

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **THE MERTON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Syston

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 119970

Headteacher: Mr Howard Mence

Reporting inspector: Mr C Parker  
11897

Dates of inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> October 2000

Inspection number: 190765

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: The Merton Primary School

School category: Infant and Junior School

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 Years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Cherry Drive  
Syston  
Leicestershire

Postcode: LE7 2PT

Telephone number: 0116 2608 150

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Peter Fox

Date of previous inspection: 25<sup>th</sup> November 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr C Parker - 11897	Registered inspector	Mathematics	The school's results and achievements
		Physical education	How well are pupils taught?
			How well is the school led and managed?
Mr K Greatorex - A09545	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs M Powell - 19387	Team inspector	English	
		Art	
		Music	
		Religious Education	
		Under fives	
Mrs D Hall - 12593	Team inspector	Science	
		History	
		Geography	
		Special educational needs	
Mrs P Askew - 17349	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Design and technology	
		Equal opportunities	

The inspection contractor was: St Mary's Inspection Unit  
Waldegrave Road  
Strawberry Hill  
Twickenham, TW1 4SX

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Inspection Quality Division  
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Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway

London WC2B 6SE

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The Merton School is a larger than average primary school for pupils aged from four to eleven Years. There are 320 children on roll, of whom approximately five per cent come from minority ethnic backgrounds. There are no pupils receiving support for the development of English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register is above that found nationally. Currently three pupils have statements of special educational need. The attainment of pupils when they first enter the school covers a range of abilities, but initial assessments indicate some weaknesses in their early language acquisition but their mathematical capabilities are broadly average.

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

The Merton School is a vibrant school community that makes very good provision for its pupils. At all levels, the leadership and management of the school are excellent. There is a very strong desire to bring about continued improvement. As a result standards are rising and are above average in key areas of the curriculum. The school provides very good value for money.

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

- Standards in reading and mathematics are above average. In science they are very high by the end of Key Stage 2.
- The teaching is good throughout the school.
- The curriculum is very well organised and extended by a range of interesting activities.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The pupils' academic progress is carefully monitored and their personal development very well supported.
- The parents are very well informed and the vast majority strongly supports the work of the school.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher are outstanding. Key members of staff contribute significantly to the excellent management of the school. The governing body is very well informed, fully involved and guiding the work of the school very successfully.

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

- The pupils' writing, although improving, is not as strong as it should be.
- The opportunities provided for pupils to use information and communication technology across the curriculum are inadequate because of the poor level of resources.

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

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

Since the last inspection in November 1996 there has been a clear upward trend in the results of national tests. The teaching remains a strong feature of the school's provision. The leadership and management remain excellent and are the most significant reason for the school's continued improvement.

The issues raised in the last inspection report have been addressed. The curriculum is now very well planned and organised, and the children have good opportunities to develop a degree of independence in their learning. The school's planning, assessment and record keeping procedures are now very good and consistently established throughout the school. The governing body's curriculum statement sets out clearly the expectations for the pupils' personal and social education. The school has made significant improvement since it was last inspected and is very well placed to make further improvements.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				<b>Key</b>
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	A	D	B	B	well above average      A above average            B average                      C below average            D well below average      E
mathematics	B	C	B	B	
science	A	A	A	A	

Throughout the school the pupils are achieving good standards in English and mathematics. The results achieved in the national tests for eleven-Year-olds in 2000 are above the national average and are better than those of similar schools. Nevertheless, closer analysis of the results shows that writing remains a relative weakness for many pupils. The school has focussed on developing the pupils' writing and although improvements have been made it is not yet as good as it should be.

Although there have been some inconsistencies in the results of the national tests for eleven Year olds over the last few Years, taken overall they show an upward trend broadly in line with the national rate of improvement. The results of the tests taken by seven-Year-olds have been consistently better than the national average.

High standards were maintained in the national science test in 2000 when the proportion of eleven-Year-olds attaining the higher level was double the national average.

The school sets appropriately challenging targets, which it generally achieves although it fell just short of its mathematics target in 2000. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress in nearly all their lessons.

Standards in information and communication technology, although broadly in line with expectations, fall somewhat short of what could be achieved by the pupils because the poor level of resources restricts the range and frequency of opportunities they have to use and apply what they are taught. The quality of the work in the other subjects of the curriculum is at least in line with expectations and in music, art and history it is of a good standard by the time the pupils leave the school. In religious education standards are rising and much of the pupils' work is above average by the end of Key Stage 2. Taken overall the pupils are achieving very well.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils have very positive attitudes to school. They listen carefully, contribute fully to discussions and concentrate on their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The pupils behave well. The vast majority of the pupils are polite and co-operative. The few pupils who display challenging behaviour are well managed by their teachers and support assistants.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships throughout the school are very good. The pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to take responsibility.



Attendance	Attendance is above average.
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## 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.*

The teaching is good overall and particularly strong in English and mathematics. All of the lessons seen were at least satisfactory. In almost three-quarters of the lessons seen, the teaching was good or better. In a third it was very good or excellent. There is a high level of consistency in the quality of the teachers' lesson planning, preparation, marking and assessment that reflects the high expectations of the senior management. The teachers also have high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and achievements. In many lessons they probe and question the pupils to ensure they fully understand what they are being taught. This contributes significantly to the pupils' learning.

The teachers have good subject knowledge which they utilise particularly well in English and mathematics to develop the pupils literacy and numeracy skills. They are working hard to improve the pupils' spelling and writing by using a good range of appropriate methods. The teachers meet the needs of all pupils including those with special educational needs. They work very closely with the classroom assistants to provide both groups and individual pupils with a good level of support.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is well organised and thoroughly planned to ensure the pupils' learning builds systematically as they move through the school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The pupils on the special educational needs register are well supported by their teachers and support assistants and as a result many make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for the pupils' social development is very good. The school provides good opportunities for spiritual, moral and cultural development through a wide range of activities both in and out of school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school monitors the progress of the pupils very thoroughly. The procedures to ensure the pupils' health, safety and welfare are comprehensive.

The parents are extremely supportive of the school and confirm that it has many strong features. They and other adults are encouraged to become involved in the life of the school and many respond enthusiastically by participating in a range of activities. Some help regularly within the classroom and around the school. The school's partnership with the parents is very good.

The curriculum provided for children in the foundation stage is good and prepares them well for the first stage of the National Curriculum. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the quality and range of the curriculum is very good overall although not enough use is made of information technology.

The teachers run various extra curricular activities both at lunchtime and after school. They include choir, drama, young ornithologists, French and sports clubs. These activities make a positive contribution to the breath of the curriculum and the pupils' development.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher provides a clear strategic vision for the school that guides the work of key members of staff who make an excellent contribution to the overall management of the school. Improvement planning is comprehensive, thorough and precisely targeted.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are well informed and provide the school with effective support, guidance and critical evaluation. They make sure that the available funds are spent carefully and are increasingly checking to ensure development activities have the expected impact on standards and provision.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There is a high level of analysis and evaluation of the school's performance. All available data is exhaustively analysed. The headteacher and deputy headteacher undertake a comprehensive programme of monitoring to evaluate the quality of the teaching. All evaluations of the school's performance are reported to the governing body.
The strategic use of resources	The resources available to the school are carefully deployed. Recently, funds have been used to employ more classroom assistants. The governors are currently monitoring this development to assess its impact on standards.

The school has sufficient teachers for the growing number of pupils on roll. The teachers are very well supported by classroom assistants who they thoroughly brief for every lesson. The arrangements for the teaching and support of pupils on the special educational needs register are good. In most areas of the curriculum there are adequate and often good resources but information and communication technology resources are poor. The recent addition of two classrooms means that the accommodation is now adequate. All of the available space is well used. The school is kept very clean and tidy and the teachers use attractive wall displays to create a stimulating environment.

All of the available financial resources are carefully deployed and governors are increasingly seeking to ensure best value from all of their decisions.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The good progress made by the pupils.</li><li>• The good behaviour in the school.</li><li>• The good teaching.</li><li>• The range and quality of information they receive.</li><li>• The opportunities provided for residential visits.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The lack of opportunities to use information technology.</li><li>• The lack of space in cloakrooms.</li></ul>

The inspectors agree with the many positive and supportive comments made by the vast majority of parents. They also agree that the school's poor information and communication technology resources restrict opportunities for the pupils to use and apply what they are taught. Although the inspectors agree that cloakroom space is limited they found that these area were well supervised and reasonably orderly.

A few individual issues were raised, for example, relating the frequency that teachers hear children read and the use of classroom assistants to support pupils with special educational needs, but these were not typical of most parents' experiences. The inspectors found that the teachers are using the National Literacy Strategy well and that reading standards are above average. The classroom assistants are very well briefed and contribute significantly to the provision made for the pupils who are on the special needs' register.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Throughout the school the pupils are achieving good standards in English and mathematics. The results achieved in the national tests in 2000 are above the national average and are better than those of similar schools. Although there have been some inconsistencies in the results of the national tests for eleven Year olds over the last few Years, taken overall they show an upward trend broadly in line with the national rate of improvement. In 1999 there was a dip in the results that had been forecast by the school in its comprehensive analysis of the pupils' prior performance. In 2000 the upward trend in results was resumed with more pupils achieving higher levels of attainment than the national average. Nevertheless, closer analysis of the results shows that writing remains a relative weakness for many pupils. The school has focussed on developing the pupils' spelling and writing and although improvements have been made their writing is not yet as good as it should be. The results of the tests taken by seven Year olds have been consistently better than the national average and are particularly strong in reading. The school should seek to bring about further improvements in the standard of the pupils' writing. **This is an issue for action.**
2. The inspection findings confirm that standards in English are rising with a high proportion of pupils reaching and exceeding the expected level in their reading, by the time they leave the school. Standards in writing are rising through good literacy teaching but improvements in spelling are not yet reflected in many of the pupils' writing. In mathematics standards are above average at the end of both Key Stages as a result of good teaching that ensures the pupils acquire new knowledge and skills systematically as they move through the school.
3. In science the results of tests and assessments are above average by the age of seven and well above average by the age of eleven. High standards were maintained in the 2000 test for eleven Year olds when the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level was double the national average. These results are due to the high level of challenge presented by the skilled and enthusiastic teachers within a broad and well-planned curriculum.
4. The school sets and achieves appropriately challenging targets, which it generally achieves, although it fell just short of its mathematics target in 2000. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress in nearly all their lessons. They receive a high level of appropriate support and their lessons are well planned and provide well-focused learning activities.
5. Standards in information and communication technology, although broadly in line with expectations, fall somewhat short of what should be achieved by the pupils because the poor level of resources restricts the range and frequency of opportunities they have to use and apply what they are taught. The quality of the pupils' work in the other subjects of the curriculum is at least in line with expectations and in music, art and history it is of a good standard by the time the pupils leave the school. Taken overall the pupils are achieving very well and making good progress in both Key Stages.

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

6. The pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They are enthusiastic about their work and eager to succeed. They sustain high levels of interest and concentration because the teachers plan tasks that interest and motivate them. The pupils are encouraged to express their ideas and opinions. They respond to the high expectations of the teachers with confidence, enthusiasm and enjoyment.
7. Behaviour remains consistently good and this confirms the views of parents. When they come to school, in assemblies, at lunchtimes and at playtimes, virtually all pupils show that very high standards of behaviour are achieved. In lessons, their behaviour is generally at least good even though a few pupils can be disruptive. This is because the teachers exercise firm management and control that helps to prevent other pupils being distracted. The pupils move around the school, even in the narrow corridors and confined cloakroom areas, in a quiet and orderly manner and have a very clear

understanding of the standards expected of them. During the inspection, there was no evidence of either bullying or lack of respect for school property.

8. Relationships in the school are very good. The pupils form constructive relationships with each other and with adults. They work co-operatively, listen with interest to each other and try to understand the other person's point of view. The pupils treat each other with respect. They help each other with their work especially those with special educational needs. The pupils play together well and make good use of the well-appointed play areas. All pupils consistently demonstrate patience, tolerance and understanding for others.
9. The pupils' personal development is very good. The school provides opportunities for them to show initiative and take responsibility and they demonstrate that the trust is well placed. They regularly perform jobs within the classroom and around the school, for example, acting as clerks for the Yorkshire Bank scheme and running the tuck shop during morning breaks. The school council minutes confirm that the pupils address issues in a mature and sensible manner. As pupils progress through the school greater degrees of independence are encouraged, and the older pupils regularly help the younger ones in a range of different ways. Pupils are eager to be involved in fund raising for charities.
10. Attendance at the school remains above the national average. There is virtually no unauthorised absence and punctuality is very good. Virtually all pupils are on time, many arriving early. They come happily to school, eager and ready to learn enabling the school to make a prompt and efficient start to the day.

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

11. The teaching is good throughout the school. The quality of teaching in all of the lessons seen was at least satisfactory. In almost three-quarters of the lessons seen, the teaching was good or better. In a third it was very good or excellent. The strong teaching reported at the time of the last inspection has been maintained and the level of consistency has improved so that the small amount of unsatisfactory teaching evident has now been eradicated.
12. The teaching of the youngest children is well organised and effectively managed. In the foundation stage the children work with their teacher on a wide range of carefully planned activities that are successful in developing their intellectual, physical and social skills and abilities. Every opportunity is taken to enhance and extend the children's learning through, for example, games, conversation, questioning and play.
13. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the teachers plan their lessons very thoroughly and set out clearly what they want the children to learn. The pupils are always told what is expected of them and what they are going to learn. Often the targets for the lesson are displayed in the classroom. The tasks the teachers set for the pupils are interesting, often demanding and in many lessons modified to set an appropriate level of challenge to different groups of pupils. Many of the teachers are able to do this because they take time at the end of most lessons to ask the pupils to evaluate the extent of their own progress. For example, in one Year 6 class the children evaluate their own learning using the traffic light colours to indicate the extent of their understanding. The teachers also question the pupils to make their assessment of whether they need more practice or are ready to move on to the next stage of learning. The vast majority of lessons move along at a good pace and the teachers effectively support the pupils, who are generally confident to ask for further help when they need it. Relationships between the children and their teachers are very good. In many lessons there is quiet working buzz with pupils completely involved in the tasks and activities they have been set. This was evident, for example, when the children in lower Key Stage 2 were carrying out experiments to find out what happens to materials when they are heated and then allowed to cool.
14. The teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. They are taught effectively by their teachers and a very good support team. The teachers plan appropriate work so that the targets defined in the individual education plans are met. They ensure the learning support assistants help pupils to fulfil the learning intentions within the planned programme of work. In addition to developing the key skills in literacy and numeracy, these pupils frequently receive additional teaching support in other subjects.

15. There is a strong commitment to teamwork and professional development. This is very evident in the consistent approaches and methods used by the teachers particularly in numeracy and literacy lessons. The teachers are making full use of the literacy and numeracy strategies to bring about further improvements. The quality of marking is good throughout the school with teachers making clear assessments of what the pupils can do and setting out what they need to do to make improvements. They also keep comprehensive records of the pupils' progress, which allows them to plan effectively for the next stage of learning.
16. As a result of good teaching the pupils acquire new knowledge and develop their skills and understanding at a good rate. The teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach that allows them to motivate and interest the pupils. This is particularly evident in the specialist teaching of music. The pupils concentrate on their tasks, work with considerable independence and achieve good results because of the high expectations of the teachers. The pupils are encouraged to think for themselves in many lessons. Many of the teachers skilfully probe and question to develop the children's thinking although very occasionally not enough is demanded of the pupils in their answers. Nevertheless, this questioning is a very strong and helpful feature of the teaching in many classes.
17. The arrangements for homework are clearly laid out and the school is encouraging parents to take an increasing role in their child's learning. The teachers set tasks that are closely linked to what the pupils' are learning in class.

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

18. The school provides its pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The curriculum provided for children in the foundation stage is good and prepares them well for the first stage of the National Curriculum. In Key Stage 1 and 2, the quality and range of the curriculum is very good overall but insufficient use is made of information technology. The subject co-ordinators have reviewed their schemes of work in relation to Curriculum 2000, the nationally recommended schemes and the school's own topic plans. As a result the school has maintained the breadth and balance reported at the last inspection.
19. The provision for pupils with special needs is very good. They are well taught and supported both in lessons and when withdrawn for specialist teaching. Booster classes in Year 6, which were observed at lunch times, were very effective in supporting the pupils in both their literacy and study skills. The school has successfully introduced the national strategies for the teaching of numeracy and literacy. The teachers plan these lessons well and set out clearly what they expect the pupils to learn. This has resulted in raising achievement in these fundamental skills.
20. The school provides satisfactorily for the pupils' health education, which includes sex education and information about drug misuse. This work is integrated into science topics throughout the school.
21. The teachers run various extra curricular activities both at lunchtime and after school. They include choir, drama, young ornithologists, French club and sports clubs. These activities make a positive contribution to the breadth of the curriculum and the pupils' development. The choir performs to both local and national audiences. In addition there are a number of visits to support specific curriculum work. From Year 2 onwards, pupils have the opportunity to participate in residential visits, which also enhances their learning and personal development. The school is building strong links with the nearby secondary school. Detailed reports are passed on to the school and the headteacher visits the Year 7 pupils to check how they have settled. The teachers at both schools have developed good curriculum links particularly in relation to information communications technology, design technology and English. They now have plans to extend this to science this Year, in order that Year 6 pupils can become familiar with the science laboratories at the secondary school.
22. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and is a strength of the school. The school's curriculum is socially inclusive ensuring that the particular needs of pupils with special educational needs are met. For example, there is a high level of support in literacy and numeracy lessons to help these pupils reach similar targets as their peers.

23. The school's comprehensive curriculum policy contains a strong statement on the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and how important these aspects are in the daily life of the school. The school meetings are planned to take into account all of these aspects and the teachers give careful consideration to developing them throughout the curriculum. As a result the provision for the pupils' social development is very good. The school provides good opportunities for spiritual, moral and cultural development through a wide range of activities both in and out of school. This has been maintained since the last inspection. The pupils have time both in the school meetings and lessons to reflect, to share feelings and beliefs and to recognize that others may think differently. The pupils learn to live and work together amicably through the guidance and encouragement of their teachers. They show respect for each other and the adults in the school. Year 6 pupils host a Monday lunchtime club for local senior citizens and the whole school is involved in collecting money for charity.

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

24. The school continues to provide very high quality support and guidance, and effectively promotes the pupils' welfare, health and safety in a caring, stable and secure environment. All members of staff show great concern for the well being of the pupils and employ a wide range of measures to promote their development. Very good assessment procedures are in place to monitor the pupils' academic and personal development. The teachers compile detailed records to assist in the tracking of progress. The formal assessment structure complements well the very good informal monitoring which results from the warm relationships between staff and pupils. The monitoring of pupils with special educational needs is very good. The SENCO and her team identify precise targets for improvement on the pupils' individual education plans and keep good records of their progress. Where pupils have personal targets for improving behaviour these too are monitored carefully.
25. The teachers use all the available information to obtain a full picture of pupils' strengths and weaknesses to plan for their future learning. They remain successful in promoting high standards of good behaviour. The behaviour policy is consistently applied by all staff, many of whom were seen to pre-empt incidents of possible misbehaviour with firm, calm interventions.
26. The school has effective systems in place to monitor and promote attendance. The registers are marked speedily, correctly and efficiently at the start of the school day and after lunch. All absences are properly noted and contact made with parents to justify absences. Annual figures for attendance are correctly aggregated and properly reported in the governors' annual report to parents and in the school prospectus.
27. Child protection continues to be handled very effectively. The headteacher is named as the designated person. All members of the teaching and non-teaching staff are aware of the need for vigilance and the steps to take if suspicions are aroused.
28. Health and safety continues to be very well promoted in the school. Potential hazards are identified and remedial action taken where appropriate. All members of staff are safety conscious and watch for the security of the children. Hazardous materials are kept securely away from pupils. Overall, all members of staff work hard to create a caring environment where the well-being of the pupils is promoted very effectively.

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

29. The parents are extremely supportive of the school and confirm that it has many strong features. Virtually all parents believe that the pupils' behaviour and the teaching in the school are good. They believe that their children like school, are being helped to become more mature, are expected to work hard and are making good progress. They also believe that the school is well led and managed and they feel comfortable in approaching the school.
30. Parents and other adults are encouraged to become involved in the life of the school and many respond enthusiastically by participating in a range of activities. Some help regularly within the classroom and

around the school as well as on trips and sports days. Helpers are deployed effectively; they are given clear directions and their help is well structured. In addition, parents are very supportive of the work that their children are expected to do at home. There is a very active Parents' Association that organises a range of social and fund-raising activities in support of the school. The school values highly the contributions made by parents that materially enhance the children's learning and personal development.

31. The parents are well informed about the school and their children's activities and progress through a very good quality range of letters, newsletters, reports and meetings. The annual written reports to parents are of a very good standard and give much detailed information about what the children can do and the progress they have made. In addition, useful records are completed and reviewed to identify for pupils what they need to do to improve. The parents at the meeting confirmed that there are good opportunities to visit the school to talk to teachers during formally arranged meetings each Year. The inspection confirms that, in this area of its operations, the school provides very good quality information and access to parents.
32. The school fulfils the requirement of the code of practice to undertake an annual review of pupils with a statement for special educational needs. The parents of these pupils and the special needs teachers meet regularly with the class teachers to discuss the progress of the children. However, the teachers do not always record the dates of the meetings and the issues discussed with the parents.
33. Reservations expressed by some parents about the range of activities provided by the school were not supported by the inspection findings. The evidence confirms that the school continues to offer 'an extensive and impressive range of extra-curricular activities'.

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

34. The leadership and management provided by the headteacher are outstanding. He receives excellent support from the deputy headteacher and co-ordinators. The management system is very efficient and effective in planning and implementing improvement activities that illustrate the senior management team's drive and determination to promote high standards. The school development plan and subject co-ordinator's action plans are clearly and precisely focussed on continuous improvement. The co-ordinators are given full responsibility to manage developments in their subjects. In all aspects of the school's work the governing body guides, supports and critically evaluates the school's performance.
35. The monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the school's work are carried out rigorously. The results of national tests are analysed to evaluate the school's performance in comparison other schools and to set challenging targets for the future. In mathematics, for example, individual pupil's answers are analysed to identify potential areas of weaknesses in their knowledge and understanding so that the teaching programmes can be strengthened in future. The headteacher and deputy headteacher carry out a comprehensive monitoring of the teaching within the school. Their evaluations are conveyed to individual teachers to help them to improve their own practice and also to staff meetings where wider issues are discussed. The head teacher's written evaluation of the quality of teaching is circulated to and discussed by the governing body. The subject co-ordinators monitor and evaluate the teachers' planning and the quality of the pupils' work. As a result of the work of the Key Stage and subject co-ordinators, the school's planning, assessment and record keeping procedures are now very good and consistently established throughout the school. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection.
36. The monitoring and evaluation procedures are wide-ranging but carefully organised and precisely targeted to ensure that they contribute to raising standards and improving provision. The headteacher has undertaken training in performance management and is now tying the school's existing systems with the formal national systems that are currently being implemented.
37. The governors are very well informed on both school and wider educational issues. The headteacher provides briefings for governors to ensure they have a full understanding of the issues faced by the school. He also provides them with a comprehensive analysis of test results, and the co-ordinators make presentations about developments in their subjects. The governors also undertake termly visits that

have an agreed focus. The observations from these visits are shared with the governing body and help the governors to make independent judgements about the work of the school. Through a wide range of activities they are clear about what the school is doing well and where improvements can be made. This clear picture of the school's performance is used very effectively to allocate financial resources and identify priorities for further development. For example, the governors have recently taken the decision to increase the number of classroom assistants to support the teachers in dealing with larger classes. They are carefully monitoring this decision so they can evaluate its impact on both provision and standards. All of the available financial resources are carefully deployed and the governors are increasingly seeking to ensure best value from all of their decisions.

38. The co-ordination of the provision for the pupils with special educational needs is very effective. The co-ordinator maintains accurate records and liaises well with the support team, the educational psychologist and parents. She supports the teachers in planning and setting appropriate targets. She and the special needs teacher work together as a team to ensure the provision of excellent support. The governors fulfil their monitoring role very effectively.
39. The school has sufficient teachers for the growing number of pupils on roll. They are very well supported by classroom assistants who they thoroughly brief for every lesson. The arrangements for the teaching and support of pupils on the special educational needs register are good. In most areas of the curriculum, there are adequate, and often good, resources but the equipment for information and communication technology is poor. There are not enough computers for the pupils to apply what they are taught in information and communications technology lessons, in a range of contexts across the curriculum. Steps should be taken to improve the level of information and communication technology resources. **This is an issue for action.**
40. The recent addition of two classrooms means that accommodation is adequate. All of the available space is well used. The school is kept very clean and tidy and the teachers use attractive wall displays to create a stimulating environment. Cloakroom space is barely adequate but the pupils are generally well managed in the confined spaces with teachers keeping a watchful eye on younger pupils at the start and end of the day.
41. Since the school was last inspected, the excellent leadership and management of the school have been maintained and have continued to bring about improvements. The role of all co-ordinators is now well developed and as a result there is a high level of consistency in approaches to planning, teaching and assessment, all of which contribute significantly to the improving standards achieved by the pupils.

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

42. The governors, headteacher and teachers should continue to implement their long-term strategic plans paying particular attention to
  - (1) improving the standard of the pupils' writing; **(paragraph 1)**
  - (2) improving information and communication technology resources to a level that will allow the pupils sufficient opportunity to use and apply the skills they are taught in a range of contexts. **(paragraph 39)**



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	64
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	18

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

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7	28	37	28	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**

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		320
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		29

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Special educational needs**

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		63

#### **English as an additional language**

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	17

#### **Pupil mobility in the last school Year**

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

%
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#### **Unauthorised absence**

%
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School data	4.16
National comparative data	5.4

School data	0.05
National comparative data	0.5

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

***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1***

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final Year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting Year	2000	18	26	44

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	16	18
	Girls	23	22	25
	Total	39	38	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (86)	86 (81)	98 (90)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	18	16
	Girls	24	24	23
	Total	40	42	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (83)	96 (90)	89 (86)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

*Percentages in brackets refer to the Year before the latest reporting Year.*

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final Year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting Year	2000	21	23	44

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	18	21
	Girls	21	16	20
	Total	37	34	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (72)	77 (70)	93 (91)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	19	21
	Girls	19	18	22
	Total	36	37	43
Percentage of pupils	School	82 (70)	84 (76)	98 (87)

at NC level 4 or above	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)
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*Percentages in brackets refer to the Year before the latest reporting Year.*

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	15
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	305
Any other minority ethnic group	

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

### ***Exclusions in the last school Year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	1	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.7
Average class size	29.4

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	158

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

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

Total number of education support staff	
-----------------------------------------	--

### ***Financial information***

Financial Year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	521 986
Total expenditure	522 217
Expenditure per pupil	1606
Balance brought forward from previous Year	14 320
Balance carried forward to next Year	14089

Total aggregate hours worked per week	
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Number of pupils per FTE adult	
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	325
Number of questionnaires returned	87

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	34	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	40	3	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	45	3	2	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	51	13	0	5
The teaching is good.	57	39	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	40	13	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	26	6	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	29	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	54	34	10	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	55	38	5	2	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	39	1	1	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	40	14	0	18

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

**AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

43. Children enter the school in either September or January, when an additional reception class is formed. At this stage, they show a wide range of abilities, but initial assessments indicate some weaknesses in their early language acquisition though their mathematical capabilities are broadly average.

**Personal, social and emotional development**

44. By the time they leave the foundation stage, many children have well developed social skills. The group of children seen during the inspection, after only 5 weeks in school, works harmoniously and can sit still, listen and concentrate on an activity for an appropriate length of time. This is because the adults have sensitively ensured that the children feel secure in a new environment and understand that there are class rules and expectations to which they have to respond. The children confidently undertake the variety of activities provided. They co-operate well when they work in a group to make play dough models or to act out situations in the role-play area. They help each other to put on aprons for painting and when they are preparing for a lesson in physical education. No child failed to engage in either a directed or self-chosen activity.
45. The teaching is good. A calm, orderly atmosphere is established early on and ensures that the learning is not disrupted. The adults make certain that the children acquire an understanding of essential classroom routines such as putting away puzzles, felt pens and scissors after use. The children already know that when they line up to go to the hall, the adults expect them to take turns to lead the line and to move safely. Consequently, they settle very quickly and by the time they reach the end of the foundation stage, the majority recognises the appropriate behaviour for different activities.

**Communication, language and literacy**

46. On entry to school, a proportion of children do not speak clearly and experience some difficulty in organising their ideas, for instance, when responding to stories or engaging in role play. However, by the time they leave the reception class, most children acquire satisfactory speaking skills. They learn to take turns during discussions and know that if they are addressing the whole class, they need to speak more audibly than when engaging in informal talk during play activities. Moreover, they make good progress in recognising that print has a particular significance and most can successfully self-register by selecting their name card. A few children are not yet able to accomplish this unaided but are beginning to recognise, for example, the initial letter in their first names. They know how to hold a book, turn pages in the correct direction and understand that print is read from left to right. A few can read simple sentences accurately. Their early writing skills develop satisfactorily from the making of individual marks on paper to the production of accurate, simple sentence. By the time they join Year 1, many are aware that writing has a variety of purposes such as captioning pictures, labelling and recording thoughts and simple events.
47. The teaching of writing is thorough and systematic and closely linked to the children's reading activities. The adults provide many opportunities for the children to see them writing so that they learn about the shape and orientation of letters. A good effort is made to link letter names and sounds. During a reading activity, for instance, one child recognised the "O" in "Once" and then went on to say "and this is how you write it," correctly drawing it with her finger in the air. There are very regular opportunities for the children to listen to and "read" stories. Some already recognise how book covers are organised and can identify titles and authors' names. The adults are keenly aware of the need to promote talk and do so skilfully. This is a basic skill that is systematically developed. This was seen, for example, when the children were exploring the concept of "shorter" or "longer" during a numeracy lesson.
48. The children enjoy talking about items they bring to school. They are excited and interested when the adults read a story with them and they are encouraged to comment on the illustrations.

### **Mathematical development**

49. Although the children's mathematical capabilities are broadly average when they start school very few can count confidently to ten. However, they make good progress and quickly begin to have fun calling out larger numbers. This was the case when some children, with help from the teacher, counted thirty-two beads on a string. A few children can relate low numbers both to numerals and to sets of objects. By the end of the foundation stage, their ability to count to twenty, and in some cases beyond, is much more secure. The children quickly recognise the usefulness of mathematics, for example, in simple data gathering such as that necessary for recording attendance at school. The teacher is securely establishing the concept of comparative size as a result of much practice and consolidation of experience. In one lesson, a child held up a threading string next to the visitor and said, "It's longer than you and thinner!"
50. The good teaching ensures that numeracy experiences are built into many activities. The strength of the teaching is that many practical experiences are exploited to build the children's confidence. For example, a number of children had brought toy rabbits into school to reinforce the teaching of the letter "r". The rabbits were also used for a counting activity, as were strings of beads of various lengths.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

51. By the end of the foundation stage, the children increase their knowledge of the world and their understanding of why things happen. They are currently using computer programs for aspects of their work in literacy and numeracy. They learn how to change images on the screen and recognise the function of keys such as the arrows and space bar. They learn about animals, some of which are found only in zoos in Britain. The school grounds provide a rich resource for the collection of insects, leaves and seeds which can be scrutinised under lenses. Through looking at family photographs and recognising how family members change over time, they begin to understand the passage of time. By the time they enter Year 1, they recognise that there are distant countries such as France where the landscape and weather are not quite like that of Britain. They begin to appreciate that groups of people engage in a range of celebrations such as harvest festivals and, for the Jewish people, the building of the Sukkot. Many children become adept at using scissors and glue spreaders because there are good opportunities for them to cut and join a variety of fabrics, card and material.
52. The teaching in this area is very well planned and provides the children with many interesting experiences that contribute well to their personal and academic development.

### **Physical Development**

53. The children move confidently around the reception class and have the necessary manipulative skills to draw and paint and to fit together puzzles and construction equipment. While they are in the hall, they engage confidently in a range of physical activities that include stretching, rolling, jumping, crawling, travelling on apparatus and playing small games with bean bags and quoits. They are considerate towards each other and respect the need for safety. They enjoy dancing and handling instruments that need to be held in particular ways. The school grounds have a range of play equipment but there is some restriction on the development of skills that are appropriate for very young children. For instance, there is no safe area where children in the foundation stage can push or pedal wheeled vehicles or play on a variety of equipment suitable for this age group.
54. The teaching carefully promotes the development of physical skills. The children are guided well in their early attempts at holding pencils for writing and using scissors to cut shapes. The activities organised in the hall are very well structured and promote confidence. The school recognises, however, the need for these young children to enjoy a secure area where they can engage in an appropriate range of outdoor activities.

### **Creative development**

55. The children satisfactorily develop a range of skills as a result of the variety of creative activities planned for them. At this early stage of their foundation learning, their personal confidence is well reflected in a gallery of expressive, colourful self-portraits that they have painted. They engage in finger painting and printing and successfully use a variety of drawing media such as chalks, felt pens and crayons. They sing very enthusiastically and also enjoy listening to music. They are fascinated with



the range of percussion instruments they are allowed to play or which are used to provide suitable sound effects for stories.

56. The teaching in this area generally is a considerable strength, and in music it is outstanding. It excites the children and develops their skills so that many exceed the early learning goals by the time they complete the foundation stage.
57. The children respond very well to the organisation of the class, to the variety of work and to the challenges of working both individually and collaboratively. They make a very good start so that they are well prepared to begin the National Curriculum.

## **ENGLISH**

58. In the national tests in 2000 the proportion of seven-Year-olds, achieving the expected level in reading was slightly higher than the national average with a good proportion reaching the higher levels. In writing, the results were similar to the national average with a few pupils achieving the higher levels. The results of national test for seven-Year-olds show a consistent picture of above average attainment although detailed analysis indicates a relative weakness in writing.
59. The results of the 2000 national tests in English for eleven-Year-olds indicate attainment is above the national average. The results were better than those of similar schools. Over the last four Years, standards have risen steadily but, in 1999, they fell below the national average, highlighting a weakness in writing that is still evident in closer analysis of the 2000 results. This accords with the inspection findings that reading standards are above average and standards in writing, although improving significantly, are not yet as good as they should be.
60. By the end of Key Stage 1, most of the pupils have speaking skills that are in line with those expected of seven-Year-olds. They are eager to speak, but at times their vocabulary is inadequate to enable them to converse with either fluency or the necessary precision. This is evident when the younger pupils discuss books they have read. They are unable to embellish their accounts with interesting words and the necessary detail to interest their audience. They speak confidently when explaining their work to adults or to their peers during whole class sessions at the end of the literacy hour. This is because the teachers are skilful in interjecting questions to help them develop their ideas. The older pupils are developing their speaking skills satisfactorily. This is due in part to the frequent use of good quality texts as a basis for the literacy lessons. For instance, the pupils in Year 6 provided some clearly articulated and interesting ideas to expand brief notes they had made earlier about the life of Anne Frank. The teachers enhance the pupils' replies by affirming their ideas, often including higher order vocabulary that the pupils then use when editing the written account of their discussions. The majority of pupils listen very well because they relate well to their teachers and have developed a respect for them. A few pupils are still a little immature and sometimes restless but the consistency of the approaches used by the adults is having an increasingly positive impact on their ability to listen and sustain concentration.
61. By the age of seven, most pupils attain reading levels that are at least in line with expectations. A good proportion reads with greater fluency and confidence than can be expected at this stage. Progress in reading is good and ensures that by the time they leave the school at eleven, few pupils fail to reach the expected level. This is because the teaching of reading is highly regarded in the school and the pupils are supported by many adults who are skilled in developing their capabilities. There is a good proportion of very fluent readers among the oldest pupils. Opportunities for shared class reading, together with additional reading support in small groups have raised standards among average and below average readers. The younger pupils enjoy sharing the "big books" and show satisfactory comprehension skills when reading together. The majority successfully sound out various parts of words and can recognise words at sight. The higher attaining readers competently refer to words and phrases to predict events in stories. Very good support is provided in Key Stage 2 to ensure that the pupils develop an increasing range of strategies for reading. This results in standards that are currently above average by the time the pupils leave the school at eleven. They develop their opinions of books and preferences for authors. One pupil, commenting on why she had enjoyed "The Diary of Anne Frank" observed "I liked the way it's put into words" and proceeded to provide examples of phrases she judged effective. The lower attaining older pupils are becoming more secure in using their knowledge of phonics to split up unfamiliar words, so that their accuracy is increasing.

62. The school has identified the raising of attainment in writing as a key target for improvement and produced an effective action plan detailing the strategies to be adopted. The pupils' writing skills have recently improved significantly, and standards are rising to above average levels as a direct result of this initiative. Spelling still remains a comparative weakness in the pupils' writing as too many older pupils are inconsistent in spelling common words and have hitherto not been sufficiently independent to correct their own spelling by either applying their phonic knowledge or the regular use of dictionaries. However, a much greater emphasis on improving the younger pupils' phonic recognition and attention to developing the older pupils' editing skills suggest that the school is now very effectively addressing some key weaknesses in the pupils' writing.
63. The younger pupils are making satisfactory progress in writing sequences of sentences that are often punctuated with capital letters and full stops. They are increasingly encouraged to use wordbooks and displays of words in the classroom, in order to improve the accuracy of their spelling. Many older pupils now have a good recognition of the different forms of language required, for example, to write a biography or to engage in narrative or descriptive writing. While writing about an air raid, the pupils showed a good awareness of language that was in keeping with the period of World War II. A few pupils do not have well formed handwriting by the age of eleven. The majority, however, benefit from the continued opportunities to practise letter shapes and joins so that their writing is fluent and evenly formed. The older pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their editing skills through using information technology.
64. There is a high proportion of good and very good teaching at both Key Stages. The planning of lessons is thorough and consistent across the school. It reflects the importance of developing reading and writing skills in particular. Together with good quality support, it is the reason why pupils with special literacy needs make such good progress in developing their basic skills. Another strength of the teaching is the way the pupils' progress in various aspects of English is so very carefully tracked. The targets set for each pupil are regularly referred to and the teachers' marking of work often relates to these targets. A very effective model of target setting was seen in Year 2 where reference to individual targets was made during the assessment of work in a whole class session. Many teachers are skilled at developing the pupils' language by the way they ask questions and then develop the pupils' replies. Occasionally, the adults provide answers when they question younger pupils, resulting in some lack of challenge for the pupils themselves. Relationships in classrooms are very constructive; the pupils recognise that teachers have high expectations of them and require them to work hard. The teachers' knowledge of how to implement the school's literacy strategy is a further strength of a well-balanced English curriculum.
65. The curriculum is very well led. The temporary co-ordinator is very effective in carrying forward the excellent planning agreed earlier this Year. The teachers are confident and very committed to raising literacy standards. The money for resources has been prudently spent and has ensured that a good range of reading and textbooks is available. The libraries are adequate but some of the books are now well worn and require replacement.

## **MATHEMATICS**

66. Overall, standards in mathematics have improved since the last inspection. The results of the 2000 national mathematics tests for eleven-Year-olds were above the national average and above the average for similar schools. The percentage of pupils attaining higher levels was also above the national average. These results resume the upward trend following a dip in 1999. The inspection findings indicate that standards continue to be above average.
67. In the 2000 national mathematics tests for seven-Year-olds, the results were above the national average. Above average standards have been consistently maintained since the last inspection and observation of lessons and scrutiny of the pupils' work show that the vast majority of pupils are working at an appropriate level for their age and a good proportion is achieving beyond this.
68. The rate of learning is good as the pupils move through the school and this enables children of all abilities to achieve good standards. Very good use is made of the analysis of test results to help the teachers to focus more closely on the needs of their pupils. The scrutiny of work already completed indicates that many pupils are already achieving some of the key objectives for their Year group and that the school is well placed to achieve the targets set for it in mathematics.

69. The pupils with special educational needs are well supported by their class teachers and the support assistants. They make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts.
70. In Year 1, where the pupils have only recently embarked on the national curriculum, they are able to add and subtract one from numbers up to ten. They recognise simple number patterns and are developing their knowledge of the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes. The pupils in Year 2 are becoming increasingly adept at doubling numbers to twenty. This is because the teacher motivates and encourages them in mental arithmetic sessions. The majority of pupils are able to recognise and develop counting patterns in tens. They are also becoming increasingly confident working with time and many are able to add two or three hours to a given time. By the age of seven, almost all of the pupils' skills in number have reached the expected level. The school's well-established numeracy strategy is having a positive effect on the pupils' knowledge and skills, which is often evident in the speed with which they respond to questions.
71. In Key Stage 2 almost all of the pupils sustain good levels of concentration and are eager to participate in the mental arithmetic sessions. For example, the pupils in Year 3 and 4 learn very effectively through the opportunities they are given to practice and improve their rapid recall and mental calculation at the start of each lesson. Work on classifying and describing shapes builds effectively from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 where the pupils' knowledge is well developed through carefully planned activities and very good use of resources in well structured lessons. In Year 5 the pupils are able to collect, sort and classify data and present it in graphs and charts. Some pupils can use information technology to do this, but poor levels of resources limit the number of pupils able to explore the most effective ways to work with data. Year 6 pupils are set challenging tasks by their teachers which build effectively on their knowledge and understanding. Consequently, scrutiny of the pupils' work shows they have a secure knowledge and understanding of division and multiplication, for example, and in lessons are able to demonstrate the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages. They make some use of computers to analyse data and plot the details graphically, but overall not enough use is made of information technology in mathematics.
72. The teaching is good overall and has improved in the level of consistency since the last inspection. The teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject, which they use well to question the pupils, give clear explanations and set challenging tasks. As a result, most lessons have a good brisk pace of learning and the pupils are well motivated. This is exemplified in Year 2 where the teachers continually probes and questions the pupils to extend their knowledge and deepen their understanding. In Year 6 where the tasks are carefully modified for different abilities, the teachers have high expectations, and the whole class sessions are used effectively to review learning and evaluate the extent of the pupils' understanding. As a result of good teaching, the pupils progress well and make good gains in their learning. The marking of the pupils' work is very effective and the teachers clearly identify for them what they need to do to improve. The assessments of the pupils' progress are carefully recorded both to track achievement and provide information to assist the teachers in planning their lessons. Homework is used effectively to support classroom work and has a positive influence on attainment.
73. The use of numeracy skills in areas of the curriculum other than mathematics is good. For example, the older pupils used weather data downloaded from the Internet to investigate the climate of mountain regions throughout the world.
74. The subject is very effectively led by an experienced and well -qualified co-ordinator whose enthusiasm and commitment to raising standards in the subject is fully supported by all of the teachers. The co-ordinator monitors the planning of mathematics and attainment and progress through scrutiny of the pupils' work. The teaching is monitored by the headteacher and deputy headteacher who discuss their observations and evaluations with the co-ordinator. Taken overall the management of the mathematics curriculum is excellent and places the school in a strong position to ensure that both provision and standards will continue to improve.

## SCIENCE

75. By the time the pupils leave the school they achieve high standards in science because of the high level of challenge presented by the skilled and enthusiastic teachers within a broad and well-planned curriculum.
76. Standards attained by pupils by the age of eleven in national tests in 1999 were well above the national average. The results for 2000 maintained and improved on this standard, with over half of the pupils attaining the higher level. These very good results indicate significant improvement and progress in Key Stage 2 and this is supported by the inspection findings. By the age of seven, standards in science are broadly in line with national expectations. On the basis of teacher assessments the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level is well above the national average. Overall, this is an improvement since the last inspection. There has been a steady improvement in results over the last four Years with an increased proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in both Key Stages.
77. Observation of lessons and scrutiny of the pupils' work provides evidence that the pupils receive extensive coverage of all aspects of the science curriculum. By the age of seven, the pupils have a very good understanding of life and living processes and of materials and their properties. They know about the life processes common to humans, plants and animals, and recognise that animals need food, shelter and care. Year 1 pupils were learning how baby animals change as they grow and matching them to their mothers. They explore differences between things that are living and inanimate objects. In the animal world, the pupils know that insects have wings, and that some animals can swim or fly. They also have a good understanding of how sound travels different distances. This term, they are learning about their bodies and measuring feet, heads and arms to explore differences. They use information technology effectively to record their findings as bar charts. Throughout Key Stage 1, the pupils make sound progress and many attain the higher level.
78. Progress in Key Stage 2 accelerates and by the time they are eleven the pupils have very good investigative skills. They know how to set up a fair test and how to change and control the variables. They make sensible predictions based on their previous learning, record their findings in a variety of ways and draw their conclusions from the data. Due to the high level of challenge presented by the planned curriculum and skilled teaching, the pupils frequently work at a level higher than expected for their age. For example, Years 3 and 4 were studying reversible changes such as how solids such as chocolate respond when they are heated and cooled. Also in Year 5, pupils were studying how to muffle sound and Year 6 pupils demonstrated advanced skills in their knowledge of which factors contribute to alterations in volume and pitch.
79. In addition, the pupils' previously recorded work showed very good investigations into properties of materials to identify the differences between solids, liquids and gases accurately. They also have a good knowledge of how to construct a variety of circuits, the effects of magnetism and how light travels from one source and the effects of shadows and reflection.
80. The quality of teaching is good overall and a high proportion of it is very good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. These high standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Good teaching was seen in both Key Stages, but teaching is particularly effective in Key Stage 2. The effects of good quality teaching and excellent breadth in the curriculum result in standards that are above those that the pupils attain in English and mathematics. In the best lessons, the teachers have a clear understanding of what they teach and give precise and succinct explanations that enable pupils to make very good progress in learning; they develop good investigative skills and are able to reach realistic scientific conclusions. The work presents a high level of challenge, particularly in Year 6 where both classes receive theory sessions when the teachers review previous learning and ensure that the pupils understand. The formal assessment of pupils' progress made during these sessions is used in the teachers' planning of subsequent activities. In all lessons, the teachers' planning has clear learning intentions and makes appropriate use of good resources. In some lessons, information technology is used well to record data.
81. The pupils have very good attitudes to their work and work together collaboratively. This was evident, for instance, when Year 2 pupils were measuring parts of their bodies and when Year 6 were making excellent posters about sound to present information to younger children. They are enthusiastic and

well motivated in all science lessons, and eager to take part in discussions. They work together showing respect for the efforts, ideas and feelings of other children.

82. The co-ordinator has a high level of scientific expertise that has contributed well to the high standards attained by the pupils. Under his leadership, the school has developed a challenging scheme of work. He has also monitored the quality of pupils' work and supported his colleagues. In tandem with this process, the headteacher and deputy-head have monitored the teaching of science. As a result the teaching throughout the school is relevant and challenging. Resources are good and appropriately used.

## **ART**

83. Standards are well in line with expectations by the end of Key Stage 1. Good progress is made and by the age of eleven the pupils' attainment is above average. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The pupils make good progress in acquiring the knowledge, skills and understanding to enable them to express themselves confidently in a range of media. Their skills in drawing, in particular, are very high. The subject is well led and the teachers co-operate well to plan work. This has a decidedly beneficial effect on the quality of the pupils' work.
84. The youngest pupils enjoy experimenting with colour and they paint confidently. Some younger pupils have produced very vivid pictures of various living things and bold, expressive portraits of themselves. By the end of Key Stage 1, they use a range of brushes to obtain different effects, for example, when painting flowers or butterflies. They have also painted bold scenes of how they imagine the seaside in the south of France and what the Alps might look like.
85. Drawing skills are above average in Key Stage 2. The pupils' observational skills, their understanding of line and tone are very skilfully developed. The oldest pupils have very successfully produced "action drawings" using repeated figures to represent movement, suitably refined by the addition of shading. Pupils in lower Key Stage 2 have produced well drawn groupings of figures because the guidance before they begin their work was very clear and drew upon the work of artists such as Van Gogh and Hogarth. Good use of sketchbooks to trial and refine drawings improves the pupils' skills and critical judgement. As they move through Key Stage 2, the pupils paint with increasing confidence, often adding interesting details and subtle tones to their portraits.
86. The teaching at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory but improves during Key Stage 2 where it is often very good. The teachers are usually clear about what they want pupils to do, often writing up the objectives of the lessons for referral as the pupil's work. Confident, direct teaching encourages the pupils to use their imagination and develops their understanding of composition. This was seen to good effect in lower Key Stage 2 where the pupils' attention was appropriately drawn to the unity of a particular group composition. As a result, the proportions of the figures drawn by the pupils were very accurate, resulting in a high level of satisfaction for the pupils themselves. The pupils at all levels benefit from good opportunities to appraise the qualities of the work of a range of painters.
87. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and recognises the strengths of the art curriculum. Her intention now is to develop a greater range of three-dimensional work and also to broaden the scope of the craft aspect of art to include areas such as needlework. These are very appropriate targets that the school has set itself in order to further enrich the current art curriculum.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

88. The quality of the work in design and technology is above the expected level by the end of Key Stage 1. No lessons were observed in Key Stage 2. However, from examination of samples of the pupils' work, analysis of the planning and discussions with the teachers and the pupils, it is clear that standards are at least in line with national expectations and in some cases better than those usually achieved by eleven Year olds.
89. The teaching in all of the lessons seen in Key Stage 1 was at least satisfactory. Some very good whole class teaching was observed where the pupils evaluated different puppets that they had designed and made. The children were able to practice different joining techniques before deciding on their final designs, which resulted in high quality products. In both Key Stages, the pupils use a wide range of

resources, including textiles, foodstuffs, rigid and flexible materials, wood and construction kits. The pupils work hard and enthusiastically, collaborating well and respecting others feelings when involved in evaluating each other's work.

90. Since the last inspection, the co-ordinator has developed a whole school policy for the subject and a scheme of work based on the national recommendations. They are well linked to the school's own topic plans. The co-ordinator assists the teachers in their planning, and has developed a portfolio of pupils' work at different levels in order to support them in the assessment process.

## **HISTORY**

91. By the end of both Key Stages, the pupils exceed the national expectations for history and their achievement is therefore good. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were found to be satisfactory.
92. By the age of seven, the pupils have a good knowledge of 'then and now' and are able to compare old and new toys. They know that their grandparents would have played with some of the toys, and through this interesting topic they understand that changes in the way we live took place during the last century. They are starting to understand that events of the past affect our lives today; for example, they learn that improvements in technology, such as plastics, sprung mechanisms and batteries affects the quality of toys in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Through the study of famous characters the children are beginning to understand that there are reasons why people in the past acted as they did.
93. By the age of eleven, the pupils have a good understanding of chronology. Examination of the pupils' recorded work shows that they have a good understanding of recent and ancient history. The planned programme of study units includes The Tudors, Invaders and Settlers and Ancient Egypt. Through these studies the pupils develop a good understanding of primary and secondary sources of evidence. For instance, in their study of World War II, Year 5 pupils looked at old photographs, ration books and letters written at the time. They were able to demonstrate their understanding of how historical events affect peoples' lives when pretending to be evacuees writing home to parents. Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 have a good understanding of life in Tudor times. They know about the everyday lives of people from different sections of society. This was demonstrated particularly well when they watched a video of a Tudor village and learned about a clothier and his shop. They then made a glossary of terms used at the time.
94. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and much of it is good. This is a similar picture to the last inspection, but there are improvements. The teachers now provide a greater range of opportunities to analyse and evaluate evidence from a good variety of sources and they encourage pupils to communicate their knowledge and understanding in a greater variety of ways. In the best lessons, enthusiastic teaching, using a range of teaching styles, resulted in the pupils being inspired and learning well. For example, the pupils' writing in Year 6 indicates they have a clear understanding of how people must have felt when war was declared. The teachers have good subject knowledge and use an appropriate range of sources of evidence such as books, videos and artefacts to support their pupils' learning. This good teaching results in the pupils showing great enthusiasm for their history lessons and in their being able to communicate ideas well.
95. Throughout the school, pupils have good attitudes towards this subject. They enjoy talking about the past and sharing observations when looking at old objects such as toys in Year 1 and wartime photographs in Years 3 and 4. They work well as groups to share their ideas and demonstrate satisfactory writing skills when presenting their work. In all lessons, the pupils behave well, listen carefully to their teachers and handle precious objects with great care.

96. In many lessons it was evident that homework is set for this subject. This also makes a good contribution to pupils learning. For example, Year 5 pupils had made a list of what they had eaten at the weekend in order to compare their daily diet with the diet of children during wartime.
97. History is planned and managed in parallel with geography to ensure good curriculum coverage and that the pupils develop the skills common to both subjects in a progressive manner.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

98. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection when pupils attained the expectations for the end of Key Stage and made good progress.
99. The pupils in Key Stage 1 receive a sound basis for further geographical learning in Key Stage 2. They can identify physical and human features of places describing the special characteristics, as in the study of the seaside based on holiday experiences. In this topic there are good links with history as the pupils learn about swimming costumes and seaside entertainment in the previous century. They also undertake local studies learning to record information about their observations of the town of Syston. They are also improving their key skills, using appropriate vocabulary when exploring the different habitats which animals need. Cross-curricular links with science (living things) and art (paintings of wild animals following a visit to the Zoo) are very good. These close links make learning more real for the children.
100. In Key Stage 2, the pupils further improve their knowledge and key skills in this subject. By the end of the Key Stage, there are clear indications that pupils have a good understanding of a range of places and environments, as in a Year 6 study of mountain environments. The pupils have a good knowledge of climate and how climatic changes affect people's lives. They also use a good range of geographical mapping skills and are able to identify symbols and map references in Ordnance Survey maps. However, there is less evidence that they understand how people can both change and improve the environment.
101. In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was good. The teachers plan their lessons well. They identify precisely the learning intentions and make them clear to the pupils. For instance, in a Year 6 lesson the pupils made appropriate use of information technology to construct graphs of rainfall and temperature. In the Year 2 lesson the teachers used effective questioning techniques to enable the pupils to define differences between employment opportunities in their own locality and at the seaside. The teachers also have good class management skills to help pupils complete the tasks.
102. The humanities co-ordinator has ensured breadth and balance in the curriculum by implementing a new scheme of work within a two-Year cycle to cater adequately for mixed age classes. The coordinator has identified appropriate targets for improvement such as the development of topic boxes to support the new scheme.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

103. The standard of work in information and communications technology is broadly in line with the expected levels at the end of both Key Stages. This falls short of what could be achieved by pupils because the poor level of resources restricts the range and frequency of the opportunities the pupils have to use and apply what they are taught. The schools' provision for information and communication technology is much worse than the nationally reported ratio of computers to pupils in primary schools. The school does not have access to the Internet or e-mail and has not yet received any National Grid for Learning funding for new technologies. Each class has access to a computer. However, in Key Stage 1 all the machines are at least five Years old and do not have hard discs. The school has a class set of word processors which are used effectively for writing and redrafting work and developing pupils' keyboard skills but they do not allow them to work at the required higher levels for communicating information.
104. Observations of lessons shows the teaching to be at least satisfactory, with good direct whole class teaching to develop the pupils' knowledge and understanding of communicating information, data handling and finding information from CD-Rom. Unfortunately the pupils have few opportunities to develop a high level of capability in these areas because of limited resources. No work was seen in

modelling, control or measuring as this is planned for later in the Year. In both Key Stages, the pupils work collaboratively and share the available, but inadequate, resources effectively.

105. In Key Stage 1 the pupils are developing accurate control of the keyboard and mouse. They can enter simple text, work independently on paint programs and games for reinforcing numeracy and literacy. In Key Stage 2 the pupils confidently use the word processors for writing and are developing appropriate information skills in order to carry out research using CD-ROMs. In both Key Stages, the available resources are used to support learning in other areas of the curriculum. In Year 2, for example, the pupils used data handling software to analyse the length of their hand spans; this supported their measuring work in both numeracy and science. In Year 6, the pupils successfully carried out research to enhance their geography study of mountain ranges. However, there are too few examples of this kind because of the poor level of resources.
106. The co-ordinator provides sound leadership by supporting the teachers in their planning and assessment, and by monitoring both the planning and outcomes of the subject. Since the last inspection, the co-ordinator has developed a comprehensive scheme of work based on the recommended national scheme, Curriculum 2000, and the schools' topic plan. An action plan has been developed which includes both national initiatives and appropriate targets for developing information and communications technology in the school. However, until there is greater investment in resources, the school will not be able to make improvements in the standards achieved in this subject which remain similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection.

## **MUSIC**

107. Standards in both Key Stages have been maintained since the last inspection and are above average because the teaching is very good. The pupils sing expressively, showing good control of pitch and dynamics. They project a distinct note of enjoyment into their singing. This is because the specialist music teacher engages and interests them not only through her good -humoured supportive approach but also by evaluating their performance, which improves as a result. The pupils enjoy the sound of their own music making.
108. The pupils in Key Stage 1 build on their early experiences of using untuned percussion instruments to develop their recognition of different sounds and rhythms. They improve their skills in varying pitch, tempo and dynamics as they reproduce sounds linked to particular themes such as "animals". They listen to a range of music, some from countries such as China and they identify the sound effects produced by different instruments.
109. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is also above average. Many pupils develop the ability to follow score and have knowledge of note values and names. They develop good critical skills when evaluating their own compositions and performances as well as those of others. They recognise how different musical effects are produced, for example, to signify the prince and the swallow in "The Happy Prince". Music from World War II is used imaginatively to develop the pupils' understanding of rhythm and chord formation.
110. The instrumental lessons and the opportunities for pupils to sing together are key factors in the very good teaching of music. The music specialist is very skilled, especially in developing singing. She chooses a repertoire of songs that is lively, interesting and well matched to the different ages of pupils. She is assiduous in promoting an enjoyment of music. The lessons are well prepared so that instruments and scores, including large graphical scores to support whole class performance, are immediately available. The teacher keeps significant notes relating to the pupils' performances that combine to provide a picture of the pupils' progress over a Year.
111. The co-ordinator, who is the specialist music teacher, is very appreciative of the efforts of colleagues to sustain standards during her leave in the past Year. The carefully revised scheme of work, therefore, takes account of the needs of class teachers who may be called upon to take classes in music. The subject makes a very effective contribution to the pupils' broader development.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

112. The lessons seen during the inspection indicated that the vast majority of the pupils are attaining the standards expected of them and that standards have been maintained since the last inspection. This is



because the school provides a varied and carefully planned curriculum for physical education and a knowledgeable teacher leads the subject very effectively. The pupils in lower Key Stage 2 have a programme of swimming lessons and consequently almost all pupils can swim the expected distance by the time they leave the school.

113. The pupils are confident and co-ordinated in their movements. As they move through the school, their stamina and the quality of their performance improves. They all have good understanding, appropriate to their ages, of the value of warming-up and cooling down before and after exercise. The teaching observed was entirely satisfactory. The lessons are carefully planned and build on the skills the pupils have previously acquired. The teachers understand the sequence in the teaching of specific skills and this enables their pupils to succeed. This was the case in Key Stage 1 where many pupils are able to devise ways of linking balancing and travelling together but some need guidance and support from their teacher. Overall they are developing sound body control, co-ordination and balance in gymnastics lessons.
114. In Key Stage 2, the pupils make secure progress. For example, in gymnastics, Year 5 pupils improve their movements by paying particular attention to control and position as they develop sequences of movement that conclude with balances on body points. Year 6 pupils presented good sequences of movements and balances during a school meeting, further demonstrating the importance placed on physical education. As a result the pupils understand the value of exercise and, with their teachers' guidance, know how to evaluate and improve performance.
115. Although no games lessons were observed the school does provide the pupils in Key Stage 1 with opportunities to develop their basic skills. This work is extended in Key Stage 2 with specific games activities such as, football, netball and hockey.
116. The pupils show positive attitudes to physical education and take part in activities enthusiastically. Most concentrate and persevere to improve their performance. They work effectively in partnerships and are very appreciative of other pupils' achievements.
117. The physical education curriculum is well organised and the subject is well managed. The current action plan sets out clearly the tasks the co-ordinator is to undertake in order to ensure that both provision and standards are maintained.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

118. Standards of work are well in line with those required by the locally agreed syllabus. As a result of revisions to the scheme of work, some of the recent work is of above average quality. When changes are fully embedded, standards are likely to rise and to be higher than those observed at the last inspection, particularly by the end of Key Stage 2. The topics for each term are now more comprehensively planned and take account of recent national guidelines. At both Key Stages, the pupils are acquiring considerable knowledge not only of Christianity but also of other faiths. They are also developing a growing understanding of religious concepts. Older pupils study various religious buildings and understand that these are special places where people who belong to different groups go to worship.
119. The pupils in Key Stage 1 listen with interest to stories from the Bible. Through questioning, discussion and looking at pictures they gain an understanding of the symbolism of various stories. They also recognise that in every religion there are special festivals. A class of pupils in Year 1 was able to relate their own baptism with the story of John baptising followers of Jesus in the River Jordan. When asked about the meaning of baptism, a child replied "It means you belong to the family of Jesus and God".
120. In Key Stage 2, the pupils develop their understanding of the significant religious books such as the Bible and the Torah. They also acquire a more detailed knowledge of religious festivals and are able to see parallels, for example, between Christmas and Divali. They have good opportunities for exploring issues such as those related to friendship. They can draw upon their own experiences of concepts such as loyalty or what it is like to be excluded.
121. The teaching was judged to be sound overall at the last inspection. There is now a proportion that is good as the teachers are more knowledgeable about what they have to teach and have greater awareness of how to build progressively, Year on Year, on what the pupils know and understand. The teachers have a better understanding of how to develop, for example, knowledge about religious beliefs

and practices in a way that matches the developmental level of pupils of different ages. They use a very good range of stories, pictures and artefacts to bring the subject to life. Relationships within classes are good so that pupils listen with interest and are confident that their ideas and feelings will be treated with sensitivity. The revised scheme of work is broader and more balanced than the earlier one. It provides greater opportunities for more interesting activities to be introduced. A good example was seen in lower Key Stage 2 where the class was discussing the significance of food in religion. Having looked at a Jewish family at a meal and at Sikhs sharing a meal in the langar, and discussing the importance of sharing food, the pupils went on to draw “love heart” sweets bearing messages of appreciation of their friends.

122. Religious education is recognised as a core subject that contributes significantly to the pupils’ personal development. This is a significant development that results from the purposeful work of the co-ordinator. The teaching of religious education enhances the pupils’ spiritual understanding and fosters an appreciation of a range of cultures. The co-ordinator and the teachers are now usefully developing ways of assessing the pupils’ knowledge and understanding and linking them to the objectives of each unit of work.