

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH SCHOOL

Orton Goldhay

LEA area: Peterborough

Unique reference number:110856

Acting Headteacher: Mrs. L. Harris

Reporting inspector: Mrs. L. Read
21199

Dates of inspection: 30th April to 3rd May 2001

Inspection number: 191947

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Riseholme
Orton Goldhay
Peterborough

Postcode: PE2 5SP

Telephone number: 01733 237543

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs. V. Octon

Date of previous inspection: 24th February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21199	Ms L Read	Registered inspector	Music Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage	What sort of school is it? School's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9146	Mr M Brennan	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
28320	Mr R Willey	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Physical education Special educational needs	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
21245	Mr W A Lowe	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

1157	Mr N Tonge	Team inspector	English Geography History English as an additional language	
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London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St John's Church School is situated in Orton Goldhay, one of the township developments of Peterborough. Originally built in the 1980's to an open-plan design, the building has been modified to provide nine enclosed classrooms, an early years unit, a hall and resource areas. Outside grounds are extensive and provide good facilities for physical education and play. A nursery unit is attached to the school but a pre-school playgroup currently rents the premises. Some of the 268 pupils are taught in mixed age classes with a system of setting in English and mathematics for those in Years 3 to 6. The school has been led and managed by an acting headteacher for the whole of this academic year. St John's serves an area of high social need, where the vast majority of housing is council owned. There is a large number of single parent households with very little extended family support. Over 50 per cent of pupils claim free school meals. The proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is well above average at 34 per cent and, of these, 11 pupils have a formal statement. The majority of pupils are of white ethnic origin. Two pupils are learning English as a second language. There is a significant level of pupil mobility, with almost 20 per cent entering or leaving the school over the last year. Attainment on entry to the school varies from child to child but is well below average overall.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St John's is a good school and has made very good improvements since the last report. Pupils enjoy their work and make good progress. This can be directly attributed to the high quality of teaching, good leadership and strong teamwork. The many strengths far outweigh the areas identified for improvement, and the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Throughout the school, pupils make good gains in their learning especially in English and science. In comparison to similar schools, achievement at age eleven in English is well above average, in science it is above average and in mathematics it is in line with the average.
- Teaching is never less than satisfactory, the majority being of a high standard. The good quality of teaching leads to consistently good levels of progress.
- Pupils have very good standards of behaviour, very positive attitudes to their work and there are excellent relationships throughout school.
- Very good strategic leadership is provided by the acting headteacher who is well supported by the senior management team. Very good team work amongst the staff ensures a consistent approach to teaching and learning and provides a secure environment for the pupils.
- The rich curriculum provides a good range of learning opportunities for the entire age range. Targeted provision within the classroom for pupils who have special educational needs is very good and leads to good progress.
- Provision for pupils' social and moral development is very good and ensures a calm, orderly atmosphere within school. Work and activities planned to promote pupils' spiritual and cultural development are good, resulting in a harmonious school community.
- Adults in school know the pupils very well and maintain a high standard of care at all times. There is a positive, pro-active approach to behaviour management that is very successful. The nurture group provides some effective, specialist support for pupils who are experiencing difficulties.
- Parents support the school well and are very satisfied with the standard of education it provides. There are established and effective links between home and school.

What could be improved

- The standards of attainment in English and mathematics throughout the school and in science for seven year olds to meet national averages. The attainment in information and communication technology for pupils aged eleven.
- Access to the full curriculum at all times for all pupils, especially those who have special educational needs. The current practice of withdrawing small groups for literacy work means that some pupils miss parts of other lessons.
- Accommodation in two classrooms where a dividing wall makes whole class teaching very difficult, especially in literacy and numeracy lessons.
- The governors' annual report to parents, that, at present, has many sections missing.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good improvements in tackling the issues from the last report in February, 1997. The quality of teaching is now good, with a substantial proportion of very good and excellent practice seen. All lessons have clear learning targets and teachers are secure in their subject knowledge. As a result of these factors, pupils' attainment has improved. Systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are adequate and there are plans to extend procedures further. The standard of behaviour is now very good and pupils are expected to work hard on the demanding tasks that are set for them. There are detailed schemes of work in place that cover all programmes of study in the National Curriculum and act as useful working documents to guide teachers' planning. The curriculum co-ordinators have a sound overview of provision in their subjects. After the last inspection, considerable measures were taken to improve the teaching areas and this has been very effective in providing a quiet, well-organised atmosphere for working.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	E	E	D	A
Mathematics	E	D	E	C
Science	E	D	D	B

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Results for eleven year olds show the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level 4 in English and science is below the national average and in mathematics, it is well below. However, when the results are compared with those of schools in similar settings, attainment in English is well above average, in science it is above average and in mathematics it is in line with the average. Trends over time show attainment at the school in English, mathematics and science is rising faster than the national trend. The school has far exceeded the set targets in English and met those for mathematics. Pupils enter school with skills and knowledge that are well below average. They make good progress throughout their year in reception class and in Years 1 and 2. However, the low starting point is reflected in results for seven year olds. The percentage of pupils in this age group attaining the expected Level 2 in reading, writing and mathematics is well below national averages. Again, however, when compared to schools in similar settings, the picture is better. Attainment in reading is in line with the average and in writing and

mathematics it is just below average. Inspection findings conclude that similar levels of attainment for eleven year olds will be achieved this year but there are some promising trends for future years. For pupils aged seven, similar results are expected and are unlikely to improve unless the school can make some intervention in children's learning before the age of four. Attainment in information and communication technology for pupils aged eleven is below expectations, largely because they do not have sufficient time on the computers to consolidate and practise what they are learning.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy coming to school and have very good attitudes to learning. They are well motivated and work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in school is very good. Pupils understand and follow the established routines and meet the high expectations set for them.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are excellent and enable the school to function as a well-ordered community. Personal development is very good. Pupils soon develop independent skills of working and learn to collaborate well with their friends.
Attendance	Attendance rates are below average, despite the school's active procedures to improve them.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	A half of teaching is very good or excellent, with the remaining half being good.	Mainly good, with an equal proportion of very good and satisfactory teaching.	A half of teaching is good. Just over one quarter is very good or excellent with the remaining quarter being satisfactory.

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

Teaching is never less than satisfactory and is now a major strength of the school. In 7 per cent of lessons seen teaching is excellent, in 21 per cent it is very good, in 51 per cent it is good and in the remaining 21 per cent it is satisfactory. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection. All staff are skilled in teaching literacy and numeracy and the successful implementation of the new, nationally recommended frameworks has led to some good improvements in attainment.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad range of interesting learning opportunities with a suitable emphasis on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is very good provision for pupils on the school's register of special educational needs. Early identification of difficulties and targeted teaching ensure that pupils make good progress. In some cases, where pupils are withdrawn from class for short periods of time, they lose the thread of the lesson and therefore do

	not have full access to the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school makes satisfactory provision and pupils make good progress. All ethnic groups have full access to the curriculum and enjoy all aspects of school life.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for social and moral development is very good. An established code very successfully promotes respect and consideration amongst the pupils. They have a clear sense of right and wrong. Cultural education is good and pupils have opportunities to learn about different lifestyles and beliefs from around the world. Spiritual development is well promoted through assemblies and personal, health and social lessons where there is time for reflection. Pupils develop an awareness of the less tangible gifts in life by talking about families and friends, and through opportunities to discover the natural world.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Day-to-day routines are well established to provide a very good standard of care for pupils and ensure their well being. Staff know all their pupils very well and the monitoring of personal and social development is especially good.

The school has good relationships with parents and is held in high regard. The response to the parents' questionnaire and comments made at the meeting were overwhelmingly positive. The school's 'open door' policy is successful in ensuring that good communications and trust between home and school are maintained.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The acting headteacher provides strong, active leadership and is instrumental in maintaining a clear direction for the school that is firmly focused on the improvement of provision and achievement. She is very well supported by the acting deputy headteacher and the senior management team who help to ensure that agreed school policies and procedures are carried out on a day-to-day basis. Her corporate approach to management promotes good teamwork amongst staff. Curriculum co-ordinators manage their subjects effectively and have begun to monitor teaching and learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors discharge their responsibilities conscientiously and are supportive of the school. They have a sound overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors are playing an increasingly active role in school development planning and the evaluation of the school's performance.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in English is very good throughout the school. Similar procedures are currently being developed for other subjects. Teachers and subject co-ordinators analyse test data to check on progress made and to set future targets.
The strategic use of resources	The school's finances are managed effectively and resources are generally well targeted to support the school's priorities for improvement. However, governors remain indecisive about the allocation of funds from the growing reserve held for capital projects. The principles of best value are applied when ordering and governors now consult with staff on budget decisions.

There is a good number of learning assistants, who are well trained and knowledgeable. They make a significant contribution to learning in the classroom, especially for those pupils who have special educational needs. The previously open-plan accommodation has been usefully partitioned to provide

enclosed classroom space and several resource areas. However, two classrooms have a dividing wall in the middle that restricts opportunities for whole class work. Access to areas is often through classrooms and this causes some disturbance to lessons. Resources are good for English, science and music.

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 like coming to school. • Children make good progress. • Children get the right amount of work to do. • The teaching is good. • Parents are well informed about how their children are getting on. • They feel comfortable about approaching school. • The school expects children to work hard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some inappropriate behaviour still remaining. • The frequency of changes in staffing, especially management.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Results of the National Curriculum tests for eleven year olds in 2000 show the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 4, or above, in English and science to be below the national average. In mathematics it is well below. However, when compared with schools in similar settings, attainment in English is well above average, for science it is above average and for mathematics it is in line with the average. Trends over time show attainment at the school in English, mathematics and science to be rising faster than the national pattern. These results represent good improvements in standards since the last inspection.
2. The results of National Curriculum tests for seven year olds show the percentage of pupils gaining the expected Level 2, or above, in reading, writing and mathematics to be well below the national average. When compared to schools in similar settings, attainment in reading is average and for writing and mathematics it is below average. Since the last inspection, the percentage of pupils attaining the expected Level 2 has increased by 20 per cent in reading, 11 per cent in writing and 30 per cent in mathematics, representing good progress overall. Inspection findings confirm that for this year, attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 will remain below national averages. However, good levels of achievement are evident in the other junior classes and this indicates that attainment levels are set to rise. In science lessons and from scrutiny of work, it is evident that pupils in Year 6 are currently achieving the expected national standard. In Year 2, achievements in reading, writing, mathematics and science are set to improve, with more pupils on track to attain the higher level 3 but, overall, attainment will remain below the national average. Good progress is made throughout Years 1 and 2 but pupils and teachers are faced with an extremely difficult task in reaching national standards when the level of prior learning is so low at the outset. The high percentage of pupils with special educational needs attain good standards in relation to their prior learning across all subjects. However, their overall attainment is below average and this is reflected in the school's results. High pupil mobility, currently running at just under 20 per cent presents significant difficulties. Many pupils who enter the school part way through their education have not had the benefit of a sound start to learning and require additional help in the classroom. There is no consistent difference in the attainment of boys and girls. The school far exceeded the statutory targets set for attainment in English and met those set for mathematics over the last academic year.
3. Children enter the reception class with varying levels of prior experience and learning. A high number of them have difficulty in discriminating, segmenting and blending letter sounds within words and have a very limited vocabulary. In mathematical understanding, few can count or recognise numbers and there is a poor understanding of mathematical concepts. Children enter school with very limited skills in physical, personal and creative development and have a restricted knowledge of the world. Taking into account the poor level of skills and knowledge evident, attainment on entry to school is well below average. There is no nursery and children are introduced gradually into the reception class on a part time basis until they are settled and ready for full time education. This is a sensible strategy that provides a good level of support for the children as they learn how to follow school routines and develop their social skills. It does, however, leave only two and a half terms of full time learning in the Foundation Stage of education before moving into the National

Curriculum programmes of study. By the time children reach Year 1 they have made good progress but attainment remains well below average, except in personal and social education, where they make very good progress and reach the national standards set for them. This provides a secure foundation for later learning and contributes to the positive, enthusiastic response to teaching in future years.

4. Overall, pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in reading and writing, mathematics and science. By the end of Year 2 pupils have a range of strategies that they use effectively to help them tackle unfamiliar words. Comprehension is developing well and some pupils are beginning to predict what might happen next in the story. They spell simple words by splitting them into sounds and know some irregularly spelt words from memory. Writing is generally sequenced, with capital letters and full stops used appropriately. In mathematics, pupils become confident in applying the rules of addition and subtraction. Some are beginning to understand the concept of multiplication and to work with multiples of 2, 5 and 10. By the end of Year 2, pupils recognise two and three-dimensional shapes and know about measures relating to length, capacity, and weight. In science, pupils use their senses to investigate different materials. They understand about magnetism and have a lively interest in learning about living things. Some make predictions in their experimental and investigative work and are developing ways of recording their findings.
5. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to make good progress, especially in science. Their reading becomes more fluent and they experience a wide range of texts and authors, including fiction and non-fiction genres and play scripts. They talk confidently about the plot in a story and analyse characters, often predicting how they might behave. By age eleven, pupils have developed a good range of reading strategies at their fingertips that they use to tackle unfamiliar words. Most check the sense of what they are reading by reference to the context of the work. Pupils begin to write in more detail, showing a developing awareness of vocabulary and grammar. By the end of Year 6, pupils use a range of writing techniques and styles they have studied to improve their own work. Most pupils have a good command of grammar and spell accurately. In mathematics, most pupils are confident in pen and paper methods when working out problems involving all four rules of number. By age eleven, pupils have a sound understanding of shape, space, data handling and measures. They add and subtract to two decimal places, often working accurately. Pupils use their mathematical skills effectively to enhance learning in other subjects, for example, when measuring or producing graphs. In science, skills of enquiry, investigation and fair testing develop well. By the end of Year 6, pupils design and carry out their own experiments, paying good attention to the effects of variables. They work collaboratively, sharing and discussing ideas and using evidence from previous work. They have a good understanding of the properties of different materials and of physical processes. They develop hypotheses and design experiments to test their theories.
6. In all other subjects, attainment is in line with national expectations at ages seven and eleven, except in information and communication technology. For pupils aged eleven, attainment in this subject is improving well but is just below expectations. The school is aware of the issue and has plans to increase 'hands on' time for pupils to consolidate and practise what they learn.
7. Pupils identified as having special educational needs make very good progress in relation to prior learning and abilities. A tailored programme of support is devised, and all staff involved with these pupils know their specific learning targets. All pupils are fully included in every aspect of the school's work, having access to extra-curricular activities and to school visits. In some cases, however, pupils are withdrawn from

lessons for short periods with the aim of providing tuition, mainly in English. This often results in a loss of continuity of learning in the main lesson and therefore restricts access to the full curriculum.

8. Higher attaining pupils are always given suitably challenging tasks and this is evidenced in the growing numbers of pupils working at advanced levels for their age in English and mathematics. There is no lack of challenge or underachievement for these pupils. Those pupils who speak English as an additional language have full access to all aspects of the school curriculum and make good progress.
9. Generally good attendance at a range of extra-curricular activities enhances academic and personal development. Pupils enjoy the opportunities to practise their games skills and the challenge of playing against teams from other schools. The art and performing arts clubs extend pupils' interests and talents well. Parents are especially appreciative of the after-school booster classes in numeracy and literacy that provide additional support for their children's learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. All pupils, including those who are not yet five, pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, display very good attitudes to learning. This represents a significant improvement in pupils' attitudes to learning since the time of the last inspection. Pupils collaborate very successfully on tasks, sharing ideas and resources readily. Their relationships with each other and with adults are excellent. Pupils respond enthusiastically to activities in the class. Groups of pupils who are not directly supervised by the teacher or learning assistant, remain on task well and demonstrate sustained concentration. In two classes for older pupils, there is a partition running two thirds of the way down the centre of the room. Pupils working without direct supervision maintain focused interest in their work, and there is no misbehaviour. In the returned parents' questionnaires, 100 per cent agreed that their children like school, a sentiment that was strongly endorsed at the meeting. A total of 89 per cent agreed that behaviour is good. The few concerns expressed about behaviour largely relate to incidents on the playground, in pupils' recreation time and not to incidents in class time.
11. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school building is very good. Although there are a number of temporary exclusions, these are related to a small number of pupils who have been excluded on more than one occasion. There are few instances of inappropriate behaviour within school. When they do occur, they are responded to quickly and effectively. Pupils are polite, keen to talk to visitors and show respect for the books and resources they use. They understand the importance of taking turns and of showing respect for each other's space and opinions. It is evident by their behaviour that they are aware of procedures and the classroom rules. There are many instances in lessons of praise and encouragement being used by adults to promote positive behaviour and pupils respond very well. For example, in one physical education lesson, the teacher moves around the hall, encouraging effort, pointing out new ideas and generally maintaining a high level of interest in the task. Throughout the school, pupils are motivated to learn and work hard. The school's policy for behaviour and bullying is well understood by all. No instances of oppressive behaviour or bullying were seen during the inspection.
12. Relationships are excellent between all members of the school community. Pupils share in each other's success. One such example was in an assembly where pupils were receiving reward stickers for achievements, both academic and social. There was spontaneous applause without any prompt from adults.

13. Pupils willingly carry out essential jobs in each class, such as taking the register to the office, sharpening pencils or helping to organise resources. Older pupils are encouraged to develop their sense of responsibility and good citizenship through their contact with younger children in school. In one scheme, Year 6 pupils eagerly give up their lunch time play to work with reception class children, sharing books or joining in the activities. This provides very good benefits for all. Older pupils set good role models for the younger ones to follow in terms of behaviour, attitude and respect. The previous inspection reported few opportunities for independent study or for showing initiative beyond the classroom. There have been some developments but there is scope to extend opportunities for private study, especially using the library or computer suite. The introduction of a school council is included in the school development plan for the coming year. This aims to enhance pupils' awareness of citizenship that is already developing through the established programme for personal, social and health education.
14. At the time of the previous inspection, most pupils had unsatisfactory skills of co-operation and collaboration. This has vastly improved and pupils throughout the whole school work very well together. Pupils' collaborative working is now a strong feature of school life. In an orienteering lesson with pupils in Years 3 and 4, they worked very well together in pairs and in groups of four. They listened to, and respected, each other's views, tested out solutions and came to collective decisions in a sensible and mature manner.
15. The level of attendance at school is unsatisfactory. Whilst significant improvement in this area has been made since the previous inspection, figures remain below the expected level. This has a negative effect on the progress of the pupils concerned. Punctuality during the week of inspection was satisfactory and many pupils took good advantage of the morning open session to start work early.
16. There are high expectations of conduct, attendance has improved and there is an emphasis on promoting a family community within the school. All these factors do much to encourage and support good behaviour and contribute to the purposeful atmosphere of the school. Staff have worked very hard, and extremely successfully, to improve pupils' attitudes and behaviour since the time of the last inspection.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. During the inspection, 57 lessons or parts of lessons were observed. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen and most of the teaching was of the three highest standards. In 7 per cent of lessons teaching was excellent, in 21 per cent it was very good, in 51 per cent it was good and in a further 21 per cent it was satisfactory. This represents a vast improvement since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is now a major strength of the school and is directly responsible for the improving standards of pupils' attainment at age eleven and the good progress seen throughout all age groups.
18. The Foundation Stage caters for children up to the start of Year 1 and is more commonly referred to as the reception class. For this age group, half of the teaching is good, with the other half being very good and excellent. In detail; in 16 per cent of lessons teaching was excellent, in 34 per cent it was very good and in 50 per cent it was good. A notable strength of teaching in this class is the good quality of detailed planning that covers all areas of learning for children up to six years of age. Lessons very cleverly consolidate and extend pupils' developing skills, knowledge and understanding, especially in language and literacy and mathematical work, through

well devised topics. The teacher and learning support assistants work effectively together, paying great attention to establishing routines and to developing confidence and independence in their pupils. This sets a very firm foundation for later learning. Children are assessed at the start of the year to gain a clear picture of their skills and knowledge. The information is then used to set learning targets, of which all staff are aware. Regular, on-going assessments keep the teacher well informed about the progress they are making and ensure that new, challenging work is planned in line with children's developing skills.

19. In Years 1 and 2, teaching was mainly good with a significant proportion of very good practice. In 21 per cent of lessons, teaching was satisfactory, in 58 per cent it was good and in a further 21 per cent it was very good. The teachers make learning exciting, ensuring that pupils are well motivated. A good balance of practical and recorded activities provides a rich level of experience. There is a good emphasis on teaching the basic skills, including phonics and number work, and in constantly extending pupils' vocabulary. In one lesson, pupils were using plastic fruit and a toy creature to re-tell the story of the Hungry Caterpillar. This interactive activity led to very good progress and much enjoyment. It also allowed the teacher to check that all pupils could identify the different fruits, and provided a good context for teaching the names of them. At the same time, pupils learnt about comparative measures as the caterpillar grew bigger, fatter and longer. There are no identified weaknesses in the teaching for these age groups. However, some lessons could be improved by including more short, interactive tasks and reducing the amount of time that the teacher spends talking to the whole class.
20. In Years 3 to 6, teaching was mostly good with a high proportion of very good and excellent lessons seen. In detail, in 9 per cent of lessons teaching was excellent, in 19 per cent it was very good, in 47 per cent it was good and in 25 per cent it was satisfactory. Teachers set challenging learning targets for the pupils, ensuring very good levels of motivation and sustained concentration. Very good use is made of exposition and demonstration. A commendable feature of teaching is the challenging pace of lessons where several tasks are set to a demanding timescale. In one excellent literacy lesson, pupils were learning how to improve their writing by using persuasive language and style. They read different brochures and found some ideas and words they could use. They went on to correct and refine a draft leaflet and were set the completion of this task for homework. In their independent work session, they had various challenging assignments to complete, all based around the introductory theme. At the end of the lesson, the teacher assessed learning in one group through targeted questioning, as they explained their work to the rest of the class.
21. There are many strengths in the teaching at St John's across all age ranges. Teachers establish excellent relationships with the pupils. An industrious atmosphere pervades the school and this encourages very good behaviour and enthusiasm for learning. Teachers set clear learning goals for children in the reception class and pupils in both key stages. They always tell pupils what they are going to learn, providing clear objectives for the lesson. Sessions are usually concluded with a focused time to assess progress, tackle any misconceptions and to congratulate individuals on their successes. This encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own work and supports the development of confidence. Questioning techniques are excellent and all pupils' replies are treated with sensitivity. This creates stimulating discussions and encourages all pupils to 'have a go'. The quality of marking is variable. Some teacher's comments are helpful in guiding pupils' future learning but this is not so in all classes. Teachers' planning is detailed and work is set at differing levels to cater for group needs. Many teachers design useful prompts for pupils to use as they work or writing frames to support their recording. In one physical education

lesson, pupils were developing sequences of movements. The teacher provided picture cards for the groups, to remind them of the movements they had worked on in previous weeks and a useful chart to help them record their aerobic routine. However, in Years 3 to 6, care needs to be taken to avoid the over-use of guided worksheets in school and to ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunity to choose their own style of writing and presentation to extend the skills they are learning in English. All ages and groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, and for whom English is an additional language, are well catered for and lessons build accurately on prior learning. Teachers encourage pupils to ask questions, investigate and experiment, and provide good opportunities for collaborative work. There is excellent class organisation and management, even in some rather difficult conditions in the divided classrooms. Carefully chosen resources are organised and are readily available, pupils' books and other consumables are always to hand and classroom routines are well established. The result is that the maximum amount of time is used for learning, and this makes a significant contribution to the progress that pupils make.

22. There is a good number of learning support assistants in school who are generally effectively deployed to support pupils' learning. They are knowledgeable and know the pupils very well indeed. Teachers ensure that assistants know the expected learning outcomes of each lesson and target their support to specific groups or individuals. In some whole class sessions, however, learning support assistants simply watch the teacher and opportunities for interaction with the pupils are lost.
23. Teachers throughout school have a good understanding of the most effective ways to teach literacy and numeracy and are successful in supporting pupils to develop skills in these areas. Literacy lessons are imaginatively delivered, with high expectations of class, group and independent working. Teachers' knowledge of information and communication technology is well used to improve the curriculum for this subject. In the Foundation Stage, pupils are constantly encouraged to use their skills in communication, language, literacy and mathematical understanding in all their work. Across all age groups, skills in literacy and numeracy are used to extend learning in other subject areas but there is a need to extend writing opportunities further, especially in history, geography and science.
24. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs or who may be experiencing learning difficulty is very good throughout the school and enables them to make very good gains in learning. The requirements of individual education plans are built into daily activities. Designated teaching and support staff provide targeted, unobtrusive support to meet individual and group needs. This ensures that all pupils are fully integrated into the life of the school community and that all develop good levels of self-confidence. Teaching is also good for those pupils who speak English as an additional language. Teachers check that all pupils understand new vocabulary and can use specific terminology in the correct context. Support is unobtrusive and effective.
25. Homework is effectively used in all classes. Younger pupils regularly take books home to read and those in Years 3 to 6 have a range of tasks that usually provide reinforcement and extension activities to classroom learning.
26. Teachers make good use of the school grounds and local environment, especially in the teaching of science, geography, history and physical education. Parents' returned questionnaires show that 99 per cent are of the opinion that teaching is good, and 95 per cent agree that the school expects pupils to work hard. The same sentiments were very strongly repeated at the parents' meeting.

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

27. Since the inspection of February 1997, the school has made considerable improvements in the management and organisation of the curriculum and now offers a broad and interesting range of learning opportunities. The new schemes of work in all subject areas provide a good foundation on which teachers can plan their lessons, both in the medium and short term. The school has developed a cyclical programme of work for some subjects, for example, science, history and geography. This ensures that pupils receive a balance across the programmes of study and that the requirements of the National Curriculum are fully covered. The subject managers and senior staff now monitor the teaching of the curriculum through the checking of planning, scrutiny of pupils' work and some classroom observation, thus ensuring that continuity is maintained. The re-structuring of the school day enables more efficient timetabling and useful slots of time for each subject area. All of the key issues from the report of February 1997 have been addressed.
28. The varied range of learning opportunities for children in the reception class is very good. The curriculum for these young children is based on the nationally recognised areas of learning, targeted to their individual needs. It is successful in providing an accelerated programme of learning that leads to good progress. However, children have only one year in which to 'catch up' from the low baseline of achievement and, when most pupils enter the next class, they are not totally ready for the National Curriculum programmes of study. Teachers therefore have to integrate some of the early learning goals into their planning in Year 1.
29. Teachers' planning takes full account of the different ages, abilities, ethnic background and levels of prior learning within classes. On-going assessment in lessons provides information that is intelligently used to plan tasks that carefully build on what the pupils already know. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are set into teaching groups for English and mathematics. This allows for focused teaching at a suitable pace and ensures that those pupils capable of higher attainment are well challenged.
30. Effective methods for the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills have been developed and, in both cases, the national strategies have been successfully adopted. The school recognises the continued need to improve standards in both mathematics and English and regularly reviews planning as a result of assessments and evaluations of pupil progress. Teachers have a good level of expertise in the teaching of literacy and plan a suitable balance of fiction and non-fiction work with the support of a very knowledgeable co-ordinator for the subject. There are good levels of confidence in the teaching of numeracy. Recent training has supplemented teachers' skills and placed a new, appropriate emphasis on the teaching of mental computation.
31. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teachers ensure that the work planned for them is matched to their requirements through an individual programme of learning. There is very good support from trained classroom assistants, some of whom use specialist techniques in order to meet identified needs. The nurture group provides very good support for pupils who would otherwise have great difficulty in coping with mainstream lessons. The teacher provides a rich, relevant curriculum that is delivered in short sessions to ensure that pupils can maintain concentration and interest. There is a very good balance of practical, oral and recorded work.

32. The school recognises its responsibility to ensuring equal access and opportunities for all its pupils and is currently running a worthwhile social inclusion project for midday staff. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are fully integrated in all aspects of school life. However, there is an issue of withdrawal that requires attention. Pupils, sometimes with special educational needs, are taken out of lessons for small group work. For example, a few pupils are withdrawn from their music class for literacy work. Others go out of the physical education lesson for reading. The result is that pupils lose continuity of learning and therefore are not receiving their full entitlement to the curriculum. Pupils in the school are highly valued as individuals, with their particular talents and idiosyncrasies. This is evident in the day-to-day interaction between staff and pupils that is distinguished by mutual respect and excellent relationships. Each pupil's development is also well supported through a very good programme of personal, social and health education. Pupils are encouraged to discuss their experiences during class sessions and to explore their own feelings. For example, in a Year 5 and 6 lesson, pupils discussed situations where they have felt uncomfortable or unsafe. There was a mature interchange, with all respecting each other's points of view. The school provides a relevant programme of sex and drug awareness lessons for pupils at the appropriate time in their school lives.
33. A satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities are available to pupils. The sporting interests of pupils are met through the football, hockey and basketball clubs, whilst artistic talents are developed in the art club. Pupils also have opportunities to join in the performing arts sessions. After-school booster lessons for both numeracy and literacy are popular and provide a valuable source of additional tuition.
34. The school has established useful links with the local community. Classes visit places of interest, for example, the local art gallery, museum and Peterborough Cathedral. Teachers make regular and effective use of the local shops, religious institutions and businesses to enhance pupils' learning. Close links with the local bagel factory not only provide opportunities for teaching but also ensure that pupils have welcome refreshments during the long morning session. Staff maintain basic links between the playgroup that occupies the nursery block, for example, by sharing the outdoor play area. However, there is no collaboration in planning and the reception teacher is not aware of what children have covered or how far they have progressed along the nationally recommended 'stepping stones'. As part of its good links with partner institutions the school ensures that pupils in Year 6 are fully prepared for their transfer to secondary education. This includes talks to Year 6 pupils by secondary school teachers, and opportunities for pupils to visit their new schools for 'taster' days. The school has extensive links with a nearby community college that provide additional facilities for pupils. For example, they take part in a series of hockey sessions held on its all-weather surface. The school also welcomes teacher trainee students, who bring a wide range of interests and talents to the classroom.
35. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very good. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is now good. The school has provided an area within the school for pupils to use when they want time out to sit quietly and reflect on the day. Spiritual awareness is developed within the school through assemblies, when pupils are given the opportunity to think about the meaningful stories they have heard and are guided in their prayers. In class lessons. Some Year 5 pupils were thinking about the symbolism of the empty cross, "That reminds us that Jesus rose from the dead." Pupils are encouraged to consider and value the less tangible aspects of life. In personal and social education, they consider the unique qualities of each individual and talk about their families and friends. Teachers exploit

learning opportunities to develop this area. For example, younger children displayed wonder when watching snails emerging from their shells. They were given time to watch and to gain the most out of the experience.

36. Provision for the social and moral development of the pupils is very good. The school has a well-planned personal, social and health education programme. Children entering the reception class are befriended by older pupils, who help to look after them in the lunch period. The YMCA Social Skills Group comes into the school and works with some older pupils who are moving onto secondary education, to provide a useful mentoring programme. Another support group works with Year 6 pupils to develop their social awareness. Pupils are taught important skills of interaction, such as saying 'please' and 'thank you' when talking to teachers and to each other. They are taught a clear understanding of right and wrong. Throughout the school there is a strong emphasis on mutual respect and self discipline. Both these factors contribute to the excellent relationships seen. Older pupils take part in a residential holiday each year and this helps to develop their sense of independence. All adults in the school act as very good role models. Their calm, caring approach is reflected in pupils' actions. It is evident that pupils are encouraged to develop a strong sense of belonging. Good behaviour and class work are rewarded in assemblies. Stories are used well to promote the moral development of the pupils, such as the story 'Blame it on Jake' that highlights the importance of telling the truth.
37. The cultural development of pupils was found to be unsatisfactory in the report of February 1997 and, since then, the school has worked hard and successfully to improve its provision in this area. Provision for cultural development is now good and the pupils are made aware of both their own culture and that of other people. For example, they study the customs surrounding festivals such as Divali, Ramadan and Christmas. Comparisons are made between festivals such as Christian baptism and the Hindu naming ceremony. They are taught about the origins of holy books. This work is closely linked to spiritual development. The school has developed a useful link with the village of Vellone in India. Pupils write to children in the village school, providing first hand experience of life in other cultures. Talks and musical performances by visiting specialists and artists enhance provision further and help pupils to develop a sound awareness of the wider world in which they live.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The school provides a secure, supportive environment, in which staff know pupils and families very well. Health, safety and welfare are high priorities for all members of staff and these are manifest in the school's routines and through interactions observed. In returned questionnaires, 100 per cent of parents agreed that their children like coming to school, and this is further evidence of the caring ethos that exists at St John's. The parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting expressed great satisfaction at the way the school cares for their children. This aspect is a major strength of the school.
39. Procedures for assessing, monitoring and supporting pupils' attainment have improved substantially since the previous inspection. Data from baseline information, National Curriculum assessments and other, optional tests are effectively used in most year groups to track pupil progress and target areas for general improvement in the curriculum. Currently, similar systems are not fully established in Year 1 but the school has recognised the problem and has plans to rectify the situation this year. The successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has laid a good foundation for these procedures. Assessment is built into weekly planning and teachers make good use of this information to guide future work and review targets. The quality of marking tends to be variable across the school but in many

instances is good with detailed written comments included to help pupils improve. Pupils are actively involved in the assessment and evaluation of their own learning. At the start of class, they are informed of the targets for the lesson. In the plenary sessions, they discuss with the teacher whether these have been achieved. Consequently, pupils' knowledge of their progress is good and makes a significant contribution to their motivation. Class records contain detailed, relevant information and are very well used by adults. For example, they provide essential details about special educational needs within the class, the requirements of individual learning programmes, pupils for whom English is an additional language, information about summer birthdays and of pupils who have joined the school after reception class. This provides the necessary background information for teachers to tailor learning to the needs of particular children.

40. The support and guidance given to pupils is good, with trained learning support assistants being particularly well deployed. There is an excellent standard of care for those pupils in the nurture group. Provision includes a strong emphasis on developing social skills and raising self-esteem. For those pupils who have behavioural or emotional difficulties, the specialist techniques deployed create a 'safe haven' where they can talk issues through and find solutions to their problems. This approach has made a significant contribution to the all-round progress of the pupils, both personally and academically.
41. Annual reports to parents provide clear information on the academic progress and personal development of each child. They meet all statutory requirements. Parents are appreciative of the information they receive and of the 'open door policy' that the school operates. In returned questionnaires, 95 per cent were satisfied with the amount of information they receive about how their child is getting on.
42. The headteacher is the recognised Child Protection officer and she has received the appropriate training. Knowledge of the school's procedures is good amongst all staff who have contact with pupils. There is active support from the relevant representative on the governing body, who also uses her expertise in her role as senior midday supervisor.
43. At all times, teachers and non-teaching staff are very watchful and responsive to individual needs. There is good provision for first aid, with a high number of trained personnel and facilities around the building. The supervision of pupils around the school is very good and the school has very successful pro-active strategies to prevent incidents occurring. Systems for monitoring behaviour and bullying are good with behaviour and anti-bullying policies being well embedded in the work of the school. Each week there are merit assemblies to reward individual acts of kindness. Class teachers operate a system of charts and stickers to recognise and encourage good behaviour and achievement. A good number of lunchtime supervisors provide a high standard of care. They know the pupils very well and carry out their duties diligently. They place themselves in strategic positions so that they keep a watchful eye, especially in cloakrooms and the outside play areas. Some pupils, who tend to experience difficulty in the less structured recreation time, are very well supported. The playground includes adventure and games equipment and a new 'play-pals' initiative provides some interesting activities to keep pupils fruitfully occupied. There are good facilities for pupils to have quiet times out of the hustle and bustle of playtime and there are always staff on hand to talk pupils through any problems encountered. Incidents of racism are very rare. When they do occur the head teacher takes a prominent role by insisting that she meets with the parents of all concerned to deal with the issue until a satisfactory outcome is reached. The result is a harmonious community within school. There is good support for pupils who have special

educational needs. Classroom assistants, lunchtime supervisors, non-teaching personnel all work together very successfully to provide consistency of approach and sensitivity to pupils' needs. The co-ordinator for special educational needs maintains detailed records and all procedures for identification and statutory review are in line with those recommended in the national code of practice.

44. The staff handbook is clear and ensures that all adults know what is expected of them in the organisation and operation of the school. Regular health and safety checks are carried out by the site manager, the headteacher and governors. Results are recorded and any necessary action taken immediately. Emergency evacuation practices ensure that pupils know how to leave the building quickly and safely should the need arise. Substances are safely stored. Checks to electrical, fire fighting and physical education equipment are carried out by the appropriately qualified outside personnel. However, the schools' health and safety policy is in need of review to ensure that staff responsibilities are clearly documented. At present, formal risk assessments are not fully in place. The school is fortunate in having a hardworking, conscientious caretaker who takes great pride in achieving a high standard of cleanliness and maintenance in the building and grounds.
45. Arrangements for monitoring attendance are appropriate. The school has gained the benefits of an efficient, computerised system that provides a useful analysis of attendance patterns. Targeted action and close links with the Education Welfare Officer are major factors in the increasing levels of attendance and decreasing unauthorised absence. Consideration could be given to implementing a range of positive initiatives to encourage better attendance.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. Since the last inspection there has been a marked improvement in the relationship that the school has with its parents, such that the partnership is now very good. Comments made at the parents' meeting show very strong support for the way the school is run. The vast majority of parents find the headteacher and staff approachable and feel that their concerns are listened to and acted upon. This has come about because of an improvement in the links which the school has with its parents through two initiatives. Firstly, all members of staff are in their classrooms before the start of the school day and parents are welcome to call in either to be with their children or to talk informally with the teacher. Secondly, the headteacher makes a commitment to see parents on request and is available in the playground both at the beginning and the end of each day. In returned questionnaires, 100 per cent of parents agreed that they were comfortable about approaching school and 83 per cent thought that the school works closely with home.
47. There are three formal parents' evenings a year, when children's progress and future targets are shared. They are well received and, on average, about 80 per cent of parents attend. Teachers make every effort to ensure that they meet with all parents of children with special educational needs to review progress and consult about individual education plans. There is currently no Parent Teachers Association but it is an issue that the school plans to address. It is hoped that the success of last year's Summer Fayre may provide the impetus to get things on a more formal footing.
48. The quality of information provided by the school is good. Half-termly newsletters are sent home and these, together with general correspondence, keep parents well informed about what is going on. In addition, teachers provide curriculum information that tells parents what their child will learn over the term. It also offers suggestions for ways in which parents might support their children at home. For pupils in Years 3 to 6, a useful information sheet for homework has also been introduced to support the school policy. The school prospectus is a very comprehensive document that is well presented and informative. There are several sections missing from the governors' annual report to parents. These include, amongst others, information on the progress of the school's action plan, the results of National Curriculum tests for seven and eleven year olds, details of pupil attendance rates and information on the school's policy for special educational needs. In its present form, it does not meet statutory requirements.
49. Parents were fully consulted about the home-school agreement before it was successfully introduced.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50. The acting headteacher provides very good leadership, setting high expectations, continually striving for improvement and driving the school forward. She is instrumental in maintaining a supportive environment in which staff and pupils feel secure and valued. She is actively supported by the acting deputy headteacher and the senior management team. They are very successful in promoting an environment where pupils work hard, enjoy excellent relationships, and show respect for staff and their friends. This aspect is a strength of the school. All staff and governors are firmly committed to the school's aims, that include a strong emphasis on personal as well as academic development. An analysis of the returns from the parents' questionnaires shows that 85 per cent are satisfied that the school is well led and managed, a view that was strongly endorsed at the parents' meeting itself. From those who disagree, a substantial proportion are worried about the many changes in

management in recent times and feel that this is an unsettling influence for the pupils. Inspection findings conclude that the present acting headteacher has provided a consistent approach to the leadership and management of the school and, through focused action planning, has maintained the drive for quality provision and higher standards. There have been very good improvements in leadership and management since the last inspection.

51. The delegation of responsibilities to key staff is effective in ensuring the smooth running of the school and the maintenance of good systems of communication and support for all staff. Curriculum co-ordinators efficiently manage their subject areas and have a secure overview of the quality of teaching and the standards attained. They are conscientious in their approach, regularly monitoring planning, observing classroom practice when timetabling allows, and scrutinising pupils' work. From an analysis of assessment, the co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science set targets for pupils' performance. They monitor progress and take positive actions to resolve any issues that may arise. All subject managers contribute to the school development plan and are responsible for handling their own budget allocations.
52. The governors discharge their responsibilities conscientiously and are very supportive of the school. They know and understand their roles clearly and generally maintain a successful approach to meeting their statutory responsibilities. However, the governors' annual report to parents does not meet with requirements. There are many omissions, including pupils' test results, attendance figures and updates on school action planning. The proceedings of the governing body are efficiently conducted and committees are well organised. Governors are becoming more active in the management of the school and in the evaluation of its overall effectiveness. For example, the literacy governor has worked with the English co-ordinator to gain an insight into the developments and issues of the subject. All governors have received recent training in order to keep them up to date with educational initiatives.
53. School development planning is thorough and illustrates clear educational purpose. Funding is linked to priorities, with implementation strategies, timescales and success criteria specified. Both staff and governors are involved in the planning process and in the evaluation of the initiatives taken. This shared involvement ensures that the plan is a useful management tool.
54. The school is staffed by an adequate number of suitably qualified and experienced teachers who are effectively deployed to meet the demands of the curriculum and to support pupils with special educational needs. All the teachers have high levels of professionalism, dedication and commitment. They plan all their work conscientiously, readily sharing experience and expertise through strong teamwork. The acting headteacher has provided a very good level of stability and consistency of approach during the extended time taken to appoint a permanent headteacher. An agreed implementation programme for performance management is underway. The acting headteacher has appropriate targets and procedures are in place to extend the process to all staff. Trained assistants provide good support for pupils' learning, especially for those who have special educational needs. There are established arrangements for staff development, guided by the agreed priorities of the school. Recently, the main focus for training has been on writing and mathematics and this has had a positive impact on teaching and learning across all age groups. Experienced mentors provide good support for the newly qualified teachers, who have individually planned programmes of induction. St John's is very well served by appropriately skilled non-teaching staff, all of whom are totally committed to its aims and policies. Lunchtime supervisors provide a high standard of care at midday and know the pupils well. The site manager ensures that the buildings, grounds and

resources are very well maintained. She also ensures a high standard of cleanliness and hygiene at all times. Administrative support is very effective and efficient. The two secretaries make a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school, discharging a wide and diverse range of responsibilities.

55. Since the last inspection, the accommodation has been altered and partitioned to provide screened teaching areas. The result is a calm, quiet and orderly environment. However, some problems with accommodation remain. In two classrooms, there is a dividing wall that obscures vision and makes whole class teaching difficult. The teachers use some ingenious methods to overcome the problem but it leads to a lot of pupil movement and some loss of learning time. Access to many parts of the building is gained by walking through classrooms. Although pupils are extremely considerate and move very quietly, there is still some inevitable disturbance. The hall, playgrounds and games field, provide good accommodation for physical education. Much thought and care has been put into the development of recreational facilities for the pupils to keep them occupied at playtimes and lunchtimes. The dedicated outdoor play area for children in the Foundation Stage provides a very safe and stimulating resource. The purpose-built nursery unit is not used by the school because of lack of funding for staff and is rented out to a playgroup. Inspection findings show that pupils' attainment is adversely affected because of the low baseline in achievement when children enter school. In the absence of a nursery, the children have only one year in the Foundation Stage and this is not sufficient time to make good the shortfalls in early learning. Governors have given considerable thought to this issue and are keen to develop provision.
56. Overall, resourcing is satisfactory for teaching and learning and there is a good range of equipment and materials for English, science and music. Resources for information and communications technology have recently been improved but the suite is too small to accommodate a full class of pupils. This results in group teaching, often with a learning assistant. Pupils cover all programmes of study but the pace of learning is slow and there are limited opportunities for pupils to practise and consolidate the skills, knowledge and understanding that they are acquiring. The school has recognised the problem and is considering a possible solution.
57. The school's finances are carefully monitored and controlled. Spending is closely linked to the stated priorities. There is a clear, delegated limit to spending and governors exercise their strategic over-view of the school's financial planning effectively. The finance committee receive regular financial updates to enable them to monitor the budget closely. A reserve is held at present that is above the recommended level. Governors are considering three capital projects but have postponed decisions on spending until the new headteacher takes up post. This should be done as soon as possible to ensure that money is spent wisely, improving provision for those pupils for whom it was allocated. Best value principles are very well applied to all purchases and contracts. The school provides good value for money. Governors monitor the impact of spending decisions by checking that new materials and equipment purchased lead directly to improved provision. They sometimes evaluate the benefits in terms of pupils' learning but this is not routine and could be improved. The school has systematic procedures in place for the ordering, receipt and payment of goods and services. Procedures for dealing with cash and private funds are safe and effective. Specific grant funding is appropriately allocated and money provided for special educational needs pupils is very effectively used.
58. The school is well organised, with established and efficient routines making good use of information and communication technology. All statutory requirements are met except those relating to the annual governors' report.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. In order to improve further the school should:

Raise the attainment in English and mathematics throughout the school, of seven year olds in science and of eleven year olds in information and communications technology by:

- extending present assessment and target setting systems in English and mathematics to Year 1; (paragraphs 39, 82, 89)
- extending contacts in the early years to younger children, through school sessions or links with the playgroup, in order to tackle the gaps in their prior learning; (paragraphs 3, 28, 55, 63, 66, 67, 74)
- making use of the assessments in science for Years 1 and 2 to set challenging targets for learning; (paragraph 92)
- increasing the amount of time that pupils have to work on computers so that they have opportunities to practise and consolidate what they have learnt. (paragraphs 99, 108, 111, 112)

Ensure that all pupils, especially those on the school's register of special educational needs, have access to the full curriculum by:

- changing the practice of withdrawing groups of pupils for literacy work or reading from lessons other than English. (paragraphs 7, 32, 34, 118, 124)

Improve the accommodation to facilitate whole class teaching, especially in literacy and numeracy lessons by:

- removing the obstacles presented by dividing walls in classrooms. (paragraphs 55, 81, 89)

Ensure that all statutory requirements are met by improving the governors' annual report to parents. (paragraphs 48, 52, 58)

In addition, the governing body should consider the following when drawing up its action plan:

- review the governors' health and safety policy and ensure that all risk assessments are in place. (paragraph 44)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	57
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	42

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7	21	51	21	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage 51 of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	-	268
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	-	135

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	-	11
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	-	92

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	49
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	45

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	3.3
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	4.8
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	18	17	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	8	15
	Girls	14	15	13
	Total	27	23	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77 (61)	66 (67)	80 (73)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	10	12
	Girls	14	13	13
	Total	26	23	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (52)	66 (67)	71 (70)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	22	25	47

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	12	18
	Girls	21	14	22
	Total	37	26	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (50)	55 (67)	85 (81)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	11	12
	Girls	16	12	16
	Total	26	23	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	55 (56)	49 (67)	68 (74)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	3
Indian	1
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	258
Any other minority ethnic group	4

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	13	1
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)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.3
Average class size	26.8

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	363

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	511,139
Total expenditure	513,719
Expenditure per pupil	1,916
Balance brought forward from previous year	30,605
Balance carried forward to next year	28,025

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	268
Number of questionnaires returned	63

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	40	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	29	3	3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	49	5	5	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	48	5	2	2
The teaching is good.	69	37	0	2	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	63	32	2	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	27	2	6	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	30	2	3	0
The school works closely with parents.	54	29	8	6	3
The school is well led and managed.	48	37	10	2	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	37	5	2	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	40	17	2	10

Other issues raised by parents

The responses show that the parents hold the school in high regard. Only one area produced agreement of less than 80 per cent amongst parents and that relates to extra-curricular provision. The inspection team judge there to be a satisfactory range of after-school clubs that covers sporting, creative and academic interests. More detailed information about the subject can be found in the main commentary of the report in the section headed 'How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?'

The inspection team fully agrees with the parents' positive views of the school.

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

60. Children enter the Foundation Stage, often referred to as the reception class, during the Autumn term following their fourth birthdays. Some gain experiences at the playgroup before starting school. Attainment is well below average when children come into reception. Due to the very good provision for them and the high standard of teaching they receive, children make consistently good progress towards meeting the early learning goals. There have been good improvements in teaching and learning since the last inspection and planning has been fully updated to meet the new requirements of the Foundation Stage curriculum.
61. The day-to-day organisation of children's learning is very good. Planned activities embrace all the recommended areas of learning. Children are sometimes given opportunities to select activities and work independently. Other tasks are carefully directed and supported by the teacher or learning assistant in order to develop key skills systematically. Assessment and monitoring of children's progress are very good and lead to the setting of challenging learning targets. The classteacher and her assistants know the children very well and work as an effective team to provide an exciting and stimulating learning environment. Resources are good in range, quality and quantity. They are clearly labelled and stored within children's reach so that they can be accessed and cleared away easily.
62. The quality of teaching across all areas of the curriculum for the early years is at least good, with 34 per cent being very good and 16 per cent excellent. The teacher exploits every possible opportunity to reinforce and extend learning. In one excellent lesson about mini-beasts, the children read a story, observed some small creatures in the classroom, described their main features and made detailed drawings of them. In small groups, they went into the school grounds to explore the habitats of mini-beasts and to make further observations. During the day children had opportunities to make a collage of a mini-beast, to re-enact the story they had read using toys and to explore some simple non-fiction books on the topic. This careful planning ensures challenge and excitement in learning and provides valuable opportunities for the teaching of new vocabulary.
63. The reception class teacher maintains liaison with the playgroup in the building through visits and the transfer of information. However, there have been several changes in personnel at the playgroup and therefore continuity of approach is difficult to establish. At present, the organisation and curriculum of the group and the class are vastly different and children have to learn new routines when they enter school. This inevitably reduces time for learning. New children and their parents are invited into the reception class for several afternoons in the summer term before they start school. Home visits in the autumn term help to establish good links with parents. These are successfully maintained through a daily open session before school starts and at the end of the day when children are personally 'handed over'. Parents are invited to share the results of baseline assessment with the classteacher and have further opportunities during the year to attend parents meetings. They are kept well informed of their children's progress.

Personal social and emotional development

64. Children enjoy coming to school. They settle quickly into daily routines, such as registration, and show very good development of social skills. The reception teacher and learning assistants provide a welcoming and secure learning environment. During group discussions, children take turns to speak and to listen politely to others. After physical education lessons, children dress themselves without fuss and with a minimum of support from adults. They respond to the high expectations teachers have of them and most manage buttons and zips efficiently. Children show increasing levels of self-confidence, for example, when selecting the activities that interest them. They handle construction kits, computers and books skilfully, often sharing activities with friends. Children are confident when interacting with adults, easily taking part in conversation or role-play. The teaching of personal and social skills is very good. During class sessions, children explore feelings and relationships with others. High expectations and consistent routines ensure that children get out and tidy away equipment with very little prompting. They willingly help each other, respect other people's space and share resources freely. In one physical education lesson, children moved carefully around the space available, keeping a watchful eye for others and following the simple safety rules. When tidying away the wooden building blocks, two children meticulously stacked them in size order so that they would not fall over. When 'hunting' for small creatures, children readily shared their captured specimen with others and displayed a very good level of care for living things. There is a constant emphasis on the development of personal responsibility and initiative, with children being encouraged to find solutions to problems before adults step in to help. This leads to very good progress and by the time children enter Year 1, attainment is in line with expectations.

Communication language and literacy

65. Children have very limited communication skills when they enter the reception class and many have a restricted vocabulary. Children's speaking skills are encouraged through whole class sessions, where good questioning ensures that all are involved, through group work where children are very well supported by adults, and in role play. Children enjoy a range of activities that are specifically prepared to encourage discussions, for example, when sharing a book in a group reading session. All adults are mindful of the need to develop children's speaking and listening skills and to check that children have the necessary vocabulary to get the most out of their lessons. In one creative dance session, the teacher brought 'sunny day' artefacts to illustrate the vocabulary she would be using. A comfortable reading corner has been created where pupils enjoy some quiet time to browse or to share a book with friends. The teaching of letter sounds and key words helps to develop children's early reading skills effectively. Additional support is targeted for those who need it. Most children are beginning to write their own names and to form some letter shapes accurately. They use their emerging writing skills to make marks on paper and most can construct an oral sentence to accompany their drawing, for example, in their mini-beast work.
66. The teaching of language and literacy is very good. Assessments are used very carefully to ensure that skills are taught systematically. All adults talk to children continuously to extend their understanding and development of language. The teacher's story telling is lively and animated, so that children develop a keen interest in books. Reading sessions are often interactive, with children sharing in a rhyme or helping to tell the tale. Follow up activities are planned to consolidate learning, such as puzzles and games based on the story read. In one session, children investigated different fruits after reading 'The Hungry Caterpillar'. They used their senses to describe each one before eating it. Children make good progress but in the short

time available in reception class, are unable to bridge the gap in skills and knowledge that is identified at baseline assessment. If some input could be made at an earlier age, for example, through the playgroup, progress could be improved. Attainment in communication, language and literacy remains below expected levels when children enter Year 1.

Mathematical development

67. On entry to school, very few children can count reliably and understanding of mathematical concepts is poor. They make good progress because of the very good teaching and curriculum provided but in the time available, are unable to fill the gaps in their early learning. Attainment is still below average when they move into Year 1. Earlier support and intervention in learning, through workshops or the playgroup would give the children a valuable start to their education.
68. Children begin to count objects in a set with one to correspondence and to identify some numerals. They recognise numbers to five and are beginning to count to and back from ten. More able children count to twenty and say what comes before or after a given number. There is very good reinforcement of number work in the range of activities provided. Mathematical understanding is taught effectively through computer programs, and through other areas of learning. For example, children examine the properties of two and three dimensional shapes in the construction area or when completing simple jigsaws. They begin to understand the basic concept of 'measures' when exploring the capacity of containers in the water and sand trays. When playing a 'fishing' game, they recognise numbers in a set. During their shared reading and discussion of a book, they spot the growing size of the caterpillar and use the appropriate vocabulary to describe what they see.
69. The teaching of mathematical skills is very good and every opportunity is grasped to extend learning, for example, when emphasising 'how many left?' as children sing the 10 little monkey rhyme. All staff grasp informal opportunities to extend learning and to provide activities that allow children to practise their developing skills and knowledge.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

70. Children have varying levels in their knowledge and understanding of the world when they begin their reception year. Most know the names of some everyday things that are within their personal experiences but their knowledge of the wider world is poor. Provision for development in this area of learning is good and children enjoy interesting activities where they can explore, investigate and experiment. However, children's attainment remains below average as they start Year 1. Children produce some interesting work on the computer as they 'dress the teddy' or sort sets of objects. They explore the possibilities of a range of construction materials and try to copy structures that they have seen. They learn to discriminate when selecting equipment and materials for a specific purpose. In their studies of houses and homes, children draw maps to show the way to school. Their models of beds show a developing eye for detail and an ability to select tools and materials for a specific purpose. Children have a sound awareness of living things and show great sensitivity and respect when handling creatures such as those they discover under stones in their scientific investigation.
71. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is very good. The teacher conscientiously seeks opportunities to support and extend children's knowledge through practical and meaningful experiences across all areas of the curriculum.

Physical development

72. Children have basic skills in physical development when they enter the reception class. Many find manipulation and accurate use of smaller equipment difficult. Children make good progress over the year, showing increasing levels of confidence and co-ordination of movement, but skills are still below average when they move into Year 1. Manipulative skills are encouraged by using construction equipment and materials such as dough. Children begin to show attention to detail when cutting out with scissors. Their developing levels of control are evident when they glue and stick their own creations. They use space well during physical education lessons and show consideration of others around them. Children consolidate and practise the skills of running, balancing and jumping as they play in the dedicated and well resourced outside area. They appreciate the effects of exercise on the body and know to rest at appropriate times. Co-ordination is developing successfully as children ride on the wheeled toys and steer them round obstacles. In creative dance lessons, children experiment with different ways of moving and most respond to ideas and music with imagination. Skills in throwing, catching and rolling are all developing well. Most know which hand they prefer to use and are beginning to have secure control of the pencil.

Creative development

73. Children's creative development is well below average for their age on entry. There is good provision for this area of learning and children make good progress. Nevertheless, creative talents are below those expected at the start of Year 1, when children begin their National Curriculum studies. In a music lesson with Year 1 pupils, children pass the clap, showing a growing awareness of timing and rhythm. They creatively match instrument sounds to different animals and respond with interest to some taped music. Children's painted patterns show an awareness of colour and texture as they try out a selection of media to create the desired effect. Children also explore three-dimensional media when building models. In the class shop, they take on the role of shopper but find sustained imaginative role play difficult without an adult to supply ideas. Teaching is good. A permanent feature in the classroom is an easel where children can choose to work in different media, such as crayon, felt tips or chalk. In all creative activities, adults suggest ideas for children to try, but also allow sufficient freedom for them to develop their individual likes, dislikes and talents.

ENGLISH

74. National Curriculum tests in 2000 showed that the percentage of seven-year-old pupils who achieved the expected Level 2 in reading and writing was well below the national average. When compared to schools with a similar background however, results in reading were in line with the national average and just below average in writing. The majority of children enter school at age four with a very low level of language skills and have only one year in the Foundation Stage. Baseline test results indicate that only approximately 10 per cent of them are achieve the expected levels. One third of pupils at the school have special educational needs and there is a high level of mobility amongst the school population. New pupils coming into classes often require additional help in their work, either because their attainment in basic skills is lower or they have lost continuity in learning through transferring schools. Nevertheless, pupils make satisfactory progress during Key Stage 1 and there has been a gradual improvement in reading over the last three years and a promising improvement in writing. Inspection findings indicate that standards are improving but will remain below national averages.

75. National test results of eleven year olds have improved significantly since the last inspection. Results for the year 2000 show that the percentage of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 and above was below the national average but, when compared to similar schools, results were well above the average. Pupils also made good progress, indicating that the school is making a significant contribution in raising the standards. Inspection findings indicate that levels of attainment will remain at similar levels for 2001 but are set to rise further in future years.
76. These improved results have been achieved because of the good quality of teaching and the successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. Learning support assistants also make an important contribution to the improving standards. The analysis of test results, target setting and action plans that enable teachers to focus on improving areas of weakness, are all significant factors in the rising achievements of pupils. As a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language, make good progress in the acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding throughout the school.
77. Pupils progress well in developing their speaking and listening skills. Many begin school with very poor vocabulary. For example, some children in reception were unable to name different fruits. Few pupils at this stage speak in extended sentences. However, they listen attentively in class, both to the teacher and to one another, and their vocabulary and language skills improve over time. Often, at the end of lessons, pupils are invited to explain to the class what they have learnt, for example, after completing research on topics in the library. Others listen with interest and offer their opinions. Role play gives pupils opportunities to demonstrate good, clear speech in groups and individually. For example, in one history lesson, pupils attempted to persuade the citizens of Athens to admit them into their city. All pupils are eager to contribute to class discussions and often volunteer useful, additional information. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are well catered for. Teachers check on understanding to make sure that all have good access to the lesson and make good progress.
78. Pupils aged seven attain standards in reading that are below those expected nationally but they make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Attainment has improved significantly since the last inspection. A small number of Year 2 pupils read accurately and fluently, with good understanding. Some read simpler texts and know the sounds of individual letters. A few use this knowledge to look at the first sound of an unknown word and have a go at saying it. Below average pupils, who form a substantial proportion of the year group, have a reasonable bank of basic words that they recognise by sight and a fair knowledge of single-letter sounds. They are beginning to put these together in order to read unfamiliar words. Most pupils at eleven years of age use indexes, contents and glossaries of books confidently. All know how to find out information using headings, diagrams and text. As they progress through the school, pupils develop an increasing awareness of the plot and characters in the books they read and can predict accurately what might happen. Many pupils have few books that they can discuss other than those that they have at school. By the time they are eleven years old, most pupils read aloud with expression. When they come across unfamiliar words, they use their previous knowledge of the structure of words or 'sound out' the letter blends. Many use the clues provided within the meaning of the story or from their knowledge of grammar. Junior pupils enjoy reading and can quote a favourite author. They talk knowledgeably about the books they like. Their range of reading is reasonable, with the popular authors Roald Dahl and J. K. Rowling predominating. They experience a wide range of texts in their literacy lessons, including poetry, stories and non-fiction material.

79. Attainment in writing remains below national averages for pupils aged seven and eleven but has improved considerably. The development of skills is identified as a priority area for the school. Pupils make good progress through Years 1 and 2. Work is generally well presented. Children begin in reception with relatively poor hand co-ordination and it takes some time before they can form regular letters and keep words on the line. By the time pupils are seven, they are beginning to space words satisfactorily. Above average pupils demarcate sentences correctly and spell accurately many of the most used words. Difficulties arise from spellings that include a combination of vowels that sound different, such as 'ai' in rain and 'straight'. Most pupils use full stops and capital letters appropriately to separate their sentences. Some pupils at eleven confidently write extended pieces in a variety of forms and choose language and vocabulary to good effect. Punctuation and spellings are generally accurate. Pupils are just beginning to write more substantially in lessons other than English. The quality of handwriting improves considerably as pupils move through the school. A good proportion can produce fluent, joined legible script but some still make basic errors.
80. Teaching is of a high standard. In 67 per cent of lessons it was good, and in a further 22 per cent it was very good and excellent. This is a substantial improvement since the last inspection and results in good progress and improving standards. Teachers' planning is thorough and objectives are clearly understood by the pupils. Lesson plans and teaching strategies recognise the differing needs of pupils. Appropriate activities are set that build well on previous attainment. Pupils' work is marked conscientiously and most teachers provide sound and appropriate comments to help pupils improve areas of weakness.
81. The stock of books is satisfactory and contains a good balance between fiction and non-fiction texts, housed in classrooms and libraries. Great care is taken to make reading and library areas attractive and inviting. For the younger pupils, books are invitingly arranged at the child's eye level, with comfortable seating available to make their reading time an enjoyable experience. The library for juniors is very well organised and offers a wide range of material for study or pleasure. It is effectively used but its situation in a main thoroughfare through the school sometimes detracts from its usefulness as an area for quiet personal study. The dividing wall in two classrooms causes difficulties for the teaching of literacy. There is very little space for the whole class session and opportunities for timely interventions in group learning are restricted to the half of the room in which the teacher is standing. The behaviour of those pupils who, at any one time, are behind the obstruction is commendable. Teachers do all they can to minimise the effects of the divide but half of the pupils cannot refer to the class large text or to the shared class work when seated at their tables.
82. A hard working and dedicated manager provides very good leadership for the subject and is instrumental in driving standards upwards. Through an analysis of test results and the evaluation of teaching and learning, he has identified areas for improvement that are being addressed through detailed action planning. Target setting is informed through careful assessment in Years 2 to 6. At present, assessment in Year 1 relies on informal procedures and is not as reliable as in the other year groups. The subject manager's enthusiasm and substantial expertise inspires other teachers who readily try out new ideas.

MATHEMATICS

83. Attainment in the 2000 National Curriculum tests show that 80 per cent of pupils aged seven achieved the expected Level 2 or above. Although this is a marked

improvement on previous years, it is still well below the national average and that for similar schools. Results for pupils aged eleven, show that 55 per cent achieved the expected Level 4 or above and, of these, 15 per cent achieved the higher level 5. Both results are below the national average. However, when compared to similar schools, results are in line with the average and were just 0.5 of a point short of being above average. Attainment has fluctuated from year to year but the overall trend shows attainment rising faster than the national pattern. School targets are fully met. Boys and girls are given fair and equal access to the mathematics curriculum and this is evident in teacher questioning and assessments. Girls' attainment is slightly higher than that for boys in 2000 but, over time, results show that boys did better than girls. The school closely monitors the situation and takes action when needed. An after-school booster class successfully provides additional tuition for Year 6 pupils and is well attended.

84. Pupils entering school have a poor level of mathematical skills, including poor number recognition and limited vocabulary. There is good coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study, with an appropriate emphasis on the development of computational skills.
85. By the age of seven, pupils they have a secure grasp of odd and even numbers, multiples of 2, 5 and 10 and can share by 2. They identify many two and some three-dimensional shapes and have an understanding of basic measures. Most read the time from digital and analogue clocks and can recognise halves and quarters. Pupils are beginning to develop estimating skills. They understand a range of mathematical signs, including 'greater' and 'less than'. Pupils collect and tally simple data accurately. They draw and interpret block graphs, sometimes using their skills in other subjects. Mathematical vocabulary develops well. By age eleven, most pupils have a sound grasp of tables to 10. They complete long multiplication, add and subtract up to two decimal places and understand the process of long division. Pupils have an understanding of lines of symmetry, rotational and reflective symmetry, area, volume, ratio and proportion. They produce bar, line and pie graphs and have a sound knowledge of metric measurement.
86. Pupil's progress in Years 1 and 2, at all levels of achievement, including those pupils with special educational needs, is good when compared to their previous attainment. A high profile is given to all areas of mathematics, including numeracy, and this is reflected in the volume of work that pupils do and the improving standards they achieve. Progress is enhanced by the constant re-enforcement of number facts and mathematical vocabulary. This is a very strong feature in the introductory mental work during lessons. In Years 3 to 6, all pupils continue to make good gains in their learning. Information and communication technology is beginning to have a positive impact upon standards in data handling, especially since the introduction of the new computer suite. An increased emphasis has been placed upon the development of mental strategies and this has much to do with the school's positive response to the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy that has been implemented successfully. However, progress is sometimes impaired by poor recall of number facts and underdeveloped computational skills. In a Year 5 and 6 lesson on problem solving, pupils encountered difficulty in recalling table facts and became frustrated. The rate of working was considerably slowed as a consequence.
87. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards the subject. They are keen to answer questions and enjoy explaining the mental strategies they have used. They concentrate well and sustain interest. Pupils work collaboratively, often in pairs, supporting and helping each other well. They work hard and demonstrate an enthusiasm for the subject. Some Year 2 pupils enjoyed using white boards to

demonstrate their understanding of inverse operations. Pupils in a Year 3 and Year 4 lesson responded enthusiastically to the challenge of using four single-digit numbers to target an answer of 100. Behaviour is very good or excellent in 40 per cent of lessons and is never less than satisfactory.

88. The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good with some very good lessons seen. Teaching is conducted at a brisk pace and questioning is carefully focused on challenging pupils' thinking. Lessons are well planned and resourced. Teachers have good subject knowledge and expectations of pupils' attainment are realistic. There is good classroom organisation and management. Classroom assistants are clearly briefed and effectively deployed, especially in supporting pupils who have special educational needs. In Years 3 to 6, over 60 per cent of lessons were good or better including one excellent lesson. In a Year 5 and 6 lesson the teacher reinforced pupils' knowledge on the properties of shape through excellent questioning. The lesson was conducted at a fast pace and pupil tasks were well devised and challenging. In another lesson for older juniors, the teacher used a series of cards in a game situation to test previously acquired concepts of halving and doubling. Pupils responded with enthusiasm, even though the speed of play varied in accordance with the level of computational skill. Throughout all age groups, pupils are actively encouraged to use appropriate mathematical vocabulary. Many do so with growing confidence and understanding. In Year 2 pupils talked of "reversing", "total", and "equal" and Year 6 pupils talked of "reflective symmetry", "co-ordinates" and "axis". Pupils who speak English as an additional language are equally confident in using mathematical terms and they make good progress in the subject. Homework is set regularly in Years 3 to 6 and provides opportunities for pupils to consolidate what they have learnt in lesson time. Work is marked consistently and comments often help pupils to correct mistakes but there is less emphasis in providing further challenges to pupils' thinking. Pupils are grouped on the basis of prior learning for mathematics, and well differentiated tasks build very effectively on skills, knowledge and understanding acquired. This is a very good feature of the provision for mathematics.
89. The subject has a newly appointed co-ordinator who is well qualified and enthusiastic. A new system of assessment has been introduced this year that is well structured. It provides good information to complement the data analysis from formal tests in Years 2 to 6. This enables teachers to accurately determine strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attainment and has led to the establishment of additional 'maths topic' lessons that focus on specific areas for identified groups. However, the system is not extended to Year 1 and target setting in this class is less rigorous. Monitoring and evaluation of the subject are satisfactory. The subject manager checks planning, scrutinises pupils' work and regularly reviews school targets. Monitoring of classroom teaching is highlighted within the new school development plan. The school's policy document and scheme of work was thoroughly revised in 1999, putting it in line with the requirements of the Numeracy Strategy. Good arrangements for teacher in-service training are reflected in the secure levels of teacher subject knowledge and confidence. The accommodation in two classes causes problems during the numeracy lessons. Because of a dividing wall, some pupils lose sight of the whole class work done, for example, on the white board. This means that they have to move through the classroom if they need to refer to it when engaged on their independent work. This inevitably results in a loss of time and continuity of learning.

SCIENCE

90. In the 2000 National Curriculum teacher assessments for pupils aged seven, the proportion attaining the expected Level 2, or above, was well below the national average. When compared to schools in a similar context, the results were slightly

better but still below average. National test results for pupils aged eleven were close to the national average for those attaining the expected Level 4 and above. When compared to the results achieved by similar schools, attainment was above average and only just missed the well above average mark by 0.1 per cent. Inspection findings indicate that seven-year-old pupils are attaining at a level that is below that expected nationally, a slight improvement on last year's results. Those aged eleven are attaining in line with national standards. When they enter school, children's scientific skills and knowledge are poor overall. Lesson observations, scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils all clearly demonstrate good progress in science skills across the school. There is no evidence to suggest that pupils with special educational needs and those with English as a second language make any less progress than their peers. Girls achieved better standards than boys in 2000 but, over time, the trend is reversed. Teachers analyse results carefully and check that all pupils are achieving their potential. There is no consistent pattern in attainment, year on year, that indicates one group is doing better than the other.

91. By the end of Year 2, pupils are aware of the properties of different materials, for example, that some are hard while others are soft. They have an understanding of magnetism and how materials can be changed when heated or frozen. Some make simple predictions and record their findings in a logical way. In a lesson on plants, more able pupils develop their ability to hypothesise about why some have thicker roots than others. Pupils in Year 6 name the major organs of the human body and have a good knowledge of where they are. In work on physical processes, they demonstrate an understanding of the motion of the sun and how shadows are formed. They understand the life cycle of plants and explain the functions of their various parts, for example, petal, stamen and stigma. When carrying out scientific investigations, pupils understand the importance of fair testing and give examples of how variables can be controlled. They make predictions and record their work in a number of different ways.
92. Inspection findings show that there has been a good level of improvement in the planning and teaching of the curriculum since the report of February 1997. The school has worked hard to improve its provision in the subject and this is beginning to have a pleasing impact on standards. For example, there is now a detailed scheme of work that ensures all lessons build on prior work and provides a basis for teachers' planning. Lesson plans and pupils' work are regularly monitored by the subject manager to ensure that all pupils are taught all of the National Curriculum programmes of study. Assessment strategies are developing and attainment is checked after each block of work. The results are entered into individual profiles but, as yet, information is not fully used to inform future lesson planning. However, the subject manager does analyse the information from the profiles to identify strengths and weaknesses in learning and to set future whole school targets.
93. Pupils effectively use skills developed in other areas of the curriculum to help them with their science work. They use their literacy skills well to record their findings. This was illustrated, for example, in the work by Year 3 and 4 pupils about magnets, in which they recorded a list of the equipment needed and what they thought was likely to happen. Older pupils have produced extended pieces of writing based on scientific themes. Throughout school, pupils are very willing to discuss their work and demonstrate an ability to express themselves clearly. Pupils use their numeracy skills to record their findings. For example, in Year 6 they recorded their results on tally charts and then produced graphs to represent that information. In lessons, pupils work well together in groups and show a willingness to help each other during practical activities.

94. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good and results in the provision of a wide range of worthwhile learning experiences. Teachers use opening sessions well to review and revise what has already been covered and to introduce new themes. In Years 3 to 6, teaching is equally good. There is a sound level of subject knowledge. Lessons are carefully planned and well prepared to focus on the learning objectives. Teachers take account of the range of ability in their classes and plan work at different levels. In some instances, teachers effectively use opportunities in their personal, social and health education lessons to reinforce learning in science, especially about living things. Throughout school, pupils with special educational needs are very well supported by teachers and learning support assistants, as are those who may be experiencing problems with the subject. Lessons have a good pace and this helps to maintain pupils' interests. Much of the work given to pupils during lessons is based on worksheets. This, while providing a good guiding framework for recording, can have the negative effect of limiting the development of independent working skills and requires careful monitoring. Some marking lacks rigour in that it is restricted to positive comments rather than a real assessment of the work done.
95. The manager leads the subject effectively and has produced a useful, detailed subject development plan that accurately outlines what needs to be done to improve standards. The curriculum is supported with a good level of resources and events. For example, there was a visit to the school by the Health Promotion Bus and some animals were brought in from Linton Zoo. Pupils also visit a butterfly park and local farms to enhance their learning. When the improvements in the curriculum, teaching and the attitudes of the pupils are taken into consideration, the school is in a strong position to increase overall attainment further.

ART AND DESIGN

96. At the previous inspection, pupils' attainment in art and design was stated to be below national expectations for pupils aged seven and above for pupils aged eleven. This situation has improved for pupils in Years 1 and 2, whose attainment is now in line with national expectations. In Years 3 to 6, pupil attainment is now in line with national expectations. The quality of artwork in the junior years is often good but the range and volume of work is limited.
97. By the end of Year 2, pupils have experienced a range of media, styles and materials. They have a developing knowledge of line, colour and pattern making. Pupils experience and experiment with a range of materials. They learn to mould, roll and fashion plasticine and dough, using tools to score and carve. Interesting collages are produced using a variety of materials. Pupils develop printing techniques and experiment with hand, leaf and fruit prints. Some pupils in a reception and Year 1 class were using fruit for close observational drawing, following a visit to the local art gallery. The teacher introduced a wide range of different fruits and several postcards of still life paintings for inspiration. Pupils were most intrigued by the work of Archimboldo and enjoyed identifying the fruit he had used. Work using pastels is of good quality and pupils demonstrate an eye for detail as they develop shading techniques effectively. By the end of Year 6, pupils have consolidated and developed their skills further. Those in Years 3 and 4 model clay masks and in Year 6 this experience is extended as pupils produce painted clay tiles, carefully modelled clay houses and abstract, painted sculptures. Pupils learn techniques of weaving and experiment with colour mixing and painted tonal pictures. Skills in sketching are good. All pupils have a sketchpad and techniques are systematically developed as pupils move through the school. Some work is attractively displayed to provide ideas for others. The display in the entrance hall produced by pupils in the art club is of a very high standard. The work, oil on canvas, is on the theme of space and follows a visit to the local gallery. Other displays are more variable in quality.
98. The quality of teaching was good in three out of the four lessons observed. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and resources are well prepared. In a Year 3 and 4 lesson on observational drawing, pupils were encouraged to draft drawings and experiment with elevations. As a result, work improved as the lesson progressed and attention to detail began to emerge. Teachers focus on the correct use of terminology. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 were introduced to 'elevation' and pupils knew the value of sketching lightly. They explain, "It means I don't have to rub it out if I make a mistake". Pupils in Years 5 and 6 know 'viewfinder' and are able to discriminate between soft and hard leads and use these for dramatic effect. Lessons are well managed and pupils are well behaved, showing sustained effort and interest. Pupils enjoy art lessons and work hard to improve their artistic skills. Those who have special educational needs often attain good standards in this subject. Many show creativity and flair. Freed from the use of words, many pupils express themselves clearly through imaginative pieces of work. Pupils throughout school effectively use the work of famous artists as an inspiration but know little of their lives or of the techniques they developed. Pupils in Year 6 knew of Monet, Picasso and Van Gogh but were unable to describe their styles and knew little of their lives. The art and design curriculum is very well supported by the art club that runs after school and provides further opportunities for pupils to extend their skills and interests.
99. The subject is led by an enthusiastic manager. The curriculum was amended last year to include a greater emphasis on the teaching of skills but development is not yet systematic across the subject. The co-ordinator intends to address the situation fully through a new scheme of work. Little use is made, at present, of computer-generated

art. The school is fortunate to have a number of staff with good subject knowledge but not all teachers are confident in the teaching of art. Some require an up-date on skills and knowledge. There are satisfactory resources for practical work but little to support the study of art history in terms of books, computer programs and posters.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

100. By ages seven and eleven, attainment is in line with the standards expected of pupils nationally. This represents good improvement since the inspection of February 1997, when attainment was below expectations, and is largely due to the work done to improve planning and teaching. A detailed scheme of work is closely followed and ensures progression in pupils' learning.
101. By the end of Year 2, pupils generate ideas about design by drawing on their own experiences. They are able to communicate their ideas with sketches, written work and in discussion. Pupils collect and assemble materials and components, joining them using a variety of temporary methods. They plan their work following a logical sequence. They are developing the ability to look critically at what they have done and say how it could be improved. Often, through the use of kits, they gain practical experiences of mechanisms. Pupils at the end of Year 6 have further developed their ability to plan systematically. For example, Year 4 pupils worked on the design of a battery-powered light. They carefully considered who it was for, what it was for, and the particular needs of the user. In a link to their literacy work, they produce well written explanations of how a torch actually works. Some pupils produce proposals for the design of an animal house. This project involves the drawing of labelled designs and a sketched prediction of the finished product. Year 6 pupils identify the strengths and weaknesses of their constructions and suggest possible improvements. All are aware of the importance of the quality of finish. Pupils, of all ages, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in designing, making and evaluating. They learn, through experience, about using different materials. Many sketch and annotate their designs with great attention to detail.
102. The standard of teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Teachers provide many opportunities for the pupils to investigate and experiment. Pupils' social skills are extended when they are encouraged to share tools and help each other in group work. Teachers make good use of simple materials and prepare their lessons well so that everything is ready at hand. There is good attention to health and safety requirements, particularly when the pupils are handling sharp or heated equipment, and to hygiene when working with food. Learning support assistants are well deployed in lessons to support groups and individuals on their practical and recorded tasks, so that they have every opportunity to succeed. Work in the subject is often linked to other areas of the curriculum. For example, there was some good work seen in the design of windmills in a science topic about weather.
103. The subject manager has an accurate overview of teaching and learning in the subject and has produced a detailed action plan to improve provision even further.

GEOGRAPHY

104. Standards in geography are in line with what is expected for pupils by the time they are seven and eleven years old. This represents an improvement on judgements in the last inspection when attainment in geography was below average. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and in Years 3 to 6 it is good. Older pupils have especially good skills of historical interpretation and enquiry. The school has adopted a new scheme of work that is organised through topics into blocks of time, mapped out across the age groups. Work in pupils' books provides evidence of both the work covered and the development of appropriate skills such as mapping and data handling.
105. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop a good knowledge of the immediate area through guided walks in the neighbourhood. They explore and identify physical and natural features in their immediate environment. They understand why buildings such as churches and shops are essential to the community. In one Year 2 lesson, pupils were able to describe the characteristics of the different seasons and how they affect the activities of people. Pupils provide an extensive list of words to describe each of the seasons. They explain accurately the types of clothes worn and the sorts of activities undertaken at different times of the year. Throughout Years 3 to 6 pupils develop their knowledge and understanding further. Those in Year 3 responded enthusiastically to a lesson where they mapped out the hall. Good teacher questioning prompted pupils to think deeply and to keep focussed on a complex task. Year 6 pupils' geographical skills and knowledge is enhanced by residential visits to the Field Study Centre at Stibbington. Pupils show interest in their lessons by listening attentively to the teacher and collaborating well with others. They also sustain good levels of concentration when involved in independent study. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress in all aspects of geography. They have effective support, usually from classroom assistants when using various sources for research, such as books, maps or charts. This ensures that they have equal access to the study material and can participate fully in group and class discussions.
106. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is at least satisfactory, and in one third of lessons it is good. Teachers match work carefully to prior learning and pupils are well supported in their practical and recorded activities. In Years 3 to 6 teaching was very good in the one lesson seen. For this age group, lessons are well planned and show precise learning objectives, which are made clear to the pupils. Good use is made of the local environment and surrounding area to develop pupils' understanding of places and to investigate how human activity can change the environment. Teachers keep on-going records of pupils' progress in geography and the information is summarised into a detailed report for parents.

HISTORY

107. Standards in history are in line with those expected of seven and eleven year olds, and progress is satisfactory. This represents very good improvement from the last inspection when the lack of history provision for Years 1 and 2 was an issue. The scheme of work is organised into a two-year cycle of topics that avoids repetition of subject matter. Work in pupils' books provides satisfactory evidence of learning. Teachers' planning documents show adequate coverage of history and, to a lesser extent, the development of skills in the subject.
108. In Years 1 and 2, pupils develop an understanding of chronology and study events and people of long ago. In topics on transport and toys they appreciate the similarities and differences between 'now' and 'then'. They learn of important people who have

influenced the past, such as George Stephenson. Their understanding and motivation is further enhanced by visits to places of historical interest. However, their understanding that the past is based on a study of sources is not sufficiently developed. Junior pupils study the Romans, Tudor times, the Victorians and the Aztecs. The study of the Romans was greatly enhanced by a visit to Peterborough museum, where an actor provided a living history experience for the pupils. They also had the opportunity to handle artefacts, which provided an imaginative and tangible link with the past. In a lesson on Ancient Greece, Year 3 pupils were given the challenging task of sorting statements into whether they referred to Athens or Sparta. This activity was developed into a piece of extended writing, in which pupils had to explain the differences between the city-states and to express where they would have liked to live. Pupils of all abilities handled this task well, which included understanding difficult key words, such as 'democracy' or 'oligarchy'. Their study of the topic is greatly enhanced by attractive displays, one of which prompts the pupils to think more deeply about the subject by including questions for them. Pupils frame their own questions for historical enquiry, such as, "What was the Roman army like?", or "What clothes did they wear?". Pupils used referencing skills they had learned in literacy lessons to find out the answers to these questions. However, pupils' knowledge and use of the full range of sources available for historical research, including information and communication technology, could be further developed.

109. No lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2 and therefore no judgement on teaching is made. In Years 3 to 6, half of the teaching is satisfactory, one quarter is good and a further quarter is very good. Lessons are effectively planned with clear learning objectives, that are known and understood by the pupils. Activities are interesting, demanding and well matched to the range of abilities and ages. Great care is taken to ensure that all pupils who have special educational needs are fully involved in all lessons. They often work collaboratively so that can share ideas and experiences with other pupils. Teachers design recording tasks to ensure that these pupils are well supported, either through writing frames, additional supporting material or by the intervention of a classroom assistant. Consequently, all pupils achieve well.
110. The subject manager provides effective leadership for the subject. Teachers' planning is monitored and samples of pupils' work inspected to check for continuity in learning, coverage of all the programmes of study and to ensure that standards are maintained. The identified areas for development include promoting historical enquiry and further integrating literacy skills into the study of the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

111. By the age of seven, pupils achieve standards in line with those expected nationally. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is below national expectations. Since the inspection of February 1997, standards have improved but there is room for further development in Years 3 to 6. No direct teaching was seen during the inspection and judgements are based on a scrutiny of work, and discussions with pupils and the subject manager. Overall, pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6, progress is slow because pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to practise their skills and to consolidate learning.
112. Pupils at the end of Year 2 understand the use of the cursor as the point of reference on the screen. They use the delete key, space bar and direction keys to amend text. Some save text and retrieve work from file. In discussions, they are able to name some of the uses to which information technology is put in the modern world, for example, banks, credit card transactions, e-mail and as a learning aid. They understand that there is a need to instruct computers to perform tasks and that the

information fed into them must be accurate if we want them to work properly. Pupils at the end of Year 6 have experienced the use of spreadsheets and data processing programs. They know how to use different font styles, how to highlight text and use spellcheckers. Most of them open and close programs efficiently, saving the work they have done. They are not as confident generally as the pupils interviewed in Years 1 and 2 about the use of computers. However, a scrutiny of the work produced by Year 6 pupils indicates that their skills in word processing are developing well. They illustrate their work using draw programs and bring it to the desired standard of presentation. However, skills in control technology are limited and pupils are not secure in the concept of modelling events on the computer.

113. Information and communication technology is used in other subjects to some extent, and this is a considerable improvement since the last inspection. For example, pupils in Year 2 have used the mathematical program 'Starting Graphs' to produce work on their favourite flavours of crisps. Pupils in a Year 5 class were using the computer to practise their computational skills in a number lesson. In a Year 4 number lesson, pupils were using a problem-solving program to enhance learning and, in Year 6, pupils used their word processing skills to re-draft extended writing. In a clear link to science and literacy, pupils in Years 1 and 2 have produced extended written work about the human skeleton, lungs and digestive system using computer technology. More able pupils in Year 6 have used word processing to write instructions on accessing Microsoft Publisher and the Internet. There are also several examples of work done by pupils in history and religious education using their information and communication technology skills.
114. No valid judgements on the quality of teaching are possible. The school has taken steps to increase teacher confidence in the use of information and communication technology. Training provided by a teacher from a local secondary school is having some success in increasing teacher knowledge and confidence. However, due to the basic level of computer resourcing in classes and a computer suite that is not big enough to take a full class, there is a limited amount of 'hands-on' time for pupils to consolidate and practise their skills.
115. Pupils respond well to the opportunities offered by the school to work on computers and their approach is enthusiastic. They talk confidently about the work they are doing, especially in Years 1 and 2 and clearly have a lively interest in the subject. They are always well behaved when in the computer suite. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress and are as equally proficient in using computers as their classmates. They show a high level of confidence when working on tasks and thoroughly enjoy opportunities to 'play games' that consolidate learning in mathematics or English.
116. The school has a detailed action plan for the subject that includes the purchase of more equipment and the moving of the computer suite to a bigger base. Since the last inspection, the school has done much to develop the curriculum with a new, comprehensive scheme of work and effective whole school planning. The subject manager monitors provision and standards closely to ensure that pupils moving through the junior years will, in future, achieve the expected levels by the time they get to the end of Year 6. The pupils have a useful record booklet in which they proudly record their progress and successes.

MUSIC

117. Attainment in music for pupils aged seven and eleven is in line with national expectations, and pupils make good progress throughout school.

118. In Years 1 and 2 pupils clap and tap a beat on a variety of simple instruments. They listen attentively and recognise ways in which sounds can be made and altered. They listen to music with enjoyment, expressing likes and dislikes clearly. Pupils identify a wide range of instruments and explore different ways to play them and create effect. For example, some Year 1 pupils compose music using percussion instruments to represent animals, after listening to 'The Carnival of Animals'. They sing with expression and an awareness of pitch. Older pupils in Year 2 have a secure understanding of tempo and dynamics. They follow and maintain beat when saying rhymes and in musical patterns. In Years 3 to 6, pupils use a range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments to create sound patterns. When singing, they demonstrate good diction and pitch. Pupils listen to taped versions of their work and appraise it critically. They make good improvements through rehearsal. Older pupils use a varied range of untuned percussion instruments to compose and develop their ideas after listening to pieces of music around a theme. They improvise in a variety of styles using contrasting musical elements, such as quick and slow, quiet and loud. They comment constructively when appraising their own and other people's work. Pupils recognise how musical pieces reflect the composer's intentions, and some higher attainers layer the sounds in their composition. In one lesson, pupils listened to music by Schubert and Saint Saens. They identified the different instruments played and compared the composers' use of dynamics and pulse to create effect. They then worked collaboratively in groups to produce their own musical interpretation of an aquarium. One group created a particularly imaginative piece that included a sophisticated musical structure. By age eleven, pupils have a sound understanding of duration, tempo and dynamics. Pupils sing in assemblies with good pitch and some expression. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy the opportunity to be creative and the freedom to express themselves through musical composition. The majority make good progress and often attain similar standards to their peers. On occasions, however, some pupils are withdrawn from this lesson for group work on literacy. They miss vital elements of the lesson and are therefore not receiving their full entitlement to the curriculum. The literacy work that they do in these group sessions is repetitive and provides little stimulation. This is at the expense of the creative, imaginative experiences of the music lesson.
119. Teaching is mainly good in Years 1 and 2, and in one third of lessons, it is very good practice. In Years 3 to 6 teaching is at least good and one third is excellent. Pupils' learning and progress relate directly to the good quality of teaching they receive. For example, in Years 5 and 6, direct intervention by the teacher helped pupils to appraise their own performance and to suggest ways to refine it. Overall, teachers have a good level of subject knowledge and their enthusiasm is a key element that inspires pupils and produces a good pace in lessons. Some learning support assistants provide additional skills that enhance the curriculum but, in some lessons, they are too detached from the pupils and do not provide the level of intervention and support that is required. During one session, some pupils with special educational needs found difficulty in following the words to the music. The assistant did not intervene to help and this had an adverse effect on the quality of their singing.
120. Resources are especially good for this subject. They are intelligently stored and very well used. The dedicated music room is a valuable resource, especially for the older pupils in the divided classrooms, for whom a whole class music lesson would be very difficult. The subject makes a major contribution to pupils' social and cultural development. Pupils work very successfully on collaborative tasks and provide constructive comments on each other's performance. They have opportunities to experience music from different cultures and to play a wide variety of instruments from around the world. Pupils have opportunities to perform for local audiences at the

Christmas and end-of-year productions and to take part in church services. The subject is very well led by an enthusiastic and hard working manager who monitors provision and has a secure overview of standards.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

121. There has been good improvement across the school and pupils' attainment is now in line with national expectations. At the time of the last inspection the majority of pupils showed a disinterest in the subject. Now they demonstrate enthusiasm, are motivated to learn and remember to bring appropriate clothing. There is evidence to show that all aspects of the physical education curriculum are addressed, although only lessons on dance and games were observed during the inspection. The school participates in the local education authority's swimming programme. Good progress for pupils in Years 3, 4 and 6 is recorded in their swimming diaries. Pupils make satisfactory progress across the other aspects of the physical education curriculum.
122. The poor attitudes and behaviour reported during the last inspection have been eliminated. In lessons observed, pupils' attitudes and behaviour were often very good or excellent. They co-operate very well in lessons, whether in pairs or in larger groups.
123. In all lessons observed in Years 1 and 2, teaching was good. In Years 3 to 6, half of the teaching was good and half very good. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection when the quality of teaching was reported to range from satisfactory to poor. Planning is consistently good and lessons are conducted at a brisk pace. In a Year 2 lesson on ball skill development, the teacher demonstrated good subject knowledge. Activities were well focused on specific skills and pupils made good progress. Pupils are actively involved throughout lessons and work hard. They confidently demonstrate their skills to others and are frequently praised for the standards they achieve. There is a good focus on vocabulary in lessons and pupils understand terms such as 'travel', 'control', 'target' and 'grip'. The school provides a diverse range of interesting experiences in the physical education programme. In a Year 5 and 6 lesson on aerobics, the pupils made great strides in co-ordination and sequencing of movements. The lesson was very well planned and taught. Learning was consequently very good. Pupils remained on task very well during the lesson and their enjoyment was clearly demonstrated. In an outdoor lesson targeted at the development of catching and throwing skills, Year 3 and 4 pupils participated enthusiastically in paired and small-group activities. Progress was good as they developed new tactics and better teamworking. A very good lesson on the development of orienteering skills for pupils in Years 3 and 4 was observed where pupils had challenges in problem solving. An interest in hockey is developing well in the school. It is promoted through the employment of a professional who provides coaching sessions. The need to warm up is well understood by pupils, who explain that it helps to get the muscles working. Teachers stress the need to cool down and some older pupils follow a set routine of stretches before completing the lesson. Pupils pay very good attention to safety and handle all apparatus with care.
124. Pupils enjoy the challenges that their physical education provides and strive hard to improve their performance. Those who have special educational needs often do well in this practical subject. Pupils who experience difficulties with behaviour are carefully grouped with good role models to help them maintain positive attitudes. However, in one lesson, some pupils were withdrawn from their physical education lesson for reading practice. On their return, they found it difficult to join in fully because they had missed some teaching. This practice has a detrimental effect on learning and is in need of review. Provision is well supported by a range of extra-curricular activities and

inter-school matches, which serve to enrich the curriculum. The school enjoyed its first success in a tournament when winning a hockey event. Pupils and staff were thrilled by the experience and highly motivated to repeat it. Year 5 and 6 pupils visit the nearby community college to take advantage of the all-weather pitch when the field is too wet. The residential visit to the outdoor pursuits centre at Stibbington makes a positive contribution to the development of physical skills, teamwork and team spirit.

125. The hard-working subject manager provides very good leadership. At the previous inspection there was neither a policy document nor a scheme of work for physical education. This issue has been fully addressed and useful documentation is now in place. The scheme of work provides a comprehensive and detailed programme that effectively supports non-specialist teachers in the planning and teaching of lessons. Well-structured lesson plans are also readily available to teachers for reference. There have been many training sessions since the last inspection and teacher subject knowledge is now good.

126. Resources are much improved and are now adequate for teaching the curriculum. However, these could be usefully supplemented by installing a fixed climbing structure in the hall, and providing more stimulating and challenging gymnastics apparatus, particularly for older and higher attaining pupils. A replacement fund is needed so that small equipment does not become depleted during the school year. Accommodation is good for the subject, with a large field and ample hard surface areas. The erection of a fence has successfully prevented disruption of lessons referred to in the previous report.