a ready position. They show sound levels of confidence and accuracy in throwing, catching and striking a ball. More able pupils show good judgement of speed and angle of strike.
107. Teachers' management is confident and secure and as a result, pupils behave safely, respond promptly to instructions and enjoy the activities. Clear explanations help pupils to understand the purpose of the lesson and what is to be learned. In one lesson, however, this pace was lost as too much time was spent on demonstrations involving only one or two pupils. This meant that many pupils remained inactive for too long. Once pupils began to practise together, the pace of the lesson improved. Pupils often learn well when given opportunities to work together in smaller groups. Teachers give good support and help pupils to refine their techniques. They do not, however, take sufficient opportunities to allow pupils to comment critically on their own performances and those of others. As a result, some opportunities for consolidating and improving technique are missed. Pupils do not learn to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of performances and this limits their progress in learning to improve and refine their movements.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

108. Pupils' attainment is below the expected standards by the ages of seven and eleven. This judgement is in line with that made in the previous, 1996, report. Coverage of the subject now fully meets statutory requirements and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils enter the school with very little background knowledge of different faiths or spirituality. Secure planning based on national guidelines for the subject is now in place. This allows pupils to satisfactorily build on and extend their knowledge and understanding through the years that they are at the school. Teachers take some opportunities to help pupils to develop their literacy skills through the subject but tasks are often too limited. In both the infants and the juniors, the great majority of pupils find it difficult to record their work and the amount and quality of their writing is poor.
109. In Year 2, pupils learn about different Creation stories such as the Aborigine interpretation called Dreamtime. A few children have a good knowledge about the important similarities and differences in these accounts, but many find it difficult to articulate their thoughts. Pupils have opportunities to study some of the beliefs and traditions of Christianity, including Christmas. They have some limited experience and understanding of other religions. They show empathy with the story of the lost sheep, making reference to incidents when they, themselves, lost something precious such as a much-loved doll.
110. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 find it difficult to extract information describing Jesus from relevant Gospel passages. Even though the teaching includes reading these with great expression, the children soon lose interest. Most find it difficult to read the extracts for themselves. The oldest juniors respond well to good teaching and in one lesson on the last supper made great progress in their understanding of this story. Pupils enjoy taking an active part in such stories, particularly when asked to take on the roles of the main characters.

111. Year 6 pupils remember a wealth of factual information about the different religions that they have studied. They talk with enthusiasm about a visit to a Sikh temple and to a local Christian church. The pupils know many Old and New Testament stories, including David and Goliath and the Crucifixion and praise their teachers for telling these in an exciting fashion. Their ability to query and suggest answers to moral and religious questions is less well developed. The school has recognised its need to develop the spiritual dimension of its work.
112. Overall, teaching is satisfactory in the infants and good in the juniors. All teachers plan effectively for their lessons and a good range of visits are arranged to different places of worship and exhibitions. The school is able to borrow a wide range of books and artefacts through a very good local service. A religious education after-school club is run by one of the governors. There are strong links with the local Methodist and Anglican Church and the school's Christmas carol service is held there. The minister, who is also one of the governors, takes assemblies on a regular basis.