

INSPECTION REPORT

**HORBLING BROWN'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Sleaford

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120603

Headteacher: Mr Christopher Gudgin

Reporting inspector: Mr Brian Griffiths
2607

Dates of inspection: 12 – 15 June 2000

Inspection number: 191184

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior School
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11years
Gender of pupils:	Boys and girls
School address:	Sandygate Lane Horbling Sleaford Lincolnshire
Postcode:	NG34 0PL
Telephone number:	01529 240367
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Fletcher
Date of previous inspection:	31 January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Brian Griffiths	Registered inspector	Mathematics	What sort of school is it?
		Science	The school's results and pupils' achievements
		Geography	How well is the school led and managed?
		History	What should the school do to improve further?
		Physical Education	
Susan Walsh	Lay inspector		Pupil's attitudes, values and personal development.
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents and carers?
Ralph Walker	Team inspector	English	How well are pupils taught?
		Information Technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
		Art	
		Design Technology	
		Music	
		Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage	
		Equal Opportunities	
		Special Educational Needs	

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	9
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	11
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	16
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	17
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	18
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	19
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	22

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Number of full-time pupils:	67	(much smaller than average)
Pupils entitled to free school meals:	1.5%	(well below average)
Pupils on the register of special educational needs:	13 (20%)	(above average)
Pupils with statements of special educational needs:	0	
Pupils of ethnic minority origin:	1.5%	(well below average)

The school is situated about 10 miles south of Sleaford and 15 miles east of Grantham in Lincolnshire. Almost one-half of its pupils come from well beyond the area normally served by the school and there is a broad social mix in the school. It is believed that only a small proportion of eligible parents apply for free school meals because lunches are not usually provided at the school. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school covers a normal range and is around average. There are three children aged below five years old in the reception class.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school. Pupils reach good all-round standards not only in the subjects that they study but also in the development of personal qualities such as initiative, self-reliance, good behaviour and in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teaching is very good. All members of staff contribute much to the school's very good leadership. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Attainment in almost all subjects, including literacy and numeracy, is good by the age of eleven. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- The school provides a very caring, supportive environment in which pupils flourish; good relationships are very successfully promoted, enabling pupils to become independent, self-reliant learners.
- Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very successfully promoted.
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership, is very ably supported by the other members of staff and rightly trusted by governors.
- The curriculum is rich and varied, imaginatively structured and very well taught.
- Attendance is excellent – pupils want to come to school.

What could be improved

There are no major weaknesses in this school. The governors may wish to address the following minor matters in an action plan.

- Although the proportion of the budget spent on staffing of all kinds is similar to that which is seen nationally, the number of teachers employed and the allocation of teaching roles results in the headteacher and the teacher of the youngest pupils carrying very heavy work loads.
- The provisions for gymnastics and swimming are limited because of the lack of a hall/gymnasium and the distance from the school to the nearest available swimming pool.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has maintained the outstandingly positive atmosphere for learning that was seen at the time of the last inspection in 1997, and there has been a good degree of improvement since then. The curriculum is better and now has considerable investigative elements that contribute substantially to pupils' achievements. Pupils' achievements at the age of eleven remain high in almost all subjects; the good progress made from the time that pupils arrive in the reception class and throughout the school has also been maintained. The limited accommodation and the lack of swimming lessons have prevented improvements in the provision for, and attainment in, physical education; solutions to these disadvantages have been sought but not yet found. The good teaching seen in 1997 has been improved upon; more than nine lessons in every ten are now taught well, very

well or excellently. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupil remains very good. All of the foregoing improvements have been ensured by the continuing very high quality of the school's leadership. However, the demands remain very high on the headteacher, who has charge of the top class for four-and-a-half days each week, and high on the teacher of the youngest pupils, who has a class of almost 30 pupils, covering three age groups.

STANDARDS

The number of pupils in each year group at Brown's Primary School is usually too small to allow a reliable annual analysis of the school's results in national tests. However, an examination of test scores over the past four years shows that at the age of eleven, English, mathematics and science test scores are all above, and sometimes well above, the national average. There is an upward trend in these scores that is similar to the national trend of improvement. Similarly, although the test scores of seven-year-olds have fluctuated over the past three years, they have generally been above or well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics; teachers' own assessments in science also indicate above average performance.

The overall findings of the inspection are that attainment at the age of eleven is above average in English, including literacy, mathematics, including numeracy, and science. Attainment in information technology, art, geography and history is higher than the national expectations, whilst in music and physical education, attainment is in line with the national expectations; attainment in design and technology is well above the national expectation. At the age of seven, attainment is above average in English, including literacy, mathematics, including numeracy, science, information technology, art, design and technology and history; attainment is in line with national expectations in geography and physical education; too little music was observed to allow a secure judgement on standards. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and the gifted and talented, achieve a good rate of progress in their learning. Achievement is fostered by the setting of demanding targets for pupils' learning; the school is on track to meet these targets for the next two years.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils work hard and enjoy school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The school works hard and successfully to develop pupils' self-discipline.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils develop strong capacities to take sensible initiatives and are very well motivated to be responsible for their own learning.
Attendance	Excellent attendance reflects pupils' enthusiasm for school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Overall, the school's teaching is very good. Teaching is very good or excellent in almost three-quarters of lessons and good in another 21 per cent. No teaching seen was less than satisfactory. High quality teaching skills and consistently applied methods lead to very positive attitudes in pupils, high quality learning and high attainment. The teaching of English, including literacy, and mathematics, including numeracy are very good throughout the school. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils, benefit and make good progress. There are many strengths and no weaknesses in teaching. Particular strengths lie in the excellent quality of teachers' recognition of how well pupils understand the work they do in lessons; this allows them to give immediate high quality feedback; all teachers are very skilled at asking questions that demand considerable thought before pupils answer. Teachers expect that pupils will work hard and do well. Pupils respond by giving optimum effort and concentrating very well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum is imaginatively organised, and links between subjects make learning purposeful and exciting. A particular strength is the opportunity given to pupils to plan and work together over a substantial period, towards a full day presentation of the project. A weakness is that no swimming lessons are provided.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Carefully thought out work is provided, along with sensitive and effective individual help in lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is promoted very successfully. This has a significant and positive impact on pupils' all-round development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a very caring, supportive environment in which pupils flourish and develop into mature, responsible individuals.
How well does the school work in partnership with parents and carers?	The school works well in partnership with parents, who appreciate the hard work of teachers and their approachability.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. Under the excellent leadership of the headteacher, all other members of staff make powerful contributions to the school's overall effectiveness.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are strong supporters of the school. Finances are confidently handled.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is aware of its strengths and of the areas that are ready for improvement. It takes well thought through steps to maintain the quality of provision.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The money, time, staff and accommodation available to the school are used efficiently and for the considerable benefit of pupils. The lack of a hall restricts the school's provision, particularly for physical education. The headteacher, and the teacher of the youngest pupils, carry very heavy work-loads. The school gets and gives good value for the money it spends.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children enjoy coming to school and make good progress. Teaching is good in all classes. Pupils behave well and any misbehaviour is quickly corrected. The school is led and managed well. "The kids think so much of the teachers that they want to succeed". 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some parents feel that homework is not given sufficiently systematically. There are too few out-of-school activities. The absence of a hall limits certain kinds of activity.

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views. Homework is given to a set pattern and this communicated to parents; the number of out-of-school activities is similar to, or better than, in many schools of a similar size. The lack of a hall/gymnasium limits the range of the physical education curriculum; however, good arrangements are made to ensure that assemblies can still take place.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

- 1 Numbers in each year group are too small to allow a reliable analysis to be made of the school's national test results in any one year. However, putting together the test scores over the past four years and the impact of the absence of three pupils out of nine for the 1998 Key Stage 2 tests, the following conclusions can be drawn:
 - attainment in the tests taken at the end of Key Stage 2, in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, ranges from above the national average to well above;
 - the attainment of Key Stage 2 pupils in English, mathematics and science is rising at a rate which is similar to the national rate;
 - attainment in the tests taken at the end of Key Stage 1 ranges from above the national average to well above in reading, writing and mathematics and above average in the teachers' own assessments of pupils' work in science;
 - attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has fluctuated too much, largely due to the small numbers in the relevant year groups, to allow a judgement to be made about trends;
 - at the end of both key stages, there are smaller differences between the attainment of boys and girls than is seen nationally; both boys and girls achieve well.
- 2 The school sets targets for pupils' achievements in these tests that are demanding in the sense that they will not be reached unless all concerned work hard, and realistic in the sense that they are based on pupils' earlier achievements. The school is on track to reach its targets for the next two years.
- 3 The results of national tests support the overall judgements of the inspection. Attainment at the end of both key stages is above average in English, mathematics and science.
- 4 At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils reach good standards in speaking and listening, largely as a result of the many and varied opportunities made for pupils to develop their ideas orally. A particularly important contribution comes from the way in which all teachers ask questions, in all subjects, that demand full and carefully considered answers from pupils. The result is that pupils of average and above average attainment can explain their thinking very clearly. For example, a seven-year old was asked to describe the properties of a three-dimensional shape that only she could feel, and explained: "It's got one circular face and it will roll, but not straight" (It was a cone). Above average standards are reached in reading. Even lower attaining pupils read books suitable for their ages accurately and quite fluently, and have sound word building skills. Writing is of an above average standard, largely because of the many occasions on which lessons are based on matters of interest to pupils, for example, visits they have made, work in other subjects which they are enjoying and activities which pupils are designing for themselves. At the age of eleven, pupils' attainment in mathematics is above average. Most pupils handle number well because it is thoroughly and interestingly taught. They can collect data and present it in graphical forms, with lower attainers reaching the standard that is normally expected of average pupils. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the properties of two-and three-dimensional shapes, and of weights and measures, are at a good level. The practical, problem solving approach to teaching ensures that good standards are reached in

mathematical problem solving and investigative work. Calculators are used skilfully but only when it is appropriate to do so. In science, pupils reach good all-round standards across a varied and interestingly presented curriculum. A very positive contribution to the high attainment in science comes from practical and investigative work, which is well planned and makes very good use of the immediate environment.

- 5 At the end of Key Stage 1, attainment is above average in all aspects of English, mathematics and science. Higher attaining pupils read accurately and confidently from a wide range of books that are often at a level of difficulty usually associated with older pupils. Almost all pupils are enthusiastic when asked to read. Writing standards are high, and pupils are able to tackle successfully different kinds of writing such as note taking, drafting, letter and story writing and poetry. Seven-year-olds handle number accurately and confidently; they know the properties of many two-dimensional and some three-dimensional shapes and their investigative work is at a good standard. Similarly, in science, good standards are reached largely because of the well thought-out practical and investigative approach of teachers.
- 6 At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is above national expectations in information technology, and above that typically expected in art, geography and history. In design and technology, standards are well above the nationally expected level. Standards in music and physical education are in line with national expectations. Attainment in physical education is restricted by the lack of a large indoor space to act as a gymnasium and by the school's inability to make provision for the teaching of swimming; other aspects of the subject are at a good level. Pupils' achievements in music are beginning to benefit from the work of a recently appointed teacher with skills in the subject.
- 7 At the end of Key Stage 1, attainment is above national expectations in information technology, and above that typical for pupils' ages in art, design and technology and history. In geography and physical education, pupils achieve the nationally expected levels. It was not possible to observe sufficient music to make a judgement.
- 8 Overall, pupils with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils make good progress in their learning.
- 9 Pupils' achievements are enhanced by the way the school uses the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies. Both have been adapted very effectively to suit the mixed age group classes and the school's overall approach.
- 10 The general high level of attainment which was seen at the time of the last inspection in 1997 has been maintained, with improvements taking place in the attainment of eleven-year-olds in mathematics, science and art. The school is well placed to maintain these high standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 11 The school is justifiably proud of its pupils' very positive attitudes. Their enthusiasm for school is reflected in the school's excellent attendance rates and there is no unauthorised absence. The school has ensured that its pupils are not passive recipients of education and has worked hard and very successfully to encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. All pupils, from the very youngest to those at the end of Year 6, are very interested and involved in their work. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their work objectively, to aim high and try their best. Pupils present their work very well. Pupils respond very well to challenging questions, they

think hard and carefully, they often have excellent ideas and make valuable comments and suggestions. Pupils are very self sufficient and respond well to teachers' high expectations. They learn to work independently. Pupils appreciate the performance of other children and develop precise skills of observation and evaluation; through these skills learning is developed, extended and refined. A good example of this was in an English lesson involving the older pupils who were writing poetry. They commented sensitively and sensibly on each other's work, they listened to each other's comments and incorporated them in their work - which improved considerably as a result.

- 12 The policy of fully involving children in the planning and assessment of their own work helps to ensure that their personal development is excellent. Pupils develop a very strong sense of responsibility and are able to use their initiative extremely well. They are very sensitive to the feelings and beliefs of others and are tolerant and respectful.
- 13 The behaviour of pupils is very good, both in the classroom and in less formal situations. The school has admitted some children whose behaviour has been difficult in the past. These children have responded extremely well to the school's diligent and consistent application of methods that encourage and reward good behaviour and to the atmosphere of the school, where very good relationships and mutual respect abound. Pupils learn self-discipline and to understand the impact of their actions upon others. They look after their school with great care.
- 14 Since the last inspection, the school has sustained its ethos of involving pupils in their own education. They are still encouraged to be creative and innovative and pupils continue to strive for high quality. Behaviour continues to be very good and attendance has improved from good to excellent.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 15 Teaching is very good. In 95 per cent of lessons, teaching is good or better. In almost three-quarters of lessons, teaching is either very good or excellent. No teaching is unsatisfactory. This is a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection, when in six out of ten lessons teaching was either good or very good. Overall, teaching for children under the age of five is good, for Key Stage 1 excellent and for Key Stage 2 very good.
- 16 Teaching is very good in English, including literacy and in mathematics, including numeracy. It is good in science, information technology, geography, history, music and physical education. In design and technology, teaching is very good. In all subjects, pupils of all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, are well catered for, so that learning progresses at a good rate.
- 17 A significant feature of teaching in the school is the consistency of practice and in the philosophy that informs it. It is grounded in respect for the child, and successfully seeks to make pupils active participants in the curriculum.
- 18 Relationships and the management of children are of a very high order. There is mutual respect, trust and caring between teachers and pupils. Teachers have very high expectations indeed of pupils in terms of behaviour, effort and presentation of work. Behaviour in lessons is very good and influences positively the quality of learning. Pupils make considerable efforts in their work to achieve high standards in content and in presentation. Questioning and discussion between teachers and pupils, whether in full class or one-to-one, are very good, and lead to good levels of involvement and concentration. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson, the teacher

treated the pupils in a very adult and mature manner, and there was excellent sharing and development of ideas. Relationships within the lesson were very good and the teacher gave exceptional support to individuals.

- 19 Planning is very thorough, very well matched to the range of age and attainment in a class, and identifies clear learning objectives. Very great attention is given to creating stimulating learning activities that will interest and motivate children and to avoiding pedestrian and time-filling tasks. Teachers maximise pupil involvement and the quality of their learning. To enable pupils to feel some sense of ownership of their learning, teachers give pupils opportunities to plan their own work. From time to time, pupils take full responsibility for planning and developing an area of work, which culminates in a full-day event. The school calls these activities "Critical Events". Learning activities are organised through projects so that pupils are able to explore links and relationships between knowledge as well as develop understanding and skill in the subjects of the National Curriculum. As a consequence, pupils have a clear appreciation of what they are expected to learn and have plenty of opportunity to express their own ideas and thoughts. They engage positively in learning activities because they see themselves having an active, participative role. In a Year 5 and 6 dance lesson, pupils were successfully pressed hard to develop and express their ideas and feelings through movement and gesture. Pupils were given time to experiment and to practice and refine their movements. Their evaluations of the quality of their performances were highly valued. Pupils think for themselves, work effectively with partners and seek to achieve high standards.
- 20 Teachers select very effective methods that stimulate thinking, creativity and originality. They want pupils to realise that there is often no one simple right answer, and that their contributions are always worthy of consideration. All teachers question very effectively and particularly seek to develop thoughtful and probing consideration of issues. Pupils are challenged to explain and justify what they say and to re-consider ideas where first thoughts could be improved on. Children with special needs are challenged too; they work in class on the same tasks as other children, with appropriate modifications and sensitive support. Teachers' methods and the skilful ways in which they are applied have a significant impact on the quality and level of pupils' thinking and on their development of independence and confidence. The very high quality of lesson organisation was seen in a lesson on information and communication technology with pupils in Years 3 and 4 that very successfully incorporated learning in geography and history. The main task for pupils was to apply learning from a structured walk round the village to write an account of land use and evidence of change. They were to refine and clarify their ideas and incorporate a picture that they had created by using the computer and a scanner. The teacher organised and controlled very well several activities occurring simultaneously, making the best use of the resources that were available. Thus, half the class prepared a written account from their notes while the other half developed their computer knowledge and skill, learning how to enter a photograph into the computer and how to search for specific information about their street using the Internet. All pupils were given a good level of responsibility to develop their own learning without depending overmuch on the teacher.
- 21 Teachers are very effective in assessing pupils' learning through focused questioning at the beginning of lessons about what happened in the previous lesson and in evaluating what had been learnt. Self-evaluation by pupils is regularly promoted in the course of lessons, and is formally organised through the use of "Learning Diaries", where pupils' own and teachers' assessments of pupils' writing are discussed and recorded, and jointly determined targets defined. Teachers have a very clear and

detailed understanding of their pupils' strengths and weaknesses, and use this knowledge to focus learning to match individual needs. This is particularly well carried out in meeting the needs of different age and ability groups in the same class; this is, however, a time-consuming and demanding task. Teachers have a very good appreciation of the particular learning and behavioural requirements of pupils with special educational needs, and they use assessment information well to plan and support their learning. One lesson observed focused exclusively on helping pupils to set targets for their own learning. The teacher's objectives were to develop confidence and responsibility and make the most of pupils' abilities. These objectives were very well achieved in the course of the lesson and the quality of pupils' learning was high. Initially, whole-class targets were reviewed and this led on neatly to individual target review and the defining of new targets. Pupils clearly understood the value of target setting and appreciated the importance of "... doing your best". They explained well in their own words; "If we all did what we liked and didn't think of other people, everything would go haywire". The teacher used demanding questions, so that pupils had to think carefully. In reviewing their individual learning targets, pupils responded to the questioning in thoughtful, perceptive and articulate ways.

- 22 Teachers deal with their mixed-age classes in productive and imaginative ways, and make good use of classroom assistants where they are available. Whole class sessions draw in all pupils and questioning is carefully focused to different age and ability groups. In the infant class, which contains Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils, (four to seven-year-olds) the teacher very successfully used whole class sessions to challenge the younger and lower attaining pupils. Other work was organised for them, with the support of the classroom assistant, while the teacher focused on the needs of the older and higher attaining pupils. The social benefits of mixed age classes are very well exploited by teachers, so that younger and lower attaining pupils gain many benefits by working alongside others. In particular, pupils with special educational needs are not treated as a separate group, but are very well integrated into the class.
- 23 Excellent teaching was observed in Key Stage 1 in the core subjects of English and mathematics. Pupils' learning is progressing very well in these two important areas. In a mathematics lesson, the teacher used challenging questions excellently to extend pupils' thinking, kept interest high while reinforcing understanding and skill with ways of making ten. Pupils are expected to explain clearly and fully how they have arrived at their answers and are expected to be able to explain different ways in which you can arrive at the same answer. As a result, pupils are very good at formulating and explaining their mental operations. They use mathematical vocabulary very well indeed. An English lesson was very well planned to develop pupils' understanding of story endings. It extended speaking and listening, reading and writing skills very well. Pupils had to think and explain carefully how the story they were reading together might end. In doing so, they developed clear understandings, which they were then able to apply to writing their own story ending. The teacher aimed to improve the quality of composing skills in writing; for the Year 2 pupils, for example, the importance of ideas, breadth of vocabulary and working quickly were emphasised. The children responded excellently and developed lively and imaginative writing with a good style. The teacher also developed basic reading skills excellently in small group work. Overall the teacher had an excellent relationship with the class and was highly skilful in getting the best out of them.

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

- 24 The statutory requirements for subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are all fully met, except for physical education where the lack of a school hall and convenient swimming pool restrict opportunities in some aspects of the subject. Overall, the curriculum has been developed and organised in imaginative ways that help children link ideas as well as develop subject knowledge and skill. Tasks which stretch pupils' thinking skills and imagination are provided, personal response is valued, and pupils are helped to appreciate that there may not always be one clear answer or solution. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and provides a variety of stimulating learning experiences. Built into the formal curriculum are special full-day programmes which allow children to work co-operatively over a period of time on shared endeavours, which culminate in a one day event; examples are "Healthy Body Day", "World War II Day", "Annual Drama Day" and "India Day". Health education is effectively developed within projects; older pupils consider the beneficial and harmful effects of drugs. The introduction of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy has been well managed and both are operating very successfully. The school has adapted these frameworks well; preserving existing key principles of teaching and learning that inform the whole curriculum. The curriculum is enriched by good use of local resources; for instance, visits to the museum of Lincolnshire Life to find out about domestic life in the 1930's and 40's or to the Freiston Field centre to study rivers, landforms and settlements. The school seeks to provide stimulating first-hand experiences for children and much of the good progress made by pupils is a consequence of this.
- 25 Provision for children under the age of five is good. National recommendations for the curriculum are fully met within an imaginative and well-structured plan. Considerable attention is given to developing pupils' personal and social skills as they are rightly recognised as underpinning all other aspects of the curriculum.
- 26 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good at all stages. The Code of Practice is fully implemented, and pupils have equal access to all the activities the school offers. Pupils are very well supported both by class teachers and support assistants. They gain considerably from the curriculum on offer. Individual education plans are well targeted to children's individual needs.
- 27 The school has a "Learning for All" policy. It actively values each child, seeks to develop his or her full potential and promotes children's learning in the widest sense. The curriculum is so organised that all children are able to strive for quality and depth in their work, and achieve the highest possible standards in the basic skills.
- 28 Although some reservations were expressed by parents about the range of out-of-school activities, the inspection judgement is that provision for them is at least satisfactory, taking account of the size of the school. There is a school choir, a recorder group and guitar club. Pupils have the opportunity for instrumental tuition on the violin, piano, and clarinet. At particular points in the year, pupils are involved in drama activities with the "old students" drama association, with a dance festival and with country dancing.
- 29 The school has very good links with the local community including strong links with the local church. Contributions to village life include an annual play, performances at the village fete and country dancing round the maypole. The village and local towns are used as a rich resource for geography and history. Members of the community visit to

offer expertise and personal knowledge of, for instance, living history events. There are good relationships with local secondary schools.

- 30 The provision for pupils' personal development is very good. Personal development is seen as at the heart of pupil's school experience and is firmly built into the curriculum and its teaching - as well as flourishing in the general ethos of the school.
- 31 Spiritual development is very well fostered through collective worship, classroom practice and the general ethos of the school. Individual worth and value is celebrated. Very good opportunities are provided for reflection and for gaining a sense of spiritual experience and a sense of awe and wonder when looking at the world. Pupils are very willing to offer their own ideas and older children show a good appreciation of spiritual issues. Year 6 pupils, for instance, in a classroom display showed thoughtfulness and sensitivity in developing their ideas of how painful and difficult circumstances like death, war, and divorce might be healed.
- 32 Moral development is excellently promoted throughout the school. From the earliest years, pupils are imbued with a clear sense of right and wrong. They are helped to appreciate our need to care for others and be considerate towards them. Older pupils have a clear sense of rights and responsibilities, both towards other people and in care and concern for the environment. Adults set a very good example to children in the quality of relationships they have with one another and with the pupils in their classes. Moral issues are sensitively discussed in relation to matters that arise in the school or are of personal interest and concern. Pupils having difficulty with their behaviour are exceptionally well counselled. The behavioural problems of a number of pupils with special educational needs have been satisfactorily resolved through careful and sensitive responses to their needs
- 33 The promotion of social development is excellent. Its impact is evident in high levels of individual self-confidence and self-esteem, and in pupils' very high standards of behaviour and courtesy. Respect for children and their achievements are embedded in school practices. They are invited from the earliest years to play a part in planning the curriculum, particularly in relation to the "critical event" days where pupils are fully responsible for planning and organisation. Pupils are encouraged and expected to take responsibility for their own learning. Classroom practice endorses these principles, particularly in the use of "learning diaries" where teachers and pupils jointly evaluate completed work and set new learning targets. Pupils' ideas and opinions are valued and built upon. Specific attention is given to developing the quality of pupils' thinking and their skills and confidence in formulating and expressing their ideas. Skilful and carefully-focused questioning help pupils generate, refine and extend their thinking, and justify, explain and evaluate what they say and do. Pupils are expected to act responsibly and to show concern for other people and for the environment.
- 34 The school's provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. Well-planned visits in the locality allow first-hand experiences that enrich what is learned in classrooms, particularly in relation to history and geography. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to respond to music and art and to engage in creative activities in painting, dance, drama designing and making, composing and performing. Pupils are introduced to experiences of other cultures; for example, cave paintings, Chinese music and various aspects of Indian culture.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 35 The school provides a very caring, supportive environment for its pupils, in which they flourish and develop into mature, responsible individuals. Pupils are well known to staff and relationships are very good. Good quality informal knowledge of pupils is formally supported by very effective systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress. There is consistent use of good quality assessment of what pupils know, understand and can do. Pupils are fully involved in their own assessment. The assessments made of the work of groups of pupils are regularly used to inform the school's planning of future work. The involvement of pupils in setting their own targets for improvement ensures that they know what they have to do in order to improve; they therefore work hard and make good progress.
- 36 The school ensures that pupils are properly looked after in school. It has carefully considered policies and procedures relating to pupils' welfare, including child protection and health and safety. Improvements to health and safety procedures have been made since the previous inspection, although the school has not yet developed a full range of procedures to ensure that there are regular risk assessments overseen by the governing body.
- 37 The school has established excellent attendance rates and registers are extremely well kept. Reasons for absences are carefully recorded and there is no unauthorised absence. The school sets very high standards for behaviour and discipline. There is a great emphasis on personal development including developing self-discipline. Pupils' behaviour problems are addressed at a very early stage through mentoring, friendship meetings, counselling and target setting. Disagreements between pupils that might escalate into bullying are quickly nipped in the bud and unacceptable behaviour is not tolerated.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 38 The school works well with parents. Parents have very positive attitudes towards the school. The small size of the school facilitates easy informal contact and parents appreciate the willingness of teachers to talk about matters concerning children whenever necessary. The informal mechanisms for exchanging information between home and school work well and are supported by regular, good quality newsletters. Information given to parents and carers through written reports is good. Parents get information about the assessments which are made soon after their children start school and this is followed by a full report on how their children have progressed towards the nationally recommended 'desirable learning outcomes' at the end of the reception year. Reports at the end of Key Stage 1 are of excellent quality and give parents very detailed and specific information about what their child knows, understands and can do, and the progress they have made. Reports at the end of Key Stage 2 are not as detailed and this may be related to the considerable workload of the head teacher who is also the class teacher.
- 39 Parents had some reservations about the amount of homework set by the school but the inspection team found the amount of homework to be appropriate.
- 40 The school has sustained the effective working partnership with parents which was seen at the time of the last inspection and has continued to involve parents in their children's education and the life of the school. There continues to be a very active Friends of Brown's School Association, co-ordinated by a small but dedicated group of parents who organise well supported fund raising and social events. The work of the

association both helps to cement the good relationships between home and school and also provides valuable additional money for the purchase of learning resources.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 41 Under the excellent leadership provided by the headteacher, all other members of staff make powerful contributions to the school's overall effectiveness. Governors are strong supporters of the school, putting a justifiably substantial degree of trust in the headteacher and the staff.
- 42 The school has a real sense of direction and purpose. This shows itself in a number of ways, including an unusual degree of consistency between its aims, policies and, in particular the relationships with pupils and the teaching methods used in each of the three classes. This consistency is achieved because all members of staff are committed to the school's underlying principles and they work hard to convert these into high quality practice. The school's aims are clearly set out and guide the work of the school; for example, they are regarded as the touchstone for planning future developments. The school development plan is a practical document that is used successfully to steer further improvements. Governors know the school well. Some spend a good deal of time in school, giving valued advice and practical help. Their knowledge helps the governing body to join with the headteacher in very effectively shaping the overall direction of the school. The governing body meets its major statutory duties, although it has not found a way a providing swimming lessons as set out in the programmes of study of the National Curriculum for physical education; the nearest pool is over ten miles away. There is little frequent, formal monitoring of teaching, as all teachers have full-time charge of a class and even the headteacher is in charge of a class for four-and-a-half days each week. However, there is a good deal of informal monitoring by staff of each other's work and local education authority staff are used effectively to monitor work in key areas.
- 43 There is no hard evidence that the headteacher's substantial teaching commitment in the class of the oldest pupils is having a damaging effect on the management of the school or on teaching (both of which are very good) but the workload is heavy and stressful. In addition, the youngest three age groups are in one class, which is the largest in the school, at around 30 children. The curriculum in this class is based, as is required, on different models for the four-year-olds and the other pupils. The combination of three age groups, relatively large numbers, only part-time additional adult support and two curriculum models make this a stressful role. However, the teaching of these pupils generally ranges from good to excellent. The arrangements for the induction of new teachers are very good. A recently appointed teacher is now virtually indistinguishable from the others in the overall high quality approach to pupils and to lessons.
- 44 Pupils' performance is well monitored. Clear targets are set for pupils' achievement; the participation of pupils in agreeing these leads to a determination to succeed that is shared by staff and pupils. Governors agree formal targets for achievement in English, mathematics and science; these are demanding but the school is on course to meet these in each of the next two years.
- 45 The budget is managed very well. This is not an easy task, as the amount of money available each year fluctuates because numbers on roll vary with each year's intake of pupils; for example, in the recent past, intakes have ranged from six to twelve. However, the school carries a sensible surplus in order to smooth out these differences and also receives valuable financial help from 'The Friends of Brown's

School'. The budget is spent in ways that clearly reflect the school's priorities. For example, the recognition of a need to improve the provision for the teaching of information technology resulted in the governing body supplementing external funding with additional money from the school's budget. The resulting suite for the teaching of information and communication technology is of good quality and is contributing much to raising standards in the subject. In all of its spending, the school takes steps to ensure that it gets good value for money.

- 46 In almost all aspects of its work, the school uses very well its generally good quality resources. This enables pupils' learning to progress at a good rate in most subjects and aspects. The accommodation is attractive and well kept. In most respects it is of good quality, but there is no large internal space for assemblies or physical education lessons. Satisfactory arrangements are made for assemblies but the lack of large equipment such as is usually found in a school hall or gymnasium limits the provision that is made for some elements of physical education. This has the result that pupils' attainment in the subject lags behind that in most other areas; it is, none-the-less, at a satisfactory level overall. The school grounds contain a very good and well-used environmental area; its carefully considered use enhances pupils' attainment in many subjects, including science, art and music. A large pond has been used very effectively in the past as a learning resource. Too little time has been found recently for its maintenance, so that it now makes a useful contribution rather than the powerful one that can be identified in pupils' work dating back a year or more. Learning resources, for example historical artefacts, are used very well in support of the school's practical and investigative approach.
- 47 In view of the good all-round achievements of pupils, the high quality of the curriculum and the teaching - and even bearing in mind the high unit costs at this small school - Brown's Primary School is deemed to give good value for money.
- 48 The very high quality of leadership seen at the time of the last inspection has been maintained, as have the strong vision and corporate involvement of staff in decision making. The governing body remains strongly supportive of the school, still putting considerable trust in the staff. Governors have improved the ways in which they monitor developments in the school and take a systematic approach to issues rather than meeting them as they arise.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 49 There are no Key Issues to bring to the attention of the governing body. The following relatively minor matters could be considered for inclusion in an action plan.
- Reduce further the heavy load placed on the headteacher and on the teacher of the youngest three age-groups.
(see paragraphs 38, 42, 43, 55 – 57)
 - Improve provision for swimming and gymnastics.
(see paragraphs 6, 24, 42, 46, 109)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	19
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
16	58	21	5			

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	67
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	13

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	2.8
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	58
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.6
Average class size	22.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	24

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999
	£
Total income	145813
Total expenditure	148452
Expenditure per pupil	2215
Balance brought forward from previous year	9030
Balance carried forward to next year	6391

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	67
Number of questionnaires returned	19

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	21	5	5	
My child is making good progress in school.	68	26			5
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	26	5		11
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	26	32	11	
The teaching is good.	74	21	5		
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	32		21	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	11	5	5	11
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	79	11	5		5
The school works closely with parents.	47	21	16	11	5
The school is well led and managed.	68	26	5		
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	26	5	5	
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	16	16	42	16	11

Other issues raised by parents

At a meeting with inspectors, parents were strongly supportive of the school, its leadership, teaching, pupils' standards, and behaviour. The lack of a hall and gymnasium was felt to be a hindrance to some aspects of the work of the school. Reservations were expressed by some parents regarding the number of out-of-school clubs provided and about the giving of homework.

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

- 50 Children are admitted to the reception class in the September of the academic year in which they have their fifth birthdays. A good induction process has been developed in order to make entry to school a smooth transition from either home or the children's pre-school experience. On entry to school, the attainment of children is broadly average. By the age of five, most children have attained the expected standards for their age in all the areas of learning except for personal and social education where most pupils exceed the national criteria. A small number of children exceed the expected standards in all areas of learning.
- 51 Pupils' personal and social development underpins all aspects of the school's approach and the high quality teaching of this age group. The development of children's personal and social skills is very well managed by both the class teacher and the support assistant; as a result, children learn at a good rate and by the age of five, children's attainment exceeds the national expectation. Behaviour is very good and children know and follow classroom rules very well. They are developing a good appreciation of right and wrong, and are caring and considerate to one another. This is largely as a result of high quality interventions in their learning by the teacher and the classroom support assistant. Pupils are able to make choices sensibly and to persist with activities they choose to engage in. They work well with and alongside other children and co-operate well in play activities. They relate well to adults and to other children and respond positively when spoken to.
- 52 By the age of five most children have developed their language and literacy skills satisfactorily. Good teaching ensures that children's vocabulary is widened and then carefully consolidated. Stress is placed on ensuring that language skills being taught are properly understood before moving on to more complex forms. Children's achievements are thus steadily and securely developed. When encouraged, most children speak clearly and confidently. This encouragement often takes the form of carefully phrased questions, about which children have to think carefully before they can answer – for example, "Tell me about your model?" Pupils making them explained well what they were doing: one child said she was making " ... a monster that eats children", and another child was making " a car with a ladder on." Children listen carefully and with understanding in whole-class or group activities with the teacher. They answer questions sensibly and follow instructions appropriately. They follow stories with enjoyment and with help can join in with a few recognised words; a good number recognise the refrain, " Can we come too?" Most children can match letters to sounds for a good number of letters of the alphabet. Many can write their name and a number of recognisable letters.
- 53 In mathematical development most children reach satisfactory standards by the age of five. Most children can count and recognise numbers up to ten, and a few numbers beyond ten. Children were able to complete a jigsaw, putting numbers one to twenty in sequence correctly even though they were not confident in recognising all the numbers in the teens. A number of children can use a mathematics game on the computer, subtracting numbers from ten, deleting the number of objects as the computer instructed. In a numeracy lesson, higher attaining children were able to judge correctly where to place numbers between one and ten on a counting stick when it was turned and the markings covered. They could also give simple explanations for how they arrived at the correct answer. Children's progress is enhanced by the frequent use by

adults of games, songs and rhymes that effectively consolidate number work. Overall, good teaching focuses on giving children a grasp of mathematics, with considerable emphasis placed on providing a secure base before moving on. Children respond well to this when under five; older pupils reap the advantage as they build on these secure foundations.

- 54 In knowledge and understanding of the world, children attain the expected level for their age. They can make simple observations of objects floating and sinking and recognise that the number and heaviness of toy animals in a boat has an effect on whether it floats or sinks. They are beginning to record their experiments through drawing. Children explore and select materials well to make an object of their own choice and use scissors and glue sensibly. They use their imaginations well in constructing a monster, a car or a truck. Most use the computer confidently and can use correctly a number of keys like the space bar, return and direction keys, as well as use the mouse to drag items across the screen. These learning activities are well planned and carefully taught, so that children's knowledge, understanding and skills develop steadily across a wide range of activities.
- 55 In physical development, children's overall attainment is in line with national expectations. The majority of children can competently handle tools such as pencils, crayons, paintbrushes and scissors. They are able to complete jigsaws and handle small toys with increasing control. In the outside play area, children enjoy using the wheeled equipment and most of them have good levels of co-ordination of hands and feet. They are developing an awareness of space and the where-abouts of others satisfactorily when using equipment such as bikes, trolleys and a play tunnel. Confidence in using large and small equipment and developing climbing and balancing skills is limited because of the lack of a school hall for physical education. Much of the work leading to children's physical development is under the direct supervision of the classroom support assistant. High quality relationships, very hard work by adults and good planning ensure that this works well.
- 56 In creative development, children's attainment is in line with national expectations. The majority of children can recognise and name primary colours and can understand how mixing one colour with another produces a third colour. They produce effective artwork in a range of media. They engage very well in imaginative play, creating their own contexts and acting out appropriate roles in co-operation with one another. In building a long wall with bricks, a group of children pretended to use trowels and mix cement, handling the task well. Children enjoy and take an active part in singing rhymes and simple songs; they are a regular and successful feature of work throughout each day. Overall, children's creative development progresses at a steady rate. The best achievements are associated with well-phrased adult explanations of tasks and subsequently the asking of questions which demand that children think carefully before they answer; during outside play, some opportunities to do this are not taken sufficiently often.
- 57 The class teacher is responsible for a mixed-age class of Reception Year, Year 1 and Year 2 children; she relies significantly on the support assistant to organise and teach the learning activities which she has planned and resourced. Most typically she will involve the four-year-olds in a whole class activity at a level which they can understand and participate in, and then hand them over to the classroom assistant while she continues with Years 1 and 2 at a more demanding level. Overall, teaching of under-five children is good. Teaching by the class teacher is good and on occasions very good. Teaching by the classroom assistant, with the class teacher's support, is generally good and is never less than satisfactory. The development of personal and

social skills is well taught and has a considerable impact on how effectively pupils learn to behave and engage in learning activities. Teaching in all other areas is good. Planning and co-operation between the class teacher and support assistant is very good, ensuring a consistency of experience for pupils. Learning activities are very well structured and focused, so that pupils know clearly what is expected of them. In a simple way they are involved in planning which activities they are going to be involved in; at the beginning of each day, pupils select pictures of the activities in which they are going to participate. Methods take good account of the children's stage of development and those with special educational needs are well supported; this results in most children, especially those who initially find it difficult to form positive relationships, developing positive attitudes to their work and to others. Good use is made of assessment and this has a positive effect on the success of day-to-day planning.

- 58 Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Provision has improved for the development of physical skills such as running, jumping, skipping, riding and propelling and steering wheeled toys. However, the lack of a school hall continues to limit opportunities for developing these skills. Standards in personal and social development have improved.

ENGLISH

- 59 Because of the small size of year groups, comparisons of the school's test results with national averages and trends over time cannot be entirely reliable statistically. However, results are clearly good. The performance of eleven-year-olds over the four years 1996 to 1999 has ranged from well above the national average to, in one year only, below average. The performance of seven-year-olds in both reading and writing has ranged from well above the national average to a little above. No significant differences between the performance of boys and girls have been observed though some under-performance of potentially higher attaining seven-year-old boys in writing has been identified by the school and addressed.
- 60 The inspection judgement is that the attainment of seven and eleven-year-olds is above national averages. High standards and good progress have been maintained since the last inspection. The school is on track to reach the demanding targets that it has set for pupils' attainment in English.
- 61 At the end of Key Stage 2, standards in speaking and listening are well above average. Pupils achieve so well because teaching is very good. For example, teachers use many opportunities, in all subjects, to develop pupils' thinking, speaking and listening skills through the use of carefully chosen questions. Pupils are encouraged to explain, describe and discuss, and they do so with skill and confidence. They are very ready to develop and expand on ideas, to reconsider, and to explain and justify their views and answers. They use the specialist language of subjects with understanding – because teachers insist upon it from the earliest age. They listen carefully in whole class and small groups, following well what is being said, and responding appropriately when required. Pupils are not afraid to voice their own opinions and engage in debate. Teachers' emphases on developing high level thinking and personal expression has clearly borne fruit in the quality of pupils' ideas and their skills in formulating and expressing them.
- 62 Eleven year-olds attain standards in reading which are above average, mainly because teachers use a wide range of methods to ensure that pupils read regularly and accurately. The majority of pupils are fluent, competent and independent readers.

They read aloud accurately and with expression. They understand well what they are reading, both fiction and non-fiction, and can sensibly explain the meaning of difficult words in the text. They talk about their preferences confidently and know a range of authors. They are able to use the contents and index pages of reference books very well to locate information. Pupils can read silently a challenging short passage of non-fiction and afterwards explain key aspects of the information. High attainers excellently identify the main idea in a non-fiction paragraph and how it is exemplified, and can explain difficult words like “aquatic” and “submerged”. Lower attainers have a good level of competence and read well for meaning even when fluency in reading aloud is hesitant. They use word-identification skills well for words unfamiliar to them; these skills are carefully taught throughout the school. Pupils have a good understanding of different literary forms and of various aspects of the sophisticated use of language. Good teaching ensures that the above average standards reached in Key Stage 1 are consolidated.

- 63 Eleven-year-old pupils' attainment in writing is above average. By the end of Year 6, pupils are writing independently with clarity and imagination, for a wide range of purposes that are carefully planned and well taught. Because teachers make many effective opportunities for purposeful writing in other subjects, pupils plan, re-draft and edit work effectively, improving content, vocabulary, sentence structure, spelling and punctuation. Skills in assessing and redrafting their own work are high because of the very good opportunities that are provided for the development of these skills. Pupils' presentation of work is also very good because of the high standards expected and a clear stress on both the development of ideas and information in writing and also on the presentation of this in a clear, interesting, comprehensible form for a reader. A few pupils have problems with spelling but most are sound or better spellers. Punctuation is generally good.
- 64 At the end of Key Stage 1, speaking and listening skills are very good. Pupils are confident in speaking and are very willing to express opinions and ideas of their own. They think carefully before they speak and are able to give considered answers to questions. This was particularly noticeable in a mathematics lesson, in which pupils explained a number of different ways in which they arrived at the answer to a difficult mental arithmetic question. This very effective use of a subject other than English to develop speaking and listening skills is typical of the effective approach of teachers to the subject. Thoughtful and articulate comments result when pupils are asked to explain and evaluate what they have learned.
- 65 Reading standards at the age of seven are good. Pupils much enjoy reading and a number express a preference for reading as against watching television. A high attaining pupil spoke sensibly about a number of authors she particularly enjoyed, including Jill Murphy, whose “Worst Witch “ books she loved. Because the basic skills associated with reading are very well and carefully taught, pupils confidently break words down into syllables and they blend letters in order to identify unfamiliar words. They can explain the difference between fiction and non-fiction, and know how to use the contents and index pages of information books. Pupils can read a challenging passage of non-fiction silently and gain some meaning from it; this results mainly from the many opportunities which teachers provide for the use of reference books in the study of many other subjects. High attainers can identify the main gist of a passage even when a number of difficult words are not known.
- 66 Writing standards at the age of seven are good. Pupils are able to compose simple accounts with satisfactory levels of spelling and punctuation. They can use effective descriptive words and phrases. In one lesson, pupils developed imaginative ideas and

lively language when creating an ending for the story that had just been read to them. Pupils are developing a good level of awareness of how they can improve through the excellent use of "learning diaries" where they discuss and evaluate their work with the teacher and determine targets for their own improvement.

- 67 The quality of teaching overall in English is very good, so that from the age of five to eleven, pupils make good overall progress. In Key Stage 1 there were examples of excellent teaching. Teachers have very high expectations of their pupils and provide challenging learning activities that stretch pupils' speaking and listening, reading and writing skills. Pupils respond well, often enthusiastically, to these and so achieve well. Pupils' own ideas are valued and encouraged and this develops confidence and the ability to articulate ideas well. The management of pupils' learning and behaviour in lessons is excellent and founded on excellent relationships within the classroom. Discipline is firm without being harsh and pupils are expected to work hard and to try. This leads to productive lessons where progress is good and often very good because of the high levels of concentration and involvement. Teaching methods are well chosen to interest and involve children and used very effectively to forward children's learning. English work is very well planned to develop understanding and skills both in separate English lessons as well as in other subjects. A variety of procedures is used to assess pupils understanding and development of skills and these are operated to very good effect. The teachers know their pupils very well and are skilful in directing teaching and learning activities to meet pupil's needs. Pupils with special needs are very well supported in the classroom, both socially and in relation to their learning. Thus they make good progress. Support assistants are well deployed to provide additional help and do this very effectively.
- 68 The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The curriculum manager has a clear understanding of language development and of the subject requirements, and provides an excellent lead in creating an imaginative and stimulating curriculum for English. The National Literacy Strategy has been carefully studied, modified to suit the school's mixed age group classes and overall approach to teaching and learning. It is thus making a good contribution to pupils' achievements. High standards have been maintained since the last inspection and the school is well placed to maintain the high quality of its provision.

MATHEMATICS

- 69 The number of pupils in each year group is usually too small to allow a reliable analysis of the school's results in national tests for any one year. However, an analysis of results over the past four years shows that at the age of eleven, pupils reach better than average standards in mathematics and that there is an upward trend in scores that matches the national trend of improvement. A similar analysis of their scores in national tests, indicate that seven-year-olds also reach above average levels. Both boys and girls reach better than average standards. These results support the inspection judgement that pupils attain higher than average standards at the end of both key stages.
- 70 Targets are set for the achievement both of individuals and of year groups. These are demanding, in the sense that they require a high level of commitment from teachers and pupils if they are to be met, and realistic, in the sense that they take into account the earlier attainment of pupils. The school is on track to meet these targets.
- 71 By the age of eleven, most pupils handle number work well, mainly because it is thoroughly and interestingly taught; its systematic use in other subjects helps to ensure

pupils' interest and has a positive impact on standards. For example, in a geography lesson, pupils had to compare tonnages of imports and exports of various materials through a local inland port, with good achievement and consolidation of mental arithmetic up to several hundred. Most pupils can collect simple data, choose the type of graph or chart that would best represent the information and then analyse the resultant graph. Pupils of average attainment and above work confidently with decimals and fractions, readily converting one to the other. Pupils' good understanding of the early stages of understanding and manipulating negative numbers is evident in high quality work on temperatures both above and below freezing point on the Celsius scale. Their understanding of the properties of two- and three- dimensional shapes is at an above average level; higher attaining pupils confidently use the appropriate formulae to work out the area of irregular, but right-angled, shapes, and circles. Lower attaining pupils reach relatively good standards in some aspects of their work but there are gaps in their knowledge. For example, some pupils who could multiply mentally using the four and five times table struggled to multiply by ten. However, this feature of their learning has been identified and work is taking place to fill the gaps. This is already working effectively, largely because teachers have a detailed knowledge of each pupil, which allows work to be matched well to their needs; this is a major factor in the good rate of learning and the high standards achieved. Almost all pupils use calculators well – and they know when they do not need to use them.

- 72 At the age of seven, pupils reach above average standards in all aspects of mathematics. Almost all pupils handle number quickly and accurately, at an advanced level for their age. They know the names and characteristics of a good number of shapes; their high attainment owes much to the interesting and enjoyable way in which the subject is taught. For example, pupils consolidated and developed their knowledge of three-dimensional shapes by playing a quick game in which carefully chosen shapes were hidden in a bag; one pupil put a hand in the bag, felt a shape and answered questions from pupils which allowed them to quickly identify the shape; the shapes included a sphere, a cylinder and a square pyramid. Pupils' understanding of weights and measures is at an above average level.
- 73 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school. Their work is carefully monitored and new work is planned which builds on successes and returns to weaknesses in order to remedy them; the support given to them in lessons is unobtrusive and effective.
- 74 Pupils enjoy mathematics, largely because learning is made interesting. They co-operate well with adults and each other and are especially good at sharing equipment and ideas in practical work. Social skills develop very well in these sessions.
- 75 The teaching of mathematics is excellent in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2; as a result, pupils learn at a good rate between the ages of five and eleven, consolidating learning well before moving on. The best teaching went at a brisk pace and was often lightened by touches of humour from both teachers and pupils; for example, when one child described an especially difficult piece of mathematical reasoning, another responded, "Ooh! you do make life difficult, don't you, E..." – and all enjoyed the moment. All of the teaching is characterised by careful planning, the very effective use of learning resources and practical work, a detailed knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of each pupil and a determination that pupils will do their best. An outstandingly effective feature of teaching in all classes is the consistent way in which teachers ask questions which make pupils think hard and carefully. For example, during a practical lesson about money, "If you're making a sum of money

with an odd number of pennies, what can you tell me about the coins you'll need?" – to which a pupil replied, "If you want to make any amount of money that's odd, you'll have to use a 1p or a 5p 'cos they're the only odd ones". A frequently used question is "Why do you say that?" – with the result that the great majority of pupils are able to explain their thinking at a high level of sophistication. Investigative work is very well planned and benefits from the teachers' highly developed questioning techniques; in these sessions, pupils make very good progress. Teachers encourage pupils to share in the identification of their own strengths and weaknesses and then set targets for improvement; this has a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes and their rates of learning.

- 76 Work in the subject is well managed, led by the co-ordinator but with all staff contributing substantially to discussion and decision making. This has the result of an unusually effective and consistent approach to teaching and learning. The National Numeracy Strategy has been thoroughly and professionally examined, modified sensibly to suit the school and its mixed age group classes and adopted. Pupils' attainment is monitored well and areas for further improvement are identified not only for individual pupils but also in order to increase the class or school emphasis on areas that need it.
- 77 Since the last inspection, attainment has improved to be above average at the end of Key Stage 2 and remains good at the end of Key Stage 1. Teaching has improved further from an already good base; in particular, a good range of investigative work now takes place to the extent that it has become a major factor in pupils' high achievement.

SCIENCE

- 78 The number of pupils in each year group is too small to allow a reliable analysis of the school's results in national tests for any one year. Even the more reliable analysis which can be made of results over a longer period needs to recognise the substantial impact on the average score of the three eleven-year-old pupils out of nine who were absent from the 1998 tests. When these factors are borne in mind, an analysis of results over the past four years shows that the attainment of eleven years in national tests is above the national average, with boys and girls reaching similar standards. The assessments made by teachers of the attainment of seven-year-olds show that they also reach above average standards. These results support the inspection judgement that pupils attain higher than average standards at the age of both seven and eleven.
- 79 The school sets demanding targets for improving pupils' achievements and is on track to meet these targets.
- 80 Pupils reach above average standards across a broad range of science. Attainment is good largely because a carefully structured whole-school scheme of work leads to thorough lesson planning by teachers, so that the work that pupils do demands that they work hard and think carefully.
- 81 Eleven-year-old pupils have good understandings of the natural world, so that, for example, they can classify objects into 'living', 'dead' and 'never lived' with a considerable degree of sophistication – coal being recognised as being formed from plants and oil from sea creatures. They know much of the structure of the human body, including the purposes of the skeleton, muscles and the circulation of blood. They talk sensibly about the effects of tobacco, alcohol and drugs. Almost all pupils understand that materials have different properties, and that allows us to use them for

different purposes – such as conducting electricity or keeping us warm. They can construct a pin-hole camera and higher attaining pupils can explain clearly how one works. In all aspects of science, pupils understand the purpose of experimentation and how a fair test works. Most pupils can design such a test, choose appropriate equipment for measuring and make intelligent predictions as to the outcomes. Higher attaining pupils understand the need to keep some factors constant when conducting an experiment. For example, when describing a possible experiment to identify the factors that make water cool down at different rates, they quickly planned an experiment using the same amount of hot water, at the same temperature and in identical containers, before they identified the variables that they wanted to examine.

- 82 At the age of seven, pupils understand how a simple fair test works. They have good powers of observation largely because of the careful attention given to this aspect of science by teachers. (“How do we look?” - “With very, very sharp eyes!”). This ensures that when, for example, they are drawing and classifying plants, pupils use magnifying glasses and microscopes very purposefully; they observe and record detail very accurately. Pupils’ sophisticated understanding of life processes and living things owes a good deal to the well thought out use made of an environmental area in the school grounds. Their understanding of physical processes such as light and electricity, are at an above average standard.
- 83 Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress because their needs and levels of understanding are known to staff in considerable detail. This ensures that the work they are given is at the right level; together with sensitive and effective support in lessons it ensures that they enjoy science as well as making good progress towards their individual learning targets.
- 84 It was only possible to observe the teaching of the six and seven-year-olds. All features of teaching are strong, so that pupils almost always learn at a good rate. Teachers know the subject in depth and plan lessons that challenge and often inspire pupils to do well. Pupils particularly enjoy and benefit from the demanding work they do in practical and investigative science. Pupils behave very well and co-operate with others, because they are absorbed in their work. In particular, teachers’ questioning techniques ensure that pupils think carefully and often deeply before they respond. Apparently simple questions such as “Can you tell me about these marks here?” result in pupils not only describing them in well-chosen language, and subsequently improving their observational powers and sketches; they also cause pupils to hypothesise intelligently about their purposes. Pupils aged from four to seven years share a class and the teacher has to work very hard to keep all pupils involved and making good progress; this is almost always done very successfully.
- 85 Since the last inspection, the attainment of eleven-year-olds has improved from a little above average to clearly above average. Pupils remain well-motivated and hard working. Teaching has improved from good to very good. In 1997, it was judged that there were too few opportunities made for investigative work; this is no longer the case, as it now is well organised, an important and integral way of approaching the subject and plays a major part in the high standards being reached. The school is well placed to maintain its high standards.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- 86 Standards of attainment are above national expectations at the end of both key stages. This is largely because a new computer suite is being used productively by teachers whose skills in the subject have been considerably enhanced by an effective training programme.
- 87 By the age of eleven, pupils can word-process in relatively sophisticated ways, using different fonts and layouts, spell-checker and cut and paste facilities. They can generate and import graphics, including digitised and scanned pictures. Extensive use is made of word-processing in all subjects, so that pupils become very familiar with presenting information in a variety of ways to communicate more effectively with the reader. Pupils' understandings of, and skill in, data-handling are also well developed. For example, in a history project, pupils have developed 1666 databases on the number of hearths in the village and on the numbers of children baptised and buried in Horbling between 1662 and 1670. They have generated a range of mathematical charts to represent this and used them to explore the information further. Pupils develop their understanding and skill in creating, testing, modifying and storing sequences of instructions to control an event. Recently Year 6 pupils have created a "touch explorer" panel as a tourist guide to landmarks in Boston that involves controlling the screen by touch. They have created and edited the text, which appears on the computer screen when you press the appropriate landmark picture on the panel. At least one pupil has been known to send his homework to school by e-mail!
- 88 By the age of seven, pupils are confident in using the computer. They use the keyboard and mouse with understanding and control, and can operate programmes effectively in order to carry out simple word-processing, graphic, and data-handling procedures. They use their computer and programming skills purposefully in relation to project themes they study. For instance, programming the floor robot to go in specific directions in a project on "Journeys" and using a modelling programme to make weather maps in a project on "The Earth". Pupils begin to learn the value of communicating information in word-processed form.
- 89 It was only possible to see one lesson being taught which was in Year 3 and 4; the lesson was well planned and managed. It involved introducing children to the skill of using a scanner to enter a photograph into the computer, and print it. Children were successfully taught how to do this by a mixture of using instructional cards prepared by the teacher and direct support and help. In order to maximise the development of computer skills, the teacher had also planned a complementary task of searching on the Internet while the pupils waited to use the scanner. The whole activity was placed in a meaningful context, which involved communicating information through text and photographs. Discussions with Year 6 pupils and scrutiny of planning documents and samples of pupils' work confirm that many aspects of teaching at Key Stage 2 are good. It is evident that planning is thorough and well focused. All aspects of the Information and communication technology (ICT) programme are addressed
- 90 There is very good application of computer skills to all subjects and this contributes substantially to the quality of learning generally. The advantages of composing accounts directly onto the computer and using the computer's drafting and editing facilities are not taken up as frequently as they might. Pupils overall make good progress in both key stages. Pupils with special needs make good progress too, with information technology supporting their needs very well.

91 The subject is well led and managed and there is a consistent approach to the teaching of the subject throughout the school. High standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Very good provision is made to develop and extend staff knowledge and expertise. In all, the school is well placed to maintain and improve provision and standards in the subject.

ART, DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY AND MUSIC

92 Judgements for these subjects draw strongly on documentary evidence and discussions with pupils and teachers, as very few lessons could be seen.

93 The attainment of seven and eleven-year-olds is above that typical for their age in art and design technology; many aspects of design and technology at the age of eleven are well above. Eleven-year-olds reach typical levels in music. Too little evidence was available to make a judgement on music for the seven year-olds, though pupils sing in tune and with enjoyment in assemblies and when singing rhymes in the classroom.

94 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils produce detailed designs that show their ideas very clearly. They have a good understanding of simple mechanisms like levers, cogs, gears, and cams. They measure carefully and use tools like saws, files, pliers, screwdrivers, and glue-guns safely and efficiently. Evaluative comment is thoughtful and perceptive: for example, "We had to make changes like covering the scratchy bits with binding tape, if we didn't the body wouldn't go." In a Year 6 lesson, the pupils worked hard discussing and modifying how to plan their work and the resources they would need. They responded enthusiastically and effectively to the challenge to use hydraulics or pneumatics to make a magic carpet rise. Year 6 pupils have a good appreciation of colour, form, line and tone in their paintings and drawings. They have very good control of pencil, pen and brush when creating self-portraits because they are carefully taught how to observe closely, and how to produce shading and texture. Preliminary sketches of key facial features were of good quality and this practice had made a good contribution to the finished work. Pupils regularly discuss the work of artists and make imaginative use of ideas from, for instance, Lowry, Klimt and Van Dyke in their own work. Pupils sing tunefully and play instruments with enjoyment. They have created simple compositions exploring in sound, for instance, the sadness, anger and pain of war in relation to World War II. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 develop simple graphic musical scores satisfactorily to represent the recorded sounds heard on a short walk in the school grounds. They listen carefully and can identify a range of different sounds. They choose instruments sensibly to represent these sounds for a performance of their composition.

95 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have developed a good understanding of the relationship between designing and making. In creating a four-wheeled vehicle, they had explored axles and wheels and in their designs, and had considered three different ways of joining the wheels to the body so that the vehicle would move. They had also modelled some "Scary Pitta sandwiches" which they found were "... brilliant--mind *they* don't eat *you*". Pupils express their ideas and responses imaginatively in art using a variety of media and tools. Pupils know how to work effectively using clay, as when they make effective clay pots and crosses in their work on the Vikings. They successfully draw, paint and create dyed and embroidered fabric. They examine and discuss with understanding, a range of works by well-known artists.

96 In Key Stage 1, no teaching was observed in design and technology, art or music. In Key Stage 2, one design and technology lesson with Year 6 was seen and one lesson in music with Years 3 and 4. The teaching observed was of a high standard. The

music lesson was very well planned and challenged pupils well; pupils responded enthusiastically and their learning progressed at a good rate. The teachers' explanations and questions were clear and purposeful. A good variety of resources were available and used well. Pupils had good opportunities to make choices of their own. The teaching of design and technology was very good. Class management skills were excellent and very high standards of behaviour and effort were expected of the children. Pupils were very clear about the learning activity and what they had to do. They worked hard and enthusiastically. Teachers very effectively link the teaching of these subjects in well thought out topic plans. This integrated approach allows children to investigate and develop their own ideas as well as having a purposeful and meaningful context within which to develop understanding and skill. Teachers were well informed, enthusiastic and had very high expectations for the quality of work pupil's produced. Pupils responded very well to these challenges and the quality of finished pieces of work was high.

- 97 All three subjects benefit from the joint thinking and planning of all members of staff. Generally high standards and good progress have been maintained since the last inspection and the school is well placed to continue these improvements.

GEOGRAPHY

- 98 At the end of Key Stage 1, standards of achievement are around that which is typical for their age and at the end of Key Stage 2 they are above this.
- 99 At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils understand a good range of terms that allow them to explore geographical ideas and knowledge as well as demonstrating a good depth of study. For example, from their study of rivers, they understand the general meaning of terms such as source, tributary, confluence and meander. They are then able to use these with a good degree of skill when studying local rivers. Their understanding is comprehensive, largely because of the practical and stimulating way in which they are taught. For example, during an educational visit to an environmental centre several miles from the school, they were able to see a wave machine working on a sand model of a river estuary and follow the formation of the course of a river and its estuary. Pupils speak with considerable enthusiasm about these aspects of geography. Their attainment across a broad range of geographical topics is equally high, again, due to the well planned and stimulating work which pupils see as being relevant to their lives and interests. Pupils use, at a good level of understanding, globes, atlases and maps and can locate on them a good range of countries, cities and local towns. They have a keen and informed interest in the environment, both local and global.
- 100 Major factors in pupils' high attainment include very well planned work, which makes very illuminating links with other subjects such as history, very good explanations by teachers of new work and the outstandingly demanding way in which teachers put questions to pupils. For example, in a lesson involving Year 5 and 6 pupils, the teacher used a copy of ships' records of cargoes imported to and exported from a local inland port. Questions were used such as "Why do you think this boat left Boston empty and went Hull next?"..... "Might there be any other reason?" "Why do you say that?"... Pupils were eager to answer, did so thoughtfully and their learning progressed at a good rate. The pupils also knew that Boston had been a sea-port in the past and why it was so no longer.
- 101 It was not possible to see any geography lessons in Key Stage 1 during the inspection. However, an examination of teachers' planning, pupils' work and discussions with them indicate that pupils achieve standards which are in line with the national

expectation in a rich and interestingly presented curriculum. For example, pupils understand and can use the four points of the compass and can draw simple maps that trace the route from school to the local church. In this work, the higher attaining pupils are beginning to recognise the need for, and use, simple keys. Pupils are interested in their work in geography and speak about it with much enthusiasm.

102 The whole school planning of the subject is both thorough and imaginative. All teachers share in the planning process; they ensure that the requirements of the National Curriculum are fully met, that each year's work builds effectively on what went before, and that many opportunities are taken to make learning interesting and relevant to the pupils.

103 Since the last inspection, pupils' attainment by the age of eleven has improved. Teaching remains good; better use is made of information technology; the curriculum remains well and interestingly planned. The school is well placed to maintain this good quality provision.

HISTORY

104 Pupils achieve standards at the end of both key stages that are above the national expectation. These high standards owe much to the practical and first hand approach to the teaching of the subject.

105 At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils of all levels of attainment have good levels of knowledge and understanding of a wide range of historical topics. They understand much of the outline history of the British Isles and, for example, can discuss the relative contributions made by Romans, Vikings, Tudors, Stuarts and the Victorians. Most pupils can put these in their correct historical sequence and explain why and how they do so. A good illustration of the effectiveness of the school's first hand approach lies in work done on World War 2. Pupils were introduced to an excellent range of artefacts dating from around the 1940s; they talked to adults who had lived through the war and then re-enacted every-day events of the time. Glen Miller music was appreciated; pupils presented an edition of Tommy Handley and ITMA; war songs were learned and sung. Pupils' appearance on regional television was a memorable highlight. Pupils were fully aware of the devastation caused in both Britain and in mainland Europe. In an earlier presentation of this topic, the school invited ex-evacuees to Horbling from Hull to share their memories with pupils. Pupils' presentation of their work is excellent. Illustrations are detailed and accurate. Much of the writing is word-processed, using computers, and high quality book-binding produces books of library quality. The use of drama, information technology and design and technology skills to enhance learning has had two major positive impacts. Firstly, it has made the history memorable and played a large part in raising standards in the subject; secondly, it has improved the rate of acquisition of skills in the other subjects because the learning is seen by pupils as having a purpose.

106 At the end of Key Stage 1, good standards are reached largely because the teacher's approach to the subject matches that in Key Stage 2; learning is supported very well by very good planning and the use of well-chosen artefacts. This results in history 'coming to life' for pupils, to the extent that many of them choose to work on the subject before lessons are due to start – for example, during play-times. Pupils have a good understanding about the way of life of the Vikings. The detail on Viking weapons made by pupils was careful and accurate, indicating a good level of knowledge of that aspect of the lives of Vikings. Pupils speak with enthusiasm and good levels of

understanding about the 'archaeological excavation' set up in the Key Stage 1 classroom.

- 107 Pupils of all ages work hard in the subject and their learning progresses well. This is even true when pupils are relatively unsupervised. They handle resources with care and they co-operate well with each other on shared tasks.
- 108 The school has maintained the high standards that were seen at the time of the last inspection. Pupils' responses to the subject remain good and teachers plan work that is as demanding and interesting as it was in 1997. The school is well placed to maintain the quality of its provision.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 109 At the age of eleven, pupils reach standards which, overall, are in line with the national expectation. However, attainment varies between different aspects of the subject because of the differing provision that is made. Most pupils have good ball skills. They throw straight, strike cleanly with a bat or a racquet, and stop and catch balls well. When playing games such as tennis and football many have a good positional sense. Attainment in gymnastics is in line with the national expectation, even though opportunities for teaching and practice are limited by the lack of an internal space that can be used as a gymnasium and the appropriate large equipment such as ropes, wall-bars and boxes. Teachers and pupils compensate to a large extent for these gaps by the use of the school grounds when the weather allows it and by the provision of a good range of play and games equipment at break-times. Attainment in dance and drama is good. Pupils create drama and dance sequences of high quality. For example, in one lesson they interpreted the stages of a river from source to mouth using a good range of movement and gesture; they interpreted the music that was provided with sensitivity and the higher attaining pupils produced eloquent and well-structured pieces of dance. This high standard of work is made possible by the very effective work of a member of staff with specialist skills in dance and drama. Planning is excellent in the way in which it sets out the high level of demands that are to be made on pupils. Lessons are very well organised and resources are chosen and used very well in order to get the best from pupils. Standards in swimming are below the nationally expected level. The school is more than ten miles from the nearest available pool and no way has been found to teach swimming that does not have a damaging effect on the rest of the curriculum due to the large amount of time that would be lost. In view of the school's location, with substantial stretches of water in the area, more imaginative solutions need to be considered in order to provide swimming lessons.
- 110 It was not possible to see any teaching of physical education to pupils in Key Stage 1. However, it is clear from teachers' planning and from conversations with pupils that a sound curriculum is provided. It covers the requirements of the National Curriculum and is well planned so that pupils' skills are systematically built on. Pupils say that they enjoy their lessons, especially those that include games and small competitions.
- 111 Throughout the school, pupils are aware of health factors, including the need to warm up muscles and cool down when taking strenuous exercise. They are able to link this very sensibly with their learning in science on the human body.
- 112 The sound standards of achievement seen at the time of the last inspection have been maintained but opportunities have not yet been found to broaden the range of provision for the subject.