

INSPECTION REPORT

DOVE BANK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Nailstone, Nuneaton

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 120061

Headteacher: Mr Michael Dix

Reporting inspector: Mrs Barbara Crane
21227

Dates of inspection: 19th – 22nd June 2000

Inspection number: 189191

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bagworth Road Nailstone Nuneaton Warwickshire
Postcode:	CV13 OQJ
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Joy Crane
Date of previous inspection:	9 September 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs Barbara Crane	Registered inspector	English Areas of learning for children under five Art History Geography Religious education Music Equal opportunities	Standards and achievements Teaching Care of pupils Leadership and management
Mrs Maureen Roscoe	Lay inspector		Attendance Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Partnership with parents Care of pupils
Mrs Hilary Ring	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information technology Design and technology Physical education Special educational needs.	Curriculum

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is smaller than most primary schools, with 115 pupils on roll. It serves the villages of Nailstone, Bagworth and Battram. Many of the pupils come to school by bus. Children enter the Reception class at the start of the term in which they are five. At the time of the inspection none of the children was under five years old. The school's circumstances have changed significantly since the previous inspection. Just over a third of the pupils now come from Travellers' families and typically about a third of the school's population changes each year. The number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals has doubled and is now 23%, which is above average. There is now double the number of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs and at 36% this is well above average. Three pupils have extra provision for their special educational needs. All of the pupils are from white families. No pupils are learning English as an additional language. A wide spread of ability is evident when children start at the school but, generally, their attainment on entry is well below average. During the inspection, a temporary teacher taught the oldest class.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school. It provides a good quality education for all of its pupils, whatever their background. The teaching is good and the pupils' achievement is good in most subjects. Standards in mathematics and reading are average by the time the pupils leave the school. The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership and is well supported by the staff and governors. The school is committed to raising standards and is well placed to bring about further improvements. It provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils of all abilities achieve well in mathematics because of the well-planned work.
- The pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve good standards in writing because of the teachers' high expectations.
- Standards in music, art and design and technology are good.
- The teaching is good and so the pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem.
- A very good range of interesting activities broadens the curriculum and supports the pupils' personal development.
- Relationships are very good. The school puts children first and provides a high level of care.
- The pupils with special educational needs are very well supported.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership and the staff work effectively as a team.

What could be improved

- The standard of writing in Years 5 and 6 is not high enough.
- Standards in information technology at Key Stage 2 are too low.
- The teachers' marking could give the pupils better guidance on how to improve.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement, overall, since its previous inspection in 1996, given that its circumstances have changed significantly. Teaching has improved and is now more consistent throughout the school. There is now more good and very good teaching and no unsatisfactory teaching. More able pupils are achieving better standards in reading and mathematics by the time they leave the school, but there is still work to do to raise the oldest pupils' achievement in writing. The pupils now write for a good range of purposes and displays of their work enhance the environment and better reflect their achievement. The curriculum for the youngest children is now well planned and takes account of their needs. The school's resources for younger pupils are well used to support their learning. The school is in a good position to improve further.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	D	E	C	A
Mathematics	C	E	C	B
Science	C	E	E	E

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

The results of the tests for 11 year olds in 1999 show that the pupils' performance in English and mathematics was average when compared to all schools. In comparison to similar schools, their performance was well above average in English and above average in mathematics. Results in science were well below both the national average and in comparison with similar schools. The results of the Key Stage 1 tests indicate good standards in writing and mathematics and average standards in reading compared to all schools. In relation to similar schools, the pupils' results were above average in reading and well above average in writing and mathematics.

The school sets targets for the oldest pupils but has to amend these as children leave or join the school. In the present Year 6, for example, a quarter of the pupils joined in this school year. Nevertheless, the school sets challenging targets and is on track to achieve those set this year. Fewer than twenty pupils take the tests at the end of each key stage and so the percentages of pupils achieving at each level are affected significantly by the results of individuals. Some pupils are absent when the tests are taken and this affects the school's results. Over the past four years, while the results of tests have varied, the school's improvement in standards has kept pace with the national trend. In particular, the number of pupils who reach standards that are higher than expected for their ages has increased.

The inspection evidence supports the view that standards are broadly average in reading and mathematics by the time the pupils leave the school. Standards in writing are good at Key Stage 1. The pupils in lower Key Stage 2 build on this good foundation but the expectations of what pupils can do in writing at the end of the key stage are too low and as a result standards are below average at the age of 11. Standards in science are below average at the end of both key stages, but show considerable improvement from the previous year. This is due to the school's very good planning to deal with areas of weakness in the curriculum and teaching. The pupils of all abilities generally achieve well. There are, however, fewer 11 year olds who achieve at the higher level in English, mathematics and science than there are in most schools. Standards in religious education are average at both key stages. By the age of seven, the pupils achieve the expectations for their age in information technology. By the time they leave the school, however, they have not achieved what they should in all aspects of the subject and standards are too low. Standards in music, art and design and technology are good. In all other subjects, the pupils attain the standards expected for their ages.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The pupils show interest in the work and concentrate well in lessons. They are polite and helpful.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	In lessons they behave very well and in the playground their behaviour is sensible and responsible.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. The pupils take pleasure in others' success and grow in confidence. They willingly take on responsibility.
Attendance	Very low. The extended absence of some children from Travellers' families means that the authorised absence is very high.

The pupils are keen to improve and take pleasure in their work. Pupils from different backgrounds and abilities get on well together. They help each other in their work and listen to others' opinions and respect their feelings. The school monitors children's absence but does not always indicate the reason for absence in the registers. This means that it is difficult to identify unauthorised absence.

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.

All of the lessons seen were at least satisfactory and ninety per cent were good or better. Twenty-one percent of the lessons were very good or better.

The teaching of the children in the Reception class is good. They quickly learn the routines and develop independence. The pupils with special educational needs learn at a good rate because of the quality of teachers' assessment and planning to meet their individual needs.

There are some very good features to the teaching in each class, including the management of pupils and good pace to lessons. The teachers are clear about what the pupils will learn and share this with the class. The pupils settle quickly to work because they know what they have to do. Lessons are interesting and often fun. The headteacher and deputy set a very good example in their teaching. Teaching in mathematics is good at both key stages. The work is carefully planned to meet the needs of all abilities. Teaching in English is good in Key Stage 1 and Year 3 and 4, where the expectations of what the pupils can achieve in writing are high. Although the teaching of English in Year 5 and 6 during the inspection was satisfactory, the expectations for the older pupils are too low and this results in lower standards. Reading is taught well throughout the school. There are some excellent examples of teachers' marking that gives clear guidance on how to improve, but this is not always the case.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The lessons are interesting and generally build effectively on what the pupils know and understand.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The pupils are quickly identified and the work is very well planned to meet their needs. The specialist teacher and classroom assistants provide very good support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The pupils develop a strong sense of right and wrong through the school's very good guidance. They are encouraged to reflect on important issues, consider the consequences of their actions and appreciate how they can contribute to the school's community. Their understanding of other cultures is well promoted.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school displays a high level of care and values the pupils as individuals. The staff know the pupils very well and give good help and support.

The work in music, art and design and technology is very well planned. A wide range of visits and other activities extends the curriculum. The extra-curricular activities are very good and greatly enjoyed by the pupils. Information technology is a weaker aspect of the curriculum and opportunities are not always taken to use it in lessons. Older pupils also have too few opportunities to extend their writing skills by using these outside English lessons. The school's emphasis on developing the pupils' confidence and ability to relate to others positively underpins its daily work. The school has built a strong partnership with parents. This has been a priority and the school's initiatives have been successful. This is evident in the strong support expressed by the parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides a very clear direction for the school. The staff are clear about the part they play in taking the school forward and support each other very effectively.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors work hard and provide high quality support for the school's work. They are well informed and play an active role in the school's planning for development. All responsibilities are carried out effectively. There are a few minor omissions in the governors' annual report to parents.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school looks closely at its performance and how it can improve. The planning for development is detailed, realistic and effective. The school works steadfastly towards its targets.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school's finances are well used to provide a good quality education for the pupils. The governors manage an uncertain budget, due to changes in pupil numbers, but do so effectively. They seek the best value from expenditure.

The school is a good place in which to teach and learn. A very able deputy head supports the headteacher. Together, they lead a committed team of teachers whose first priority is to sustain the drive to raise standards. The management of literacy and numeracy is effective. The weaknesses in writing at Key Stage 2 have been identified. The planning to raise standards in science has brought about good improvement in a year. The management of special educational needs and support for Travellers' children is very good. There are sufficient teachers and support staff. Resources in information technology are sparse but this is set to improve. The accommodation and resources for learning are satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They find the staff are approachable. • The teaching is good. • The school expects children to do their best. • The school is well led and managed. • They receive good information about their children's progress. • Their children make good progress and become more mature and responsible. • Their children like school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No significant concerns were expressed, either through the parents' questionnaires or at the meeting for parents.

The inspection findings support the parents' positive views. While the school expects the pupils to do their best in most aspects of their work, expectations in writing, for the older pupils could be higher.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Children under five make a good start at school and achieve well in all of the areas of learning. Few of them, however, reach the levels expected for their age in personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world by the time they are five. Most of the children enter the class with limited skills in speaking and listening and find it very difficult to express their ideas. Children of all abilities make good progress in all of the areas of learning because of the well-planned work and good teaching. In the physical and creative areas of learning, most of the children achieve close to average standards by the time they are five.
2. The results of the tests for 11 year olds in 1999 show that the pupils' performance in English and mathematics was average when compared to all schools. In comparison to similar schools, their performance was well above average in English and above average in mathematics. Results in science were well below both the national average and in comparison with similar schools.
3. The results of the Key Stage 1 tests in 1999 indicate good standards in writing and mathematics and average standards in reading compared to all schools. In relation to similar schools, the pupils' results were above average in reading and well above average in writing and mathematics.
4. A small number of pupils take the tests at the end of each key stage. Over the past four years, while the results of tests have varied, the school's improvement in standards has kept pace with the national trend. In particular, the number of pupils who reach standards that are higher than expected for their ages has increased, but fewer pupils reach this level than in most schools.
5. The school sets targets for the oldest pupils but has to amend these as children leave or join the school. In the present school year, for example, a quarter of the pupils joined in Year 6. Nevertheless, the school sets challenging targets and is on track to achieve those set this year. In most aspects of their work, the more able pupils achieve appropriately, but the Year 5 and 6 pupils are underachieving in writing. The school's very good provision for the pupils with special educational needs enables them to build on their skills, knowledge and understanding and they achieve very well. The pupils who come from Traveller families are also well supported and the teachers make every effort to enable them to make up lost ground after extended periods of absence. As a consequence, they often make very good progress and, for most, their attainment is similar to other pupils.
6. The inspection evidence supports the view that, on the basis of the work seen in lessons and in the pupils' past work, standards are broadly average in reading and mathematics by the end of both key stages. Pupils of all abilities achieve well in mathematics because the work is carefully tailored to meet their needs. The pupils reading develops well and they enjoy finding out information for themselves. The pupils develop a sound facility with numbers and find different ways to solve problems. Standards in writing are good at Key Stage 1. The pupils' handwriting is well formed and their spelling and punctuation is generally accurate. The pupils in Years 3 and 4 build on this good foundation but the expectations of what more able pupils can do in writing at the end of the key stage are too low and as a result standards are below average at the age of 11.
7. The pupils use and extend their skills in numeracy and reading well in other subjects. The pupils in Key Stage 1 use their skills in writing well in other subjects but the Key Stage 2

pupils have fewer opportunities to write and this restricts their progress in extending and practising their skills.

8. Standards in science are slightly below average at the end of both key stages, but show considerable improvement from the previous year. This is due to the school's very good planning to address areas of weakness in the curriculum and teaching. Most of the pupils are reaching the standard expected for their age, but relatively few are exceeding this. The pupils' good investigative skills are a strength but the Year 5 and 6 pupils' recording of their findings is often poor.
9. Standards in religious education are average at both key stages and meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The pupils extend their understanding of a range of faiths. They have a sound knowledge of the main events in the Christian calendar. They are able to reflect on their experience and feelings.
10. By the age of seven, the pupils achieve the expectations for their age in information technology. By the time they leave the school, however, they have not achieved what they should in all aspects of the subject and standards are too low. Information technology is not used sufficiently to support learning in most subjects. The pupils have too little experience of control and monitoring.
11. Standards in music, art and design and technology are good. The pupils are encouraged to try out their own ideas in each of these subjects and they rise to the challenges presented very well. The pupils make satisfactory progress in history and geography and swimming.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Overall, the pupils' attitudes to the school are good. They show a lively enthusiasm and are keen to get as much out of school as possible. The majority of pupils take their learning seriously and are keen to improve. They are obedient and concentrate well, rising to the challenges presented to them in lessons. There are some pupils who need to be coaxed by their teachers and other staff to take a full part in lessons. Occasionally a few pupils become distracted or restless in class; these isolated incidents are well handled by skilled teachers so that learning is not affected.
13. The pupils respond well to the teachers and adults both in and out of the lessons. The majority of pupils behave well and sometimes, as in assemblies, behaviour is exemplary. Because of the pupils' willingness to get involved in school life, behaviour is good throughout the school. No pupils have been excluded from the school. Parents indicate a high level of support for this area of the school's work and their children are very clear about how they should behave during the school day.
14. Pupils from different backgrounds get on well together because their cultural traditions are understood and celebrated very well. There is a friendly warmth and great courtesy evident in the school. The pupils feel that it is a good place to be and parents agree that there is a readiness for pupils to share each other's success. This was evident when one pupil asked to see a piece of work that had been praised by a teacher and genuine interest and pleasure was then shown in another child's work.
15. Pupils' personal development is very good. They use their initiative in, for example, clearing away at the end of sessions. Older pupils care for children younger than themselves and visitors to the school are treated with respect. The pupils contribute confidently in assemblies and lessons. For example, there are plenty of volunteers to read a class poem and the rest of the class listen in a sensible manner. A strong feature of the school is the way that pupils who join at intervals during the year are helped by their peers to quickly adjust to the school's expectations.

16. Whole school activities connected with fund raising for charity or book sales engage the pupils' interest and reflect their concern about other children in the world. Many pupils get involved in school routines, carrying out jobs without looking for praise or causing a fuss. The lessons often involve pupils working in pairs or groups and they help each other. Resources are respected and handled gently. This was the case when photographs were used as historical artefacts. There was a very good degree of co-operation in an art lesson; the pupils noticed what needed to be done and willingly accepted the responsibility to organise themselves effectively.
17. Attendance figures are very low. While attendance has improved since the last inspection, some pupils attend school for varying degrees of time and others have irregular patterns of attendance. Attendance is well below that of similar schools. Parents are encouraged to support regular attendance and report absences promptly. The registers show that this does always happen. Registers are completed but the reasons for absence are not always included.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. All of the lessons seen were at least satisfactory and nine out of ten lessons were good or better. One in four of the lessons were very good or better.
19. The consistently good quality of the teaching is a strength of the school. The teachers are enthusiastic, energetic and committed to raising standards. This is seen clearly in the concerted effort that all teachers have put into dealing with the weaknesses in science. The teachers support each other well and the classroom assistants work closely with them as part of a team. The warm and supportive atmosphere of the school reflects the good quality relationships in each classroom.
20. The basic skills are very well taught in the Reception class and built on successfully in the older class in Key Stage 1. The youngest pupils quickly learn the routines of the classroom and develop independence because of the good teaching. The teacher has high expectations of them and they work hard to please her because the work is interesting. The good emphasis on the basic skills and the teacher's warm and supportive manner ensure a solid foundation for future learning.
21. There are some very good features to the teaching in each class, including the management of pupils and a good pace to the lessons. The pupils know what they will learn because the teachers make this clear at the start of the lessons. The pupils settle quickly to work as a result of the teachers' clear explanations. The lessons are interesting and often fun. All teachers use a rich vocabulary and also provide a very good model in reading aloud. In the Reception/ Year 1 class, for example, the pupils' delight at the 'Rockin' Rooster' poem was greatly enhanced by the teacher's lively use of voice and gesture. The pupils grasped the rhythm immediately and quickly read it accurately. The pupils contribute eagerly to discussions because they know that their ideas and opinions will be taken seriously.
22. Most of the teaching in English and mathematics is good. Teaching in mathematics is good at both key stages. The work is carefully planned to meet the needs of all abilities. Teaching in English is good in Key Stage 1 and Years 3 and 4, where the expectations of what the pupils can achieve in writing are high. Although the teaching of English in the top class was satisfactory, during the inspection, the pupils' written work indicates that the expectations for the older pupils are too low and incomplete and untidy work is sometimes accepted. The work in writing lacks challenge for the more able pupils and leads to underachievement. Reading is taught well throughout the school. The teachers share their enthusiasm for books and poetry.

23. There are some excellent examples of teachers' marking that give clear guidance on how to improve. In Year 2/3, for example, the teacher's comments in books often receive a written reply from the pupils, who obviously value the guidance. Not all of the teachers' marking is as helpful and is often restricted to a cursory level.
24. The teachers use the pupils' experiences very well and this makes the work more relevant. The teachers let the pupils try out their ideas in art, design and technology and music and this supports the good standards, as the pupils learn by trial and error and from each other. There is often a brief but useful recap of previous work at the start of lessons and this focuses the pupils' attention as well as reinforcing the vocabulary that will be used in the subject. The classroom assistants work closely with the teachers and provide good quality support.
25. Good support is provided for the pupils from Traveller families and the teachers work hard to enable these pupils to make up the ground lost through absence from school.
26. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. The specialist teacher prepares relevant reading materials for the pupils that reflect some of the familiar experiences in the pupils' lives. One boy was seen reading a story that included the names of his sisters and brothers and the family's horse. The pupils respond very positively to being awarded a 'brilliant brick' for their efforts and enjoy filling in their own 'wheel of progress' when they meet one of their targets. All teachers also recognise the needs of those pupils who have physical, emotional and behavioural problems, are sensitive to them and endeavour to use approaches that are consistent and make them feel confident.

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

27. The school provides a good broad and balanced curriculum. All statutory requirements are met and religious education is taught according to the local syllabus. A good range of learning opportunities is on offer. Attractive displays show the broad range of opportunities and reflect the rich life of the school. Numeracy and literacy are given a strong focus and the national strategies for these have been thoroughly implemented. The pupils apply their numeracy skills well in other subjects such as science and design and technology. Topic themes are planned carefully so that the pupils in the mixed age classes do not repeat the work. The work in art, music and design and technology is well planned and supports the good standards achieved. In these subjects, the pupils build very effectively on their previous knowledge because of the good planning. Weaker aspects include the lack of opportunities for the Key Stage 2 pupils to extend their writing skills in subjects such as science and religious education. Information technology is not yet used to sufficiently support the pupils' learning in the curriculum.
28. There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The quality of the teachers' planning to meet their needs is very good and results in the pupils acquiring good basic skills.
29. The school makes very good use of specialist provision for the pupils who are from Travellers' families and require extra support. During the inspection, a pupil who had previously missed a great deal of school was seen making good progress in learning to read, pick out letters of the alphabet, develop a handwriting style and spell simple words. This was as a result of productive one-to-one contact with a visiting teacher.
30. Within numeracy sessions, the teachers plan for groups of differing abilities and this is usually well matched to the needs of both higher and lower attaining pupils. This is not always the case in writing during English lessons for the older pupils in the school. The pupils in Year 6 who have the potential to attain high levels in mathematics receive extra

teaching from the headteacher and also attend some lessons at the local secondary school. This has a beneficial impact on the progress they make.

31. The school enhances the pupils' learning through a very good range of extra-curricular activities and clubs. These include football, netball, athletics, choir, recorders, art, sewing, computer and technology club and a 'maggie' club that also helps the pupils to learn about conservation and the environment. During the inspection a summer sports club demonstrated the commitment of both adults and children when they participated in activities involving games, fitness training and the development of ball skills. The important contribution of parents and voluntary helpers is valued by the pupils and the teachers.
32. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. The times when the pupils can share experiences, learn to value themselves and others and listen sensitively to others' opinions are important features within each week. There is a well-developed health education programme and the school has won an award for this aspect of its work. Drugs education, awareness of medicines and sex education are thoughtfully considered and taught sensitively.
33. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development continues to be an outstanding feature of the school. The school's caring atmosphere is a major factor in all of these areas. Teachers are excellent role models and are delighted when the pupils demonstrate significant steps in their learning. They welcome the diverse backgrounds of the pupils, respect their responses and value the contributions that individuals make.
34. Very good examples arise, sometimes spontaneously, for the pupils to celebrate the wonder of the world around them. The accurate drawings produced by five-year-olds after examining the inside of a cabbage reveal their amazement at the intricacies of nature. Six and seven year olds were fascinated when watching caterpillars become cocoons and an Indian moon moth and peacock butterflies emerging from their chrysalises. This sensitivity is encouraged throughout the school. Older pupils, for example, display a mature appreciation of a piece of music such as Stravinsky's 'Rite of Spring' when they discuss the feelings and images that are suggested by it.
35. The clear rules in the classes help pupils to realise that these are important for the benefit of everyone. The strong moral framework within the school community is evident during the well-prepared assemblies. The pupils explored the theme of jealousy during the week of the inspection and identified with feelings of rivalry within families and envy at another person's success. An enactment of the story of Joseph and his brothers from the Old Testament showed the pupils that there are often strong feelings within families but people feel remorse when they know that their actions are wrong and cause someone to be upset. The pupils' efforts are acknowledged and rewarded in classes and in whole school gatherings. They are delighted to receive their 'certificates of achievement'. Good deeds are recognised by including the pupils' photographs on 'The tree of pride' with captions to show how helpful they have been.
36. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. From the Reception class upwards, the pupils are taught to respect each other, share equipment and collaborate in group work, clear away and act responsibly. This was exemplified when all the pupils in Key Stage 1 prepared a selection of food for a school picnic. They were ably assisted by the staff and members of the Women's Institute. The pupils frequently use their initiative, for example when a pupil sensibly took the decision to close an external door during a school assembly. Concern for others is a high priority in the school and the pupils have generously raised funds for the Blue Peter Appeal and several charities including Barnardos and Save the Children. The pupils are often genuinely pleased by the success of others. The older pupils look after the younger ones and they participate happily together in the routines of the school day.

37. The pupils appreciate their own cultural traditions and those of others. Many thoughtful opportunities are provided in art, music, religious education and geography for pupils to appreciate the differences in cultures throughout the world. For example, the pupils look at examples of African art, listen to Tudor music and examine artefacts that represent aspects of Judaism. They participate in World Book Day and learn about the lifestyles of people living in different countries. Visits to the Millennium Dome, religious buildings and visitors to the school, for example a storyteller who told the pupils about the history of the local area, add to the pupils' awareness of their own cultural heritage. A good effort has been made to provide a large display of photographs and artefacts of the way of life of the Travellers in the past and in present times. There is also a colourful and informative display of canal art.
38. The school has very good links with the community. The pupils benefit from the interest that is shown by village residents, and by local firms who provide sponsorship for the football strip and the school prospectus. The pupils write knowledgeably in the school newspaper about sporting events and activities such as bell boating and visits that they have made. Local industry also gives good support to the oldest pupils in putting their design and technology plans into practice. During the inspection, the oldest pupils were delighted to give a presentation of their finished product at Loughborough University. The school share all the news of the pupils' achievements and experiences with the local community and involves it in the life of the school. Effective links are made with the secondary school to help the pupils to make a smooth transition into the next stage of their education.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. The school cares well for all of its pupils. The strength is in the provision of a sensitive and friendly climate in which all staff and those from other agencies work hard to help each pupil feel valued and secure. The result is that pupils are confident and the majority are at ease in their surroundings. Great importance is paid to settling new arrivals to the school or re-introducing those children of Traveller families who attend school for various parts of the school year.
40. The assessment of what the pupils can do is used effectively to plan what they need to do next in most aspects of their work. Their progress in reading, mathematics and science is tracked well. The assessment of writing is weaker in the top class and consequently the work is not planned to match the needs of the more able pupils.
41. The requirements of pupils with special educational needs are identified early and accurately. The pupils receive well-targeted support that enables them to make very good progress towards the precise targets on their individual education plans. The classroom assistants provide very good support for these pupils.
42. The teachers know the pupils well and keep track of their personal development. They provide a high level of sensitive support and guidance to individual pupils. There are clear expectations of good behaviour backed up by teachers' patience in showing pupils how to behave well and speak with respect to others. Pupils are helped to follow the school's behaviour code and those finding it difficult to do so are carefully monitored. Teaching and support staff take every opportunity to promote a sense of self-discipline that is apparent in the school and greatly appreciated by parents. The teachers' marking does not always give clear guidance on how to improve.
43. Parents are asked to alert the school when a child cannot attend and most do so, but there are weaknesses in the school's monitoring of attendance. Absences are not always properly categorised. This makes the identification of unauthorised absence more difficult. The school is not doing all it could do to keep accurate records of attendance or to sufficiently monitor the attendance of all groups of pupils and take action as necessary. The

Education Welfare Officer visits very infrequently and this means that absences are not sufficiently followed up.

44. The procedures for ensuring the pupils' safety and well being are satisfactory. All staff pay good attention to pupils' safety and well being in lessons. A policy for child protection is followed and staff are aware of their responsibilities. Some staff, however, have not had recent training. Parents were not advised through the prospectus of the school's role in these matters this year, although this is in hand for the new prospectus. The governors have not undertaken a recent formal assessment of health and safety issues, although this is planned for next term. These relative weaknesses must be set against the genuine care all pupils receive in this happy school and the good attention paid to pupils' safety and protection while on school premises.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. The parents and carers hold very positive views of the school and have a high level of confidence in the staff. Inspectors find these views to be justified.
46. The school has good and effective links with the parents. Parents speak of the open friendliness they experience when contacting the school and consider this to be a vital ingredient in its continuing success.
47. The headteacher is strongly committed to encouraging parental interest and involvement in children's learning and in the life of the school. The school is open to suggestions and parents are asked for their views about important matters through questionnaires. As a result of consultation with parents about the quality of information they receive, the school acted on their request for more information about what the children will learn each term.
48. The previous inspection showed that reports on progress needed some improvement. This has been done and now reports show where pupils' progress is slowing. Parents and carers feel they are provided with good quality information about the school's activities and plans. Inspectors find this is the case except for minor omissions in the annual report prepared by governors. The required details about the success of the school's special educational needs policy are not published. The governors also miss an opportunity to explain about the low attendance levels or promote better attendance amongst non-traveller pupils.
49. Staff and governors work hard to encourage parental involvement in the school's work. The parents are strongly encouraged to become involved with their child's reading at home, but many do not do so regularly. A very well considered home-school agreement was distributed to parents after the draft document produced a disappointing return. Help and support is given on field trips or fund raising. The staff are readily available and are well known to many parents, who approach them easily whenever they need to do so.
50. The school reaches out to those parents and carers who do not live in the immediate area by holding meetings at different venues and by providing facilities for a pre-school group. This runs with the help of parents and reflects and complements the school's priority of smoothing the transition of its youngest pupils into a school setting.
51. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to play a full part in the planned provision and are very welcome to discuss their concerns at all times. They are invited to the regular reviews of progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The headteacher provides a very clear direction for the school. He faces challenges with cheerful enthusiasm and energy. He is very well supported by an able deputy head who plays a full part in the management of the school. They work effectively together and set a

very good example in the quality of their teaching. The staff work very well together as a team and the school's aims are reflected in its everyday life. The role of the subject managers has been successfully extended. The Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been competently introduced and the teachers reflect on ways in which they can improve on the implementation of these initiatives in the light of their experience. The management of the provision for special educational needs and the support for pupils from Traveller families is very good.

53. The school's commitment to raising standards is evident in the way in which it looks closely at its performance and identifies areas for improvement. The school's careful analysis of weaknesses in teaching and learning and careful planning to improve teachers' expertise, resources and assessment has resulted in higher standards in science at Key Stage 2. The headteacher observes what happens in classrooms and the co-ordinators look at samples of work. The information gained about weaknesses in standards has generally been used very well to inform teaching. The school has identified the need to improve the expectations of writing at upper Key Stage 2. Teachers are given useful feedback following observations of lessons. The teachers' professional development is planned to take account of both their individual needs and the school's priorities.
54. The governors provide very good support for the school and have a clear understanding of its strengths and what it needs to do to improve. They are kept well informed by the headteacher. Further information is gathered by governors who visit the school to look at particular aspects of its work and report back to the full governing body. The school works steadily towards its targets. One of the school's priorities has been to build a stronger partnership with all of the parents and the community. Its success in this respect is seen in the high level of confidence that parents express in the school.
55. The school's finances are very well managed. The transient population creates an uncertain budget and the current high level of under spend is misleading and much of it will be reclaimed by the local authority in the current year. The school plans to create a computer suite and has budgeted prudently to enable this to happen. The governors seek the best value in goods and services and check that expenditure on staffing and resources gives good value in supporting the pupils' progress and standards. The accommodation is adequate, the staffing is good and resources are appropriate in all subjects except for information technology. Better accommodation for children under 5 is planned.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

Whilst maintaining its many strengths, the school now needs to:

- (1) Improve standards in writing by:**

- raising the teacher's expectations of what the more able Year 5/6 pupils can achieve;
- ensuring that the assessment of what the oldest pupils can do is used to plan more challenging work;
- planning better opportunities for the pupils at Key Stage 2 to extend their skills in writing in other subjects.

(Paragraphs 6, 7, 22, 30, 40, 64, 65, 68, 80)

(2) Improve standards in information technology at Key Stage 2 by:

- planning better opportunities for the pupils to use computers to support their learning;
- ensuring that the pupils have more experience of control and monitoring;
- improving the range of software.

(Paragraphs 10, 27, 75, 88, 95, 98)

(3) Improve the quality of teachers' marking so that it gives better guidance to the pupils on how to improve their work.

(Paragraphs 23, 69, 80, 42)

In addition to the key issues identified above, the more minor weaknesses below should be considered when the school draws up its action plan:

- Improve the accuracy with which absences are categorised so that unauthorised absence can be monitored more effectively. (Paragraph 43)
- Ensure that all the information that should be published is contained in the school prospectus and governors' annual report. (Paragraph 48)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	29
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4%	17%	69%	10%	0	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	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	115
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	26
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	42
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	37
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	31

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	15.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	5	11	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	4	4	5
	Girls	9	9	7
	Total	13	13	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (47)	81 (31)	75 (69)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	4	5	5
	Girls	8	7	9
	Total	12	12	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (75)	75 (81)	88 (88)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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
	1999	5	12	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	5	4
	Girls	8	8	5
	Total	13	13	9
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (30)	76 (15)	53 (31)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	5	5
	Girls	8	8	6
	Total	13	13	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (38)	76 (23)	65 (38)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	109
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table 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)	5.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.1
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	72.5

Financial information

Financial year	2000
	£
Total income	254046
Total expenditure	234772
Expenditure per pupil	2060
Balance brought forward from previous year	8968
Balance carried forward to next year	28242

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	115
Number of questionnaires returned	38

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	40	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	38	0	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	38	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	49	49	0	0	2
The teaching is good.	74	24	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	37	2	0	8
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	87	8	0	0	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	19	0	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	47	48	0	0	5
The school is well led and managed.	69	26	0	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	34	0	0	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	47	40	0	0	13

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

56. There were no children who were under five in the Reception class at the time of the inspection. From the observations of the children who were five during this term and the scrutiny of the teacher's assessments it is evident that few of them reach the levels expected for their age in personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world by the age of five. Most of the children enter the class with limited skills in speaking and listening and find it very difficult to express their ideas. Children of all abilities make good progress in all of the areas of learning because of the well-planned work and good teaching. In the physical and creative areas of learning, most of the children achieve average standards by the time they are five.
57. The children's **personal and social development** is promoted very effectively and permeates every aspect of their day in the classroom. They understand what the rules are and learn to stick to them. There are very good routines and so the children feel secure. They willingly help to tidy away. The teaching is good. The warmth displayed by the teacher and support staff fills the children with confidence. The teacher plans a very good range of activities to promote the children's ability to listen and they quickly understand that it is important to listen to each other, as well as the teacher. The adults know the children very well. They are sensitive to the children's social and emotional needs. The children who have put in a special effort or have persevered with difficulties are rewarded at the end of each session.
58. The children achieve well, in **language and literacy**, often from a very low starting point, because of the good quality teaching. The basic skills are taught thoroughly and reinforced consistently, consequently the children form letters correctly and remember their sounds. The children enjoy looking at books but have difficulty in describing what is happening in the pictures. They listen to stories avidly and most can retell familiar stories, particularly those with a repeated sentence or refrain. Most children can identify the words that describe the 'Ugly Duckling' but have difficulty in thinking of words other than colours to describe him. The work for more able children is suitably challenging. One boy finished writing a list of words to describe his cat and included '*hardly any neck, short tailed*'. The children write their names and learn to spell some commonly used words. They pick words out to match those in a sentence and can copy under an adult's writing. The teacher gives a very good emphasis to extending the children's vocabulary and encourages them to express their feelings and ideas. They are happy to do this because they know what they say will be valued.
59. The teaching in the **mathematical** area of learning is good and so the children develop an understanding of how numbers work. The teacher uses counting rhymes effectively and these are well remembered by the children, who join in heartily. Most children recognise simple patterns such as 'one child sitting and one standing' and can continue the pattern. They can sort objects by one property, such as colour, but some have difficulty with sorting for more than this. The children recognise numbers up to 20 and some can add two numbers under 10. The children have a sound understanding of shape. They recognise and name simple two-dimensional shapes. A more able child, who was drawing shapes with a computer program, explained that an oval is like a circle, but it is '*squashed slightly on two sides*'.
60. The children's **knowledge and understanding of the world** is successfully extended through the good teaching. There is a wide range of interesting activities and the teacher's questions encourage the children to think about why things happen and give reasons. In a

science lesson, the children learned that a push or pull is needed to move an object and found examples around the school. They know that plants grow from seeds and need water and light to make them grow. The children learn to use the mouse to move the cursor on the computer screen and give simple instructions to a toy robot to make it go forwards and backwards. They build structures with construction kits and make models with junk materials.

61. The children's **creative development** is supported by lively work in music, art and role-play. They take a great deal of pleasure in singing together and have a good repertoire of songs that they know by heart. They sing with good expression and rhythm and are delighted when their favourite songs, which include actions, are practised. In the classroom 'trailer', they take on different roles and prepare meals for friends. Their painting and collage work shows a good use of colour and imagination. They mix colours and apply paint carefully when painting portraits. Several children show a good sense of discrimination over the materials that they choose to make collages.
62. The children's **physical development** is extended through well-planned lessons that encourage them to express their feelings through movement. They develop a level of control and poise that is average for their age. The good teaching ensures that they have plenty of opportunities to use tools in painting, modelling and construction work. Generally, the children's control over large body movements is better than their finer control, when gluing or folding paper, for example. They are taught to hold pencils correctly.

ENGLISH

63. The results of the tests for 11 year olds in 1999 show that the pupils' performance in English was average when compared to all schools. In comparison to similar schools, their performance was well above average. The results of the Key Stage 1 tests indicate good standards in writing and average standards in reading compared to all schools. In relation to similar schools, the pupils' results were above average in reading and well above average in writing. Standards were judged to be average at the last inspection, but the characteristics of the school's population have changed and there are now more lower attaining pupils. To some extent, the school's results reflect these changes.
64. The inspection evidence supports the view that standards in reading are average at the age of 7 years and by the time the pupils leave the school. Standards in writing are good at Key Stage 1. The pupils in lower Key Stage 2 build on this good foundation but the expectations of what pupils can do in writing at the end of the key stage are too low and, as a result, standards are below average at the age of 11.
65. The teachers have implemented the Literacy Strategy confidently and most plan work that meets the needs of all abilities and ages. The lively introductions to lessons grasp the pupils' interest. The skills in reading learned through the good teaching based on 'big books' are well used by the pupils in the later group and independent work. The pupils catch the teachers' enthusiasm for books. The pupils in most classes have good opportunities to write in English lessons, however, there are too few opportunities for the pupils to extend their skills in writing in other subjects at Key Stage 2. Too often, the pupils simply fill in gaps in worksheets or complete undemanding tasks that do not allow them to use what they have learned.
66. The Reception pupils have a limited vocabulary and find it hard to express their ideas or to listen carefully to what others say. All of the teachers provide good opportunities for the pupils to extend their listening skills and to speak about their feelings, experience and ideas. The teachers use a rich vocabulary and use questions well to encourage the pupils to make more extended replies. Nevertheless, for most of the pupils, standards in speaking

remain below average by the time they leave the school. Standards in listening are average.

67. The pupils in both key stages achieve well in reading as a result of the good quality teaching. The youngest pupils approach books confidently because they have been taught the basic skills well. Pupils in Year 1 use the sounds of letters and the pictures or context of a story to work out unfamiliar words. They recognise rhyming words and suggest others that fit the pattern. By the end of Year 2, the pupils have a good grasp of how to use the index and contents page to find information from a book. They look up technical words in the glossary. The pupils understand what they read and enjoy a good range of stories and can explain the plot and different characters. Many of the pupils enjoy poems and take pleasure in the way that words create an effect. The pupils in Year 3 and 4 recognise the forms of different types of poetry such as rhyming couplets and narrative poems. They use a thesaurus to find alternative words to make their own poems more interesting. The pupils refer back to the text to explain why they like particular sections of a story or how a character reacts. The older Key Stage 2 pupils read competently and locate information in reference books to support their learning in other subjects, such as history. They talk about their favourite type of story and benefit from the good range of books available. The pupils recommend books to friends. Many of the pupils use good expression when they read because the teachers provide a very good model when they read aloud to the class.
68. The pupils' writing develops very well in Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2. The youngest pupils learn to form letters correctly and spell common words. They approach writing confidently and are given good opportunities to write for a range of purposes and at length. The pupils in Year 2 record their findings in science and write lists, letters and poems. They successfully adapt the style of the writing for each purpose and present their work neatly. The pupils use punctuation correctly, as a matter of habit. Some pupils include dialogue in their stories and use exclamation marks. The Year 3 pupils organise their writing well in recipes, stories and accounts. Their spelling is good and handwriting is neat and joined. The structure of sentences becomes more complex and they use commas and apostrophes. Most of the Year 4 pupils can construct a simple play script, using the appropriate conventions. In one lesson, a lower attaining pupil was delighted when he remembered the way in which a colon is used. The work is challenging and the pupils respond very well, increasingly choosing words for effect. They know how to adapt their style of writing in formal and informal letters and write persuasively. This good progress slows in Years 5 and 6. While the pupils know how to join their writing, most do not. They take very little pride in presentation and much of the work is unfinished. The pupils do not routinely check their work, although most can spot mistakes in spelling and punctuation when they are directed to.
69. The good teaching in Key Stage 1 and Years 3 and 4 supports the pupils' good progress in all aspects of the subject. The teachers' marking in these classes helps the pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their work. When the teachers have high expectations the pupils take great pride in their work. The pupils are eager to read aloud in front of the class because the teachers praise their efforts. The final part of the lesson is often very well used to assess what the pupils have learned. The teachers record their assessment of the pupil's progress in reading in all classes and use this information to guide the pupils to improve their skills. While all of the teaching seen during the inspection was at least satisfactory, the scrutiny of the Year 5 and 6 pupils' work shows lower expectations of what the pupils can achieve in writing. Work that is untidy, inaccurate and incomplete is accepted. The work for the more able pupils in writing does not extend or refine their skills and the teacher's marking does not give points for improvement, or is not followed through. As a consequence of these weaknesses, the more able pupils are underachieving.
70. The pupils with special educational needs receive skilful teaching that meets their particular needs and many of them make very good progress in both reading and writing. The

weaknesses in writing have been identified by the school and are a priority for improvement in the school's planning for development next year.

MATHEMATICS

71. The results of the tests for eleven-year-olds in 1999 show that standards in mathematics were close to the national average but above average in comparison to similar schools. In the tests for seven year olds, pupils' attainment was above average nationally and well above when compared to similar schools.
72. The findings of the last inspection were that the pupils' attainment in mathematics was average at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. The school's intake has changed since then and although standards have not been maintained at Key Stage 2, the pupils of all abilities are achieving very well in mathematics. When the pupils first enter the school, their attainment in mathematics is well below average. As a result of the good teaching, the pupils make rapid progress. Most of the pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are reaching the expected level for their age with some pupils working at the higher levels. Standards are broadly average by the time the pupils leave the school. There are, however, fewer pupils at Key Stage 2 working at Level 5 than in most schools.
73. The Reception pupils work with a good deal of practical equipment and this forges the way for the pupils to understand how to calculate without it. By the time that they are seven, the pupils add and subtract numbers to 20 mentally and understand how to break down numbers into tens and units when using equipment. In Year 1 the teacher considers the pupils' needs carefully. Higher attainers pick out the largest number from 160, 171 and 115 while those with special educational needs learn to count accurately, make sequential patterns and put sets of objects together to help them with simple addition. The pupils enjoy mathematics because it is often fun. For example, in a good lesson in Year 2, where the teacher had well prepared resources, she helped the pupils to partition the set of 12 by pretending that they were 12 ladybirds and had several places where they could 'land'. This led them to make up sums, for example, $6 + 2 + 4$ to represent their 'landings' on a path, the grass or a wall. The teacher's imaginative approaches helped the pupils to understand what they were doing. Further work shows that there is a good emphasis on practical exploration when pupils test two objects to discover which is the heavier, work out coin values as if they were shopping and use three-dimensional equipment to help them to understand the properties of shapes.
74. The pupils in Key Stage 2 show skills in calculating mentally but some have difficulty in explaining their strategies. Very good teaching in Years 3 and 4 leads the pupils to make good strides in their understanding. In one lesson, the teacher used questioning perceptively to find out what the pupils did not understand and helped them to identify the need to extract the mathematical content of 'wordy problems'. She skilfully included chances for the pupils to read for meaning. They realised that one question was simply a question of ignoring unnecessary information, picking out the numbers of stickers that different children had supposedly collected and adding them to find the total. The imaginative content in the teaching of basic skills and a lively pace captured the pupils' interest and they were bursting with enthusiasm when converting coin values and working out quick ways of adding £1.99 and 40p. By the age of eleven, more able pupils can quickly multiply and divide numbers by tens, hundreds and thousands. They show a mature understanding of numbers and place value and can approximate and use quick methods to give estimates. Although their understanding of shape and space is good, the work that they produce in their books is poor when they are not encouraged to use a ruler or set out their calculations tidily. They easily convert percentages into fractions and fractions into decimals. When a small group of more able pupils have the chance to work with the headteacher and develop their skills in calculator use, they make particularly good progress when tackling problems where they have to apply their skills. For example, they acted as

market researchers and worked out the actual percentages of pupils in different classes in an imaginary school and gathered data about how many wore uniform or had a pet.

75. The teachers' positive responses to the pupils help them to feel secure even if they get the answer wrong and there is always friendly encouragement to 'have another try'. Careful planning is evident in all lessons and this enables the pupils of differing abilities to tackle challenging work that is appropriate for them. Those with special educational needs are very well supported and many of their individual education plans include targets for numeracy. A thorough training programme has ensured that the recommendations of the National Numeracy Strategy have been adopted well, with many mental mathematical activities at the start of lessons proving to be particularly successful. Teachers try hard to extend the pupils' vocabulary and use accurate mathematical language. There are some well-planned opportunities for the pupils to apply their numerical skills in design and technology and science when they measure and mark out materials and produce graphs to show the results of experiments. A good example was a time and temperature chart where pupils had investigated different types of cups to discover which material is best for keeping a drink warm. The pupils do not use information technology to support their work in mathematics sufficiently and the pupils' skills in data handling are restricted because of this.

SCIENCE

76. The results of the 1999 tests for eleven-year-olds show that the pupils achieved standards in science that were well below the national average and those in similar schools. On the basis of the work seen during the inspection, very good progress has been made over this year and the pupils at both key stages are attaining higher standards than previously, although standards are below average at both key stages. In Year 6, an average proportion of pupils are achieving the expected level but relatively few are reaching the higher level. The improvement is as a result of the introduction of a new scheme of work that concentrates on all the elements of the subject, good teaching and very clear direction from the deputy head who has assumed responsibility for co-ordinating science. Lower standards than were found in the previous inspection are explained mainly by changes in the school's intake, differences between year groups and the emphasis that the school has had to give to the implementation of national initiatives to improve the pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy. The school is fully aware of these factors and has detailed plans for the continued improvement of the subject.
77. The quality of the teaching is good. There is a range of teaching from satisfactory to an excellent example. All the teachers manage the pupils very well and involve them fully in practical activities. The good opportunities to investigate help the pupils to develop the scientific skills of predicting what will happen, making close observations, devising a test that is fair and forming a conclusion based on evidence. In Year 1, the pupils learn about their five senses and the importance of keeping healthy. They notice what they eat and record how much liquid they drink in a day. Year 2 pupils identify the parts of a snail and from first hand experience they watch the life cycles of butterflies and ladybirds. They know about the dangers of electricity and identify which everyday appliances need electricity in order to work. Their learning is helped by imaginative teaching methods to make a point. In one lesson, the teacher formed the children into a ring to be a 'circuit' and asked a girl to be the shining bulb. The pupils had to join hand to make the bulb 'light up' and when this happened, the girl stood up and held up her arms. When any of the pupils stopped holding hands, 'the bulb' quickly reminded them that they had broken the circuit and she couldn't 'light up.'
78. In the best lessons, the teachers give clear and correct instructions and they brief classroom assistants well about the work to be undertaken. Time is used well, with a balance between practical investigation and direct teaching. All teachers make good use of discussions. They question the pupils to help them to recall what they have already understood and try to build on this to help them to learn new knowledge. In an excellent

lesson with Year 3 and 4 pupils, the teacher's lively approach and thought provoking questions about the effect of the force of gravity led the pupils to predict and investigate with a piece of rock or a ball of plasticine. They tried to discover which would hit the floor first if they were released at the same time and from the same height. This led them to experiment with a piece of crumpled paper and plasticine and then to observe how a flat piece of paper appeared to 'float' before it fell. The teacher's good demonstrations and the pupils' full involvement resulted in them seeing how air resistance could slow down the fall. Enthralled by this idea they went on to make parachutes and test them out to prove their point. In this lesson, the teacher did not allow the science content to become obscured in the exciting activity and the pupils were encouraged to talk lucidly about what they had found out. This imaginative lesson with its stimulating content also left the pupils seeing how the scientific ideas that they had observed at first hand are sometimes incorporated into products.

79. In a lesson for Year 5 and 6 pupils, they were able to discuss about magnetic fields with confidence. They knew which metals would be attracted to a magnet and learned how the saying 'poles apart' might have come about as they demonstrated the repulsion of magnets. Although this work was well organised by the teacher, the pitch of it was too low for some who knew what the outcome of the experiments would be before they tackled them. From the analysis of their books, it is evident that the oldest pupils gain knowledge by doing a wide variety of experiments. The pupils grow mould on a variety of foods and learn about micro-organisms, some of which they acknowledge can be harmful. They see how long it takes for different substances to dissolve and notice a pattern so that they develop their skill in forming a hypothesis, but there is still sometimes the unnecessary use of worksheets.
80. Although teachers mark the pupils' work regularly, their comments do not always provide guidance as to how it can be improved. The teacher's expectations of the recording of findings by the Year 5 and 6 pupils have been too low in the past. Instead of giving accounts in their own words, they often copy a short passage that has been given to them by the teacher. This does not extend their skills in recording their ideas and findings. The quality of written work in the oldest pupils' books does not reflect the sound quality of their explanations of the work and the breadth of knowledge that was evident during the inspection.

ART

81. The pupils achieve well in art because the teachers encourage them to try out their own ideas and experiment with different media. The standard of the pupils' work is good at both key stages; this is an improvement since the previous inspection. The pupils learn a good range of techniques, including how to use a paint program on the computer, and they are given the freedom to use them. This leads to some highly original work.
82. The younger pupils learn to observe closely and represent detail carefully in their drawings. This is seen in their pencil drawings of natural objects. Older Key Stage 1 pupils produce competent portraits of each other, with well-proportioned features. From an early age, the pupils are keen to experiment with the materials and test their ideas. They are undeterred when things go wrong and cheerfully learn from their experience. A Reception pupil, for example, decided to use collage rather than paints to express his ideas about flowers and gave as his reason '*because paint doesn't stick out!*'
83. Only two class lessons were seen, in Key Stage 2. The very good features in teaching in both lessons led to high quality work. The Year 3 and 4 pupils learned to mixed subtle shades of colour to match those found in Paul Klee's work 'Senecio'. Their brush control in blocking areas of colour improved markedly through the teacher's very good guidance and demonstration. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 looked at Georgia O'Keefe's work and chose the

media for their interpretations of flowers, after drawing from life in their sketchbooks. The teacher encouraged the pupils to explore the effects of different media and consequently the range of work was wide and very individual. Some pupils chose to work in a mix of wax-resist and watercolour while others used pastel and chalk. One pupil decided on a three-dimensional approach and used the upturned base of a plastic pot to form the centre of his flower, filling it with delicately shaped crepe stamens. Another pupil taught a friend how to quill paper, a technique that she had learned at art club. This new skill was successfully mastered and incorporated into a collage that already combined paper mosaic and painting.

84. The pupils learn about a good range of artists' work and also extend their understanding of art from other cultures. The pupils in Years 3 and 4, for example, have looked at African masks and produced their own good quality designs as part of their study of Kenya in geography.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

85. The pupils continue to achieve above average standards at both key stages as a result of good teaching and effective scheme of work. There is a clear emphasis on the skills of designing, making and evaluating. The pupils know that the subject is about making a product to fulfil a purpose. The subject is very well co-ordinated so that the pupils build on their skills step-by-step as they move through the school.
86. In Year 2, the pupils carry out research into the food for a picnic and investigate sandwich fillings. Discussions lead them to make choices about the types of fruit that others would like so that they can plan to make a fruit salad. During the inspection all the pupils in Key Stage 1 worked together to make the food that they had planned and also discovered how to bake scones and apple pies. In Year 6 the pupils are confident when using a variety of materials and their well-developed skills in carrying out research help them to design a pizza and consider how they would market it. By this age they have a good knowledge of the properties of construction materials, manipulate them well and display the skill of adding motors to their products.
87. Few examples of teaching were seen in Key Stage 2 but the organisation of resources, the planning for the precise teaching of techniques and the high expectations of teachers are key factors that contribute to the success of the subject. The pupils in Years 3 and 4, for example, evaluate a design for a buggy and highlight the weaknesses or areas for improvement. They acknowledge that accurate joins are an important factor in making a model and learn how to reinforce the corners. The quality of the finished products show that they have learned how to measure, mark and saw wood in different widths and lengths. They cut and join and know how to make rotating wheels that run freely because of the use of rubber washers.
88. The pupils often discuss their work at the making stage with regard to how it can be improved. At times the pupils have advanced ideas for their models but do not always have the skills to put these into practice. They are pleased to have the involvement of local businesses that have assisted with manufacturing their designs. Year 6 pupils received an award for their trolley with doors that opened by remote control and moveable shelves. They were proud to give a presentation of the working product at Loughborough University during the inspection week. Technology days and a technology club have also raised the profile of the subject. The ability of the oldest pupils to evaluate their work in writing is variable. The pupils learn how information technology can be used to create movement in models but information technology is not yet widely used to support the subject.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

89. Only one lesson of geography was observed, in the Year 3 and 4 class, and a history lesson in the Year 2 and 3 class was seen. From the evidence of the teachers' planning and the pupils' past work, it is evident that the pupils make satisfactory progress in both subjects and their work reaches an average standard by the end of each key stage. The good standards found at the previous inspection have not been maintained as, due to the school's focus on literacy and numeracy, less time is devoted to both subjects.
90. The teaching is good. The pupils' own experience is used very well to help them understand the work. The lessons seen included a brief but useful recap of previous work and the teachers reinforced the vocabulary for the lessons. This enabled the pupils to express their ideas more precisely. The teachers' good preparation of resources ensured that the lessons had a good pace. Classroom assistants are well briefed and provide patient and skilful support.
91. The younger Key Stage 1 pupils develop an appropriate understanding of how things change over time and know that some events happened before they were born. They know that some things happened a 'very long time ago' such as the time of the dinosaurs and that other events are closer. Older Key Stage 1 pupils understand that the way in which people live now is very different to a hundred years ago, but that some things, such as the church in the village, have not changed all that much. When Year 2 pupils look at photographs of people at the seaside, most can distinguish those from 'the olden days' and suggest that the black and white photographs must be older than those in colour. They know that their villages have grown over time and the differences between a village and a town. The older pupils talk about the features of their environment that they like and those they would like to change because they are less attractive. The pupils know that they live on an island and that the seaside is so far away that they would have to go by car, bus or train.
92. The younger Key Stage 2 pupils know that reservoirs, canals and wells are man-made water features but that a river forms naturally. They use the knowledge and understanding gained from a visit to Cropston Reservoir to work out what happens when water evaporates and then condenses. One girl exclaimed that *'it's just like a life-cycle, it goes round and round!'* By the time they leave the school, the pupils can interpret maps of different scales, use an atlas and research information using CD-ROMs. Their historical knowledge is extended through work on the Romans and Tudors. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 can explain why the Romans invaded and why they left. They use the library to research information and work in groups on particular aspects of the Roman army and then put the information together as a class.
93. Good use is made of the local area, in both subjects. A 'storyteller' has visited to extend the pupils' understanding of local history.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

94. Standards were in line with expectations at the last inspection. This is still the case at the end of Key Stage 1. Although there are some pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 who are confident when using computers and show advanced skills in word processing and carrying out research, the standards attained by the majority of pupils in Year 6 are now below average for their ages.
95. The present ratio of computers to pupils is not as good as the national average. There is good one-to-one teaching of skills and group work but with large classes and the present location of the computers, the teachers cannot easily give the pupils class lessons on information technology or provide constant access to the computers within other lessons. The present hardware presents some difficulties with compatibility and there are limitations with the software. In general, the curriculum plans do not always indicate where information technology can be supportive to different subjects. The school is fully aware of the present

difficulties and has clear plans for improvements to the subject. The teachers' own knowledge is growing and training courses that are already planned will develop this further. A new computer suite is soon to be installed with updated computers and this will enable better progress to be made so that all the pupils can develop their keyboard skills and use monitoring and control based programs to a higher standard.

96. No class lessons were seen but a group of Reception and Year 1 pupils learned to program a toy robot to make it stop along a simulated road at the correct house numbers so that they could deliver letters. As a result of clear instructions from the teacher, the pupils knew how to make the toy go forward and backwards to given destinations. When it went ten paces instead of the expected five, the teacher questioned a young boy why he thought that this had happened. He quickly realised that he had forgotten to clear the robot's memory before giving it a new instruction. A good example of how information technology can be used to support other subjects happened when Year 2 pupils were writing books about butterflies for younger children. As they drafted and refined their ideas, a pupil typed in their finished sentences to produce the class's 'final copy'. Other Year 2 pupils know how to access programs that support their work in reading and number. They 'paint' pictures, add text to them and confidently click on icons and drag items across the screen. Their keyboard skills, however, are often slow. The Year 5 and 6 pupils have identified their favourite web sites and quickly learn to browse by topic or search the library on the Internet.
97. A good one-to-one session occurred when a teacher showed a Year 6 pupil how to access the Internet for information. He was amazed to find a written account of the England match in Euro 2000 that had only taken place a few hours earlier. During the computer club time, the pupils gain confidence as a result of the headteacher's expertise in the subject. The quality of work when the pupils produce a prospectus for a club or a newsletter is of a high standard.
98. Examples of work on display show that the pupils use CD-ROMs in precise ways to discover facts, for example, about the Tudors and Egyptians. During mathematics sessions in Key Stage 2, the pupils often work in pairs on programs that help them to apply their skills. In some cases, although the pupils enjoy the interactive nature of the programs and practise using the facilities on the computer, the actual mathematics content is too easy for them.

MUSIC

99. The pupils achieve good standards by the end of both key stages. This is due to the high expectations of the headteacher, who teaches music to every class. His subject knowledge is very good and lessons are very well planned. The pupils are keen to participate and take a real pleasure in performing together. The Reception and Year 1 pupils use their voices to create sounds that represent symbols for animals and movements along a '*safari trail*'. Their eager anticipation is evident when the teacher reveals the pictures and they are delighted when they vary the length and volume of the sounds together, following his directions. When the pupils move on to choose instruments to represent the sounds, they show a good level of discrimination and name the instruments.
100. The younger Key Stage 2 pupils develop their ability to perform with others and use symbols to denote sounds. They recognise the ostinato in a piece of Tudor music. The pupils follow a grid that shows several lines of symbols for different patterns of rhythm. The older Key Stage 2 pupils work on compositions using keyboards, glockenspiels and recorders. They work very well together in groups and have a clear idea of what they have to achieve because of the teacher's very good explanations. The teacher's use of vocabulary is reflected as they work together, composing the melody and ostinato. They search for more interesting combinations and practise, without direct supervision, until they are satisfied with the result. Everyone participates actively and those pupils who play

musical instruments give good support to the others, without dominating the group. The pupils evaluate each other's work and identify ways to improve. Their singing is of a good standard.

101. The pupils enjoy making music together and have good opportunities to perform in the community. They are proud to represent the school on these occasions and practise diligently. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

102. Standards were judged to be very good at the time of the last inspection. No physical education lessons were seen during this inspection. However, it is clear from the teachers' planning and discussions with the pupils that a broad curriculum is provided. The teachers provide the pupils with good opportunities to develop their skills in all aspects of the subject.
103. Many of the pupils are keen on sports because of their positive experiences and eagerly join extra-curricular groups, often playing in mixed age teams. Several pupils in Key Stage 2 are able to compete in the local small schools' cross country events as a result of a teacher's enthusiasm and commitment on Saturday mornings.
104. Swimming is taught from Year 2. The county swimming awards programme is followed and this helps the pupils to build up their stamina so that they can swim longer distances, refine their strokes, learn to dive and know about survival techniques in water. This comprehensive programme ensures that the swimming requirements are fully met. Most pupils can swim 25 metres by the time they leave the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

105. The pupils reach the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of both key stages. The work is planned to reflect the locally agreed syllabus and builds well on the pupils' previous knowledge and understanding. They develop a firm understanding of a range of religions by the time they leave the school. The significance of the major Christian celebrations is well understood and they know a good variety of stories from the Bible. The pupils achieve well because of the teachers' lively approach and they are interested in the work. Through visits to the local church the pupils understand the significance of its artefacts and the part these play in services and worship. In Key Stage 1, the pupils have very good opportunities to consider the wonders of the natural world. The pupils develop the ability to reflect on the ways in which they can contribute to society and their responsibilities to others. Year 2 pupils, for example, explore the issues of fairness, justice and compassion through the story of Joseph and his coat. Year 4 pupils consider ways in which they can change for the better and be more helpful after reading the story of the Good Samaritan. Year 5 and 6 pupils devise fund raising activities to support the work of the RSPCA as part of their work on how living creatures should be treated.
106. The teaching has some good features. The younger Key Stage 1 pupils learn that even a small person can be a big help through the story of the lion and the mouse from Aesop's Fables. The teacher's good questioning and use of the pupils' experience helps them to understand the moral of the story. The older Key Stage 2 pupils study the use and meaning of objects, clothing and words in different religions. They know that the Seder meal symbolises the hardships suffered by the Jews and can explain the significance of the meal's components. Artefacts are used effectively and the pupils show a very good degree of respect and interest. Year 3 and 4 pupils are transfixed by the Torah and feel it an honour to be asked to handle it. In a lesson with the older pupils who were studying the symbolism in the Holy Communion, the teacher spent time with groups and individuals, extending their understanding of the ceremony and clarifying the meaning of terms such as *Eucharist*, *mass*, *chalice* and *sacrament*.

107. While the pupils often have a good understanding of the work covered, opportunities are sometimes missed to record their ideas. Too often, they simply complete worksheets or draw pictures and this does not extend their skills in writing.