

INSPECTION REPORT

BYFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Byfield, Daventry

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121802

Headteacher: Mr Andrew Ward

Reporting inspector: Mr Colin Henderson
23742

Dates of inspection: 26th – 28th November 2001

Inspection number: 192795

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bell Lane Byfield Daventry
Postcode:	NN11 6US
Telephone number:	01327 260349
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Ken Jenks
Date of previous inspection:	March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23742	Colin Henderson	Registered inspector	Science; information and communication technology; geography; history	How high are standards? The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9306	Barbara Moore	Lay inspector		How high are standards? Attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
30810	Liz Kounnou	Team inspector	English; music; religious education; the foundation stage; special educational needs	
21585	Tony Kingston	Team inspector	Mathematics; art and design; design and technology; physical education; equal opportunities	How good are curricular and other opportunities?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Byfield Primary School is situated in an attractive rural setting in the village of Byfield. It currently has 80 pupils on roll (40 boys and 40 girls) which is smaller than the average primary school. Most pupils come from a mixture of private and rented housing in the local village. They come from a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds. Almost all of the pupils are of white, United Kingdom ethnic background. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. There are 18 per cent of pupils on the school's register on special educational needs; most have moderate learning needs. This is broadly average. No pupils have specific statements of need. No pupils are entitled to free school meals. Children enter reception in the September of the year in which they are five years old. They have a wide range of attainment. It is broadly average overall. The school has four mixed-age classes, each containing pupils from two different year groups.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Byfield Primary School is a friendly and harmonious school community, and its overall effectiveness is satisfactory. Teachers successfully encourage pupils to have very good attitudes to learning. Pupils behave very well and relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils attain average standards, although their skills and knowledge are not developed consistently in all classes. Teaching is sound overall. It is very good in Years 3 and 4. The school has very good links with parents and excellent links with its local community. The headteacher works closely with a supportive team of staff and governors. They have been successful in maintaining a caring, supportive approach and in improving the building to encourage pupils' learning. The school makes sound use of its resources and gives sound value for money.

What the school does well

- All pupils have very good, enthusiastic attitudes to school.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good in lessons and around the school. There is a total absence of oppressive behaviour.
- Relationships are very good throughout the school.
- The school has very good links with parents and with the local community. They make an excellent contribution to children's learning
- Teaching in Years 3 and 4 is of a consistently very high standard.
- The arrangements for promoting pupils' personal development are very good.

What could be improved

- Pupils' achievements in writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment.
- Teachers' use of assessment information to ensure that learning activities match pupils' needs and to guide the next stage of pupils' learning.
- Procedures to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning.
- Learning resources for children in the foundation stage.

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 sound progress overall since the last inspection in March 1997. It has made some progress on the key issues, although this has not been consistent. Resources for information and communication technology have been significantly improved recently. They are raising standards, particularly for infant pupils. The school has completed schemes of work for all subjects, although the scheme for religious education does not meet all requirements. The headteacher has some opportunities to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning, although these are not rigorous enough to promote consistent improvement. The school has improved the results of national tests, especially for Year 2 pupils. However, inspection evidence shows that it has made unsatisfactory progress overall in raising standards of attainment, particularly in writing and mathematics. There have been good

improvements made to the building which are enhancing the range of learning opportunities. These, together with pupils' positive attitudes and recent changes in staff and organisation mean that the school is well-placed to make rapid improvement in standards of attainment.

STANDARDS

As the number of Year 6 pupils taking the national tests in 2001 was less than 20, no table of results is published. Results vary from year to year due to differences in pupils' ability in the small numbers taking the tests. Test results over the last four years show that the school has increased the proportion of Year 6 pupils who achieve the nationally expected level 4 in English and science. They are above the national average in English and broadly average in science. Test results in mathematics are generally below the national average. Too few pupils attain above average levels; for example, in the 2001 tests, the proportion of pupils who achieved the higher level 5 in mathematics or science was in the bottom five per cent of schools nationally. Over the last two years, the school has achieved its target for the proportion of pupils achieving level 4 in English. It has not met its target in mathematics.

Inspection evidence shows that standards meet the national average for Year 6 pupils in English, mathematics and science. Inspectors confirm that too few pupils achieve above average standards. On entry to the school, most children have average skills. They settle quickly and generally sound teaching enables them to make sound progress. Most achieve their early learning goals before entering Year 1, particularly in personal, social and emotional development. Many do not achieve their goals in writing and in creative development, where progress is restricted by a lack of good resources. Pupils attain average standards at the end of Year 2. They have not maintained the well above average standards achieved in recent national tests in reading and mathematics. More able pupils are not challenged enough to extend their writing skills or apply their number skills and knowledge to achieve above average levels. Staff changes, due to the increased number of classes, are enabling pupils in Years 3 and 4 to make rapid progress due to the consistently high quality teaching. Many are achieving above average standards. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 make sound progress overall, although more able pupils are not always challenged effectively to extend their skills and knowledge, for example, in reading and writing. This does not ensure that pupils make consistent progress in their learning and achieve standards of which they are capable. Standards in information and communication technology meet expected levels by Year 2. They are below those expected nationally by the end of Year 6 as pupils have not had enough opportunities to develop their skills in all required aspects. Attainment in religious education is below expected levels as teachers do not cover all the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils attain standards in art and design which are above expectations at the end of Year 6. They meet expected standards at the end of Year 2. Standards in design and technology, physical education, history and geography meet national expectations. There was insufficient evidence to judge standards in music.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy school. They all have very positive attitudes to learning, particularly when lessons are interesting and challenging. They are keen to participate and to succeed.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good in lessons and around the school. Pupils are friendly, polite and helpful.
Personal development and relationships	Good personal development promotes very good relationships for all pupils. Pupils play and work together very well. They show good respect for each other.
Attendance	Attendance is in line with the national average. Most pupils arrive on time and there is a prompt and effective start to the day.

The high standards of behaviour and pupils' enthusiastic attitudes are strengths of the school and support pupils' learning. The very good relationships contribute to pupils' enjoyment of school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Sound	Sound	Sound

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

Teaching is sound overall. There is significant variation across the school. Teachers do not ensure that they meet the needs of all pupils to enable them to make consistent progress in their learning. Teaching is consistently very good in Years 3 and 4 and enables pupils to achieve high standards in their learning. Teaching is occasionally unsatisfactory in the foundation stage and in Years 1 and 2 and this restricts progress. The teaching of English is sound overall. The teaching of mathematics is sound in Years 1 and 2. It is good in Years 3 to 6, although many Year 5 and 6 pupils do not have secure number knowledge and understanding. This restricts standards. Teachers do not have consistently high enough expectations of pupils' work in writing and in extending their knowledge and understanding in mathematics, particularly for infants and the older and more able junior pupils. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils. They manage their classes effectively to enable pupils to sustain their concentration, especially when activities are interesting and challenging. Teaching in the foundation stage is sound. The teacher has a good, encouraging manner with children which enables them to settle happily and quickly into school life. Learning activities are not always matched closely to children's ability, for example, in developing their writing skills.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good for pupils in Years 3 to 6. It is sound for the foundation stage and for Years 1 and 2. A good range of extra-curricular activities enhances the curriculum. The range of learning activities to challenge more able pupils is not developed enough.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Sound. Teaching and support staff work effectively together to ensure that pupils have equal curricular opportunities. Teachers do not always ensure that activities are matched closely to pupils' needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school provides effectively for all aspects of pupils' personal development. The school has very good links with the church, which it uses well to promote spiritual development. It makes good use of visitors to extend pupils' knowledge of other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school's strong caring approach provides good quality pastoral care for all pupils. It has good procedures for supporting pupils' personal development. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and using assessment information to guide teaching are unsatisfactory.
How well the school works with parents	The school's links with parents are very good. It has excellent links with the local community. They are used very effectively to extend pupils' learning.

The school's caring and supportive approach and its valuable partnership with parents and the community are important factors in encouraging pupils to have a positive approach. The curriculum

offers a sound range of activities, although the scheme of work for religious education does not meet requirements. The foundation stage curriculum is limited by accommodation and a lack of resources.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school has sound leadership and management overall. The headteacher provides good leadership in encouraging a team approach and promoting a caring and positive school ethos, valuing all pupils equally. Rigorous procedures to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning are not in place. This is restricting the improvement in pupils' attainment, for example, in writing.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	A supportive and increasingly influential governing body has a good understanding of the strengths and development priorities of the school. Governors work in close partnership with the headteacher to fulfil their responsibilities and focus on school improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory overall. The headteacher is beginning to use attainment information to identify improvement priorities. The school has not developed clear, rigorous procedures to focus on raising standards of teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	Sound. The school uses funds successfully to target improvement priorities. Governors monitor spending closely, although do not consistently evaluate its impact on standards. They apply the principles of best value effectively. The school gives sound value for money.

The headteacher has given clear leadership in creating a strong team approach and in improving the building and the range of learning opportunities. Staffing levels have been improved. However, resources in the foundation stage are poor and restrict standards achieved by children under five. The limited range of literacy resources, for example, reading resources for the older, more able pupils, does not promote high standards.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • It helps them become mature and responsible. • The school expects their children to work hard and behave well. • Teaching is good. • The school is well led and managed. • The school works closely with them to enable their children to be happy and to make good progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The consistent use of homework. • Information about how well their children are making progress. • A broader range of activities outside of lessons.

Parental responses come from 35 questionnaires (44 per cent) and the 18 parents who attended the meeting. Inspection evidence supports many of the parents' positive views, especially those relating to children's enthusiastic approach, the school's effective partnership with parents and their children's good personal development. Good teaching and high expectations were not consistently evident. Inspectors judged that the school uses homework soundly to support school work and that there was a good range of extra-curricular activities. The school provides very good information to parents, particularly about pupils' progress.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 The results of the 2001 National Curriculum tests for Year 6 pupils show that pupils attained standards which were above the national average in English. They were well below average in mathematics and science. Compared with similar schools, Year 6 pupils attained average standards in English. Their standards in mathematics and science were in the lowest five per cent of similar schools nationally. Results over the last five years show that standards are just above average in English, broadly average in science and just below average in mathematics. There is some variation from year-to-year due to differences in the range of pupils' abilities in the small numbers of pupils taking the tests. Test results show that standards have improved since the last inspection in English and science. The school has increased the percentage of pupils who achieved the nationally expected level 4¹ in English and science, as shown in the following table. Standards overall in mathematics are too low. Many pupils do not make consistent progress in their learning and do not always achieve the above average standards of which they are capable. In 2001, the proportion of pupils who achieved above the expected level in English was close to the national average. The proportion that achieved above the expected level in mathematics or in science was in the bottom five per cent of schools nationally. There is no significant difference between the achievements of boys and girls.

2 A table to show the percentage of pupils achieving the nationally expected level 4.

Subject	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
English	58	69	81	80	92
Mathematics	67	50	69	70	54
Science	67	81	81	100	85

3 Inspection evidence shows that standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils who achieve the expected level 4 meets the national average. However, as reflected in the National Curriculum test results, the proportion of pupils achieving above average levels is too low. Pupils do not make enough progress in developing their writing skills. Teachers do not ensure that writing activities build effectively on prior skills and knowledge and writing skills are not applied consistently in other subjects. More able pupils are not challenged enough to apply their skills and knowledge to solve difficult problems and investigations in mathematics and science. The school achieved its target in 2000 of 78 per cent of pupils to achieve the expected level 4 in English. It did not achieve its 78 per cent target in mathematics. The school exceeded its rather low target of 69 per cent in English in 2001, although it did not achieve that target in mathematics. The school recently reviewed its 2002 targets to aim for 83 per cent of pupils to achieve the expected level 4 in English and mathematics. Inspection evidence shows that it is likely to achieve these targets, although too few pupils are likely to achieve above expected levels.

4 Year 2 pupils attain standards which are broadly in line with those expected nationally in English, mathematics and science. The results of National Curriculum tests for

¹ The National Curriculum has been written on the basis that pupils attain Level 4 by the end of Year 6. Pupils attaining Level 5 are reaching standards above those expected for their age.

pupils at the end of Year 2 over the last three years show that pupils attained standards which were above average in reading and mathematics and average for writing. Inspection evidence shows that standards have not been maintained at those levels. The school increased the number of classes this school year and reduced the age ranges within each class. These changes have not ensured that teachers maintain consistently high enough expectations. Teachers do not enable pupils to write for a broad range of purposes. Pupils are not confident in using different strategies to spell words which are not familiar to them. Most pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of number but they are not required to apply them enough to investigate number problems. Teachers do not challenge pupils enough to apply their skills and knowledge in science. This does not enable them to achieve above average standards.

- 5 Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are not soundly developed overall. Although teachers are making sound use of literacy and numeracy lessons to develop pupils' skills, they are not extending them sufficiently to support work in other subjects. Teachers use pupils' research skills effectively to find information on a range of topics but their writing skills are not being consistently applied for a broad range of purposes. Teachers require pupils to apply their numeracy skills in science and design and technology, but not often in other subjects. Teachers are beginning to use pupils' improving skills in information and communication technology to support standards in other subjects, for example, English and science. However, this is not being done consistently. Pupils have not had opportunities to use the new resources enough to achieve the level of skill expected of their age, particularly for junior pupils.
- 6 Pupils with special educational needs achieve standards in line with their ability because their individual education plans include achievable targets. They are supported well in lessons by support staff, which enables them to be included in most learning activities. Where the teacher does not match the activity closely to their individual learning targets, pupils with special educational needs do not achieve well and do not make sound progress in their learning. The school identifies a very high proportion of pupils on the register for special educational needs as needing additional support as it tries to include all pupils that might be underachieving. No gifted and talented pupils are identified for special support.
- 7 Pupils attain standards in information and communication technology which meet those expected nationally for pupils at the end of Year 2. They are benefiting from the increasing opportunities to develop their skills on the new and improved resources. Standards at the end of Year 6 are below national expectations. Although pupils are improving their skills in word processing and researching information, they have not yet had enough opportunities to extend their skills in other required aspects, for example, control and exchanging information. Attainment in religious education is below the standards expected in the locally agreed syllabus for pupils in Years 2 and 6. Pupils do not have sufficient time to cover all the required aspects of the curriculum. Pupils attain standards in art and design which are above expectations at the end of Year 6. They meet expected standards at the end of Year 2. Standards in design and technology, physical education, history and geography meet national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. They are above expectations in Years 3 and 4. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on standards in music.
- 8 Children make sound progress overall in their learning in the foundation stage. They settle quickly due mainly to good relationships and the teacher using praise effectively and encouragingly. Their progress in some areas of learning is restricted by the limited range of learning resources. Most children achieve their early learning goals

by the time they enter Year 1 in all areas of learning, except writing and creative development. Pupils do not make satisfactory progress overall in their learning through the infants and juniors. They make very good progress in Years 3 and 4 because of the consistently very high quality teaching. Pupils make sound progress in some lessons. However, this is not consistent as teachers do not use always assessment information effectively to ensure that they match learning activities to the range of pupils' needs in the class. They do not challenge more able pupils consistently to extend and apply their knowledge and understanding.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 9 At the time of the last inspection, pupils were judged to have good attitudes to school. This has been improved, as pupils' attitudes to school are very good and are a strength of the school. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their school and are keen to participate in school activities and the day-to-day life of the school. This enthusiasm is reflected overall in the very good quality of behaviour. Pupils behave very well in and around school; and in the majority of lessons are able to enjoy their learning. There are occasional lapses of behaviour by a minority of pupils when class control is less effective and work is less challenging. However, the majority of pupils are courteous and polite and very welcoming to visitors. Pupils form very good relationships with one another and with adults. In a personal, social and health education lesson, pupils responded well to each other, they listened to each other's ideas, and showed consideration for other points of view.
- 10 Staff set a good example in their relationships with one another and with the pupils. This is reflected in the excellent way pupils relate to one another, without any apparent aggression. There is an absence of oppressive behaviour and a high degree of harmony exists between all pupils. There have been no exclusions. Discussion with pupils showed they have a good understanding of the impact of their actions on the lives of others.
- 11 The personal development of pupils is good. Year 6 pupils take on a good range of responsibilities, for example, organising the music for assembly. This contributes effectively to the smooth running of the school. School assemblies encourage the pupils to think positively about their actions and the actions of others. The residential visit to France to visit the war graves was a strong indication of the emphasis the school places on personal development. The visit gave the pupils an opportunity to lay a wreath on behalf of the local British Legion in memory of local people who had died in the war.
- 12 Pupils are happy to come to school and the attendance rate at the school is satisfactory. The school focuses well on maintaining a high level of pupils' punctuality. Through the daily life of the school, pupils' understanding and respect for others reflects the strong ethos of the school and the very close community links within the village.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

- 13 The overall quality teaching is sound. It is similar to that reported in the last inspection. There is still significant variation in teaching across the school. This does not ensure that pupils make consistent progress. Thirty-one lessons were observed during the inspection. Sixteen per cent of these were very good or excellent. These were all in Years 3 and 4 where teaching is of a consistently very high standard. Thirty-two per cent of lessons were good and 46 per cent were sound. Teaching was unsatisfactory in six per cent (two lessons). The consistently very high quality of teaching in Years 3 and 4 enables pupils to make very good progress in their learning in those years. Teaching is sound overall in the foundation stage and in Years 1 and 2, although it is, on occasions, unsatisfactory and this restricts progress. Teaching is sound overall in Years 5 and 6, and sometimes good. Pupils make sound progress in their learning in these years, although it does not always build on pupils' prior skills and knowledge. Teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of pupils' work in Years 1 and 2. Their expectations of pupils in Years 5 and 6 are not always high enough, particularly in writing and in mathematics.
- 14 The teaching of English is sound. The teaching of mathematics is sound in Years 1 and 2. It is good overall in Years 3 to 6. Teachers have implemented the literacy and numeracy strategies satisfactorily, although they do not use opportunities consistently for pupils to apply their skills, particularly in writing, in other subjects. Teaching is sound and often good in science, although teachers do not challenge pupils enough to achieve above average standards. Teaching is sound in information and communication technology, physical education and art and design. There was insufficient evidence to judge teaching in history, geography, design and technology, music and religious education. In the small number of lessons observed in these subjects, the quality of teaching was never less than sound and often good.
- 15 Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils. Most manage and control their classes effectively, especially in Years 3 to 6. This enables them to give clear instructions and learning objectives for the lesson so pupils know what they are trying to achieve. Teachers encourage their pupils to focus attentively on their activities and sustain their interest and concentration. For example, in a good Year 5 and 6 literacy lesson, the teacher controlled the class very effectively from the start of the lesson. She reviewed pupils' learning from the previous lesson to check on their knowledge and understanding of myths and fables. The teacher then gave out very clear instructions over what she expected pupils to achieve in the time available. She maintained a brisk lesson pace by giving regular reminders over the time remaining. This enabled pupils to sustain their concentration and most achieved what was expected of them in the lesson. However, the good teaching in part of the lesson resulted in most pupils achieving sound, and not good progress in their learning as the range of activities was not matched closely to pupils' needs.
- 16 Some teachers have good subject knowledge in some subjects and use it well to extend pupils' skills and knowledge. For example, in a good Year 5 and 6 numeracy lesson, the teacher had good knowledge of the use of a range of mental mathematical strategies to solve number problems. He used this successfully to give clear explanations over using these strategies in a wide variety of ways. The teacher used this good subject knowledge to clarify pupils' uncertainties then extend pupils' understanding of how to use these strategies to solve more difficult questions, for example, those involving decimals or negative numbers. However, some teachers have uncertainties in their subject knowledge. Where they do not have access to good resources to support these uncertainties, this limits the standards attained. For

example, Year 1 and 2 pupils' knowledge and understanding of Hinduism were restricted by uncertainties in the teacher's subject knowledge and by poor quality resources. They were not given sufficient information to enable them to gain a clear understanding of some of the main Hindu beliefs and practices.

- 17 Where teaching is of excellent or very good quality, pupils have an enthusiastic attitude to their learning. The teacher challenges them effectively and uses good questions and guidance to enable them to achieve a high standard. For example, in an excellent Year 3 and 4 design and technology lesson, the teacher gave a clear explanation of the sewing task. She interested and excited the pupils with her enthusiastic approach. They became keen to develop and apply their skills. The teacher used prompts and guidance very successfully to enable pupils to use correct terminology when describing their work, for example, 'seam allowance' and 'cutting-out templates'. Pupils maintained a high level of concentration and gave considerable attention and care to the quality of their work. This reflected the high expectations of the teacher and led to pupils achieving standards which were well-above those expected for their age.
- 18 However, teachers do not expect high enough standards in all classes. This does not ensure that pupils make consistent progress in their learning or always achieve the standards of which they are capable. Teachers do not use assessment information consistently to ensure that activities match closely the range of learning needs within the class. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, the teacher did not give a clear focus to the writing activity and it was not matched closely to the writing skills, particularly of the more able pupils. The teacher did not give a clear demonstration of the writing activity. This resulted in pupils not settling to the task quietly and not being challenged sufficiently to extend their writing skills. Once pupils had completed the task, the teacher organised a follow-on handwriting activity which was similar to the one which they had just completed. He did not require pupils to apply their writing skills in a more challenging way and so try to achieve a higher standard. In the two lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory, teachers did not ensure that the group activities were matched well to pupils' skills and knowledge. This led to a small number of pupils finding it difficult to retain their interest and concentration. The teacher did not control their noisy behaviour effectively which disrupted the concentration of others in their group. This restricted the amount of work and the standard achieved in the lesson.
- 19 Teachers use homework soundly to support and extend class work, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Some teachers use homework effectively to develop pupils' research skills, for example, to find out more about the Vikings as part of their history topic. Teachers use homework successfully to prepare Year 6 pupils for national tests by encouraging them to use revision texts provided by the school. For example, following a science lesson, the teacher required Year 6 pupils to use the science study book to find out more information about soil types, as part of their work on plants. Teachers use pupils' skills in information and communication technology to support work in other subjects, for example, Year 5 and 6 pupils used the Internet in science to gain further information about trees. However, pupils in Years 3 to 6 have not yet had enough opportunities to use the new computer resources. This has not allowed them to develop their skills sufficiently to be used effectively to raise standards in a broad range of subjects.
- 20 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is sound. Teachers and support staff work well together to support these pupils and ensure that they participate in learning activities. For example, support staff sometimes use *'feedback*

sheets, which they complete as they are working with small groups. As a result, teachers are kept well informed of pupils' achievements in lessons. However, teachers do not use assessment information soundly. Too often pupils with special educational needs are working at activities that are not at the right level to help them make the best progress. All pupils in a class often work at the same activity. Pupils with special educational needs are not always given tasks which match their ability and link to their learning targets. This limits their progress.

- 21 Teaching in the foundation stage is sound overall. The teacher has good relations with the children. He uses praise effectively to encourage them to get involved and to recognise achievement. However, the teacher does not always use assessment information to ensure that learning activities meet the needs of all the children. This leads to some disinterest and restricts progress. The teacher is also limited in providing a broad range of interesting activities by the poor range of resources for children under five. This restricts the standards achieved.

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

- 22 The overall quality and range of learning opportunities that the school provides for the under fives and for Year 1 and 2 pupils is satisfactory. They are good for Years 3 to 6. Throughout the school the curriculum meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. It has some shortcomings in religious education since it does not meet the requirements of the local education authority's agreed syllabus. The curriculum is supported by a good range of clubs and activities outside lessons, particularly in music, sport and art.
- 23 There have been improvements in the curriculum since the last inspection. Drugs awareness now receives good attention and all subjects are now supported by policies and schemes of work. However, in English, mathematics and information communication technology, the schemes of work lack sufficient detail to support teachers in the effective planning of sequences of lessons to ensure that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding develop systematically as they move through the school. Other than in Years 3 and 4, the work is not planned consistently at levels appropriate to the needs of pupils. This leads to unchallenging work being set for a significant minority of pupils, particularly the more able. This results in their underachievement. Whilst this has been recognised by the school, the steps it has taken to improve the situation have not as yet had sufficient time to improve pupils' progress.
- 24 Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes with some Year 1 pupils with reception and some with Year 2. Teachers take great care to ensure that they include all pupils equally in all activities and opportunities. However, the curriculum does not provide sufficient challenge for pupils, especially the more able ones, except in Years 3 and 4. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all lessons. Learning support assistants support them effectively and work hard to ensure that these pupils have good support and equal involvement in all curriculum activities. This ensures that they make at least satisfactory progress.
- 25 The school has implemented the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy soundly. However, the positive impact these strategies are having on pupils learning is being restricted because teachers' planning is keeping too strictly to the frameworks. Teachers are not giving sufficient attention to the specific needs and levels of attainment of individual pupils. Consequently, writing is not sufficiently well

developed because not enough time is provided to develop it. Investigative work in mathematics, where pupils are challenged to apply and use number, is not sufficiently emphasised. This over-reliance on the frameworks as a programme of study prevents the more able pupils from achieving the higher levels. However, the mental agility exercises at the start of each lesson are having a very positive impact on pupils' mental ability skills throughout the school.

- 26 Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is very good. It is a strength of the school. The school's policy and guidelines on PSHE are good and link extremely well into other subject areas. The school uses its links with the community very successfully to support teaching. For example, a community police officer regularly visits the school to talk to pupils about personal safety and supports the drugs awareness programme. The school nurse supports the school's sex education programme and the local vicar, who is a frequent visitor to the school, also joins pupils on their yearly residential visits.
- 27 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good overall and is still a strength of the school. The school's aims are particularly well reflected in the day-to-day provision of spiritual and moral development within a close and caring family environment.
- 28 Very good provision is made for the spiritual development of pupils. The school promotes spiritual development very well through the daily acts of collective worship and in religious education. Teachers plan collective worship effectively and it takes place in a quiet respectful atmosphere. There are opportunities for reflection as music greets pupils' arrival into the school hall and quiet times when pupils reflect on the content of closing prayers. The school has very strong links with the local church whose representative regularly visits the school and occasionally leads assemblies. Pupils learn the values of Christian faith and worship is predominantly Christian. However, pupils have the opportunity to learn other faiths as part of the locally agreed syllabus. This makes a significant contribution to their spiritual development. For example, in a Year 6 lesson on Hinduism the lit candles and low lighting, together with burning incense, created a special atmosphere to which all pupils responded extremely well. Many opportunities are provided across the curriculum to promote spiritual awareness such as the inspirational approach taken by a group of Year 6 pupils when discussing the quality of their still life paintings. Extra curricular activities also make a significant contribution. For example, the music appreciation club is very well attended and raises pupils' self esteem in a happy and relaxed atmosphere. Pupils share enjoyment of new musical experiences together, laughing with delight and happily tapping along with spontaneity as they listen to music. During the school's recent residential visit to Normandy, the local association of the British Legion asked pupils to lay a wreath at the war memorial in the Bayeux War Grave Cemetery. The effect on pupils was marked, one saying, "As soon as I walked in I felt like crying...", while another observed, "It was sad to stand and look. It was upsetting to see all the graves...and they died for us. They deserve respect and honour for their bravery" and one pupil responded for them all by saying, "We appreciated being there."
- 29 Very good provision is made for pupils' moral development. The school gives high priority to equipping pupils with a clear set of moral values. This high expectation is reinforced by routine classroom practices and consistently applied codes of behaviour, together with the explicit moral teaching in lessons and assemblies. The school helps pupils to develop a good understanding of citizenship by its successful involvement in the community. It encourages older pupils to care and help the

younger ones and encourages pupils to become involved in local and national charitable and fund raising events. All staff provide pupils with excellent role models and encourage them to behave well, to show consideration to others and to develop a clear understanding of right and wrong.

- 30 The school's provision for social development is good. The caring relationships in the school contribute strongly to the good attitudes to social development and self-discipline. There were several occasions during the inspection when teachers promoted the pupils' sense of own worth. In an assembly, for example, there was great delight when a group of four pupils played their guitars as pupils entered the school hall. Teachers encourage pupils to work together responsibly and fairly. They provide many opportunities for pupils to practise and develop social skills in class discussions, particularly in personal, social and health education lessons. In extra-curricular activities too, pupils learn to work well together in a spirit of collaboration and co-operation. The choir, of which the headteacher is a member, is a very good example of this.
- 31 Good provision is made for pupils' cultural development. There are plentiful opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of local culture. This is achieved through lessons, visits, visitors and the involvement of the school in the life of the village. Teachers promote multi-cultural understanding effectively through geography and religious education and the celebration of the important events in other cultures such as the Chinese New Year. As required, a range of religious faith is the focus of teaching across the school including Christianity, Hinduism and Judaism. The teaching of these faiths and associated cultures is greatly enhanced by the involvement of visitors to the school. For example, the school has developed an excellent relationship with a local Jewish family who visit the school to talk about Hannukah and Passover. This aspect of the school's work is so successful that parents with children at the school have asked to take part in the forthcoming sessions. The music appreciation club also provides good cultural experiences for pupils by allowing pupils to share their music preferences together. It is clear from their responses that they respect and enjoy each others' contributions. Their choices came from a vast range of musical traditions from, for example, Ray Charles to Talking Heads.
- 32 The school is at the heart of the community and regularly takes part in village activities such as; church services; inviting villagers to 'coffee and mince pie' mornings; joining with the local branch of the British Legion to lay a wreath at the village war memorial on Remembrance Sunday; and visiting a wide range of institutions to entertain residents with their wonderful singing. Parents and other village residents also give valuable support by helping in school, sharing their experiences and raising substantial amounts of money to develop initiatives such as the new computer suite. All of these links have a very beneficial effect on pupils' learning and understanding of their place in the community and its values and cultural traditions.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 33 Since the last inspection report the school has maintained its good support for ensuring pupils' welfare. Teachers understand their pupils well. They know the procedures to be followed to ensure that pupils are well protected and that the level of welfare is good overall. However, there is a need to update First Aid training for all staff. The school is also aware that they need to produce a new policy for child protection. The governing body ensures that effective procedures are in place to

promote all related matters of health, safety and security. Parents appreciate the way staff care for their children.

- 34 Procedures for the monitoring of pupils' personal development are satisfactory overall. Those for monitoring and supporting their academic progress are unsatisfactory. Personal support and guidance for pupils is satisfactory. Staff work hard to ensure that everyone in the school community is valued. In the best lessons there is a consistent approach which ensures the good behaviour of pupils and the elimination of oppressive behaviour. This effective support makes a positive contribution to pupils' well being, and enables them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered.
- 35 Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are inconsistently applied and are unsatisfactory overall. The school has started to develop a systematic process through which they can collect a range of assessment data to track pupils' progress but this process is still in the early stages of development. Assessment information is not used sufficiently well to gain a view of the school's strengths and weaknesses in order to inform teaching and prioritise curriculum development. It is not used to analyse the performance of individuals in order to set them clear targets for improvement and challenge the more able to achieve the higher levels.
- 36 Teachers do not use assessment consistently as an integral part of their teaching. They do not build it sufficiently well into their planning to help identify what the next stages of learning should be and thereby help pupils make better progress. The assessment co-ordinator is aware of what needs to be done. She has planned to undertake with all teachers a systematic development of assessment procedures including checking the validity of their assessments against National Curriculum levels in the form of samples of pupils' work with agreed levels of attainment.
- 37 Teachers assess pupils with special educational needs regularly to track their progress and regular reviews take place to identify the next steps that pupils need to make. However, procedures for assessment throughout the school do not provide a secure means for teachers to measure and check on the progress of pupils with special educational needs as compared to other pupils. This does not provide teachers, pupils and their parents with a clear understanding of how well these pupils are achieving.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 38 The school has maintained its very good relationship with the parents, who have a very positive view of the school. This very good relationship is now a strength of the school. Of the returned questionnaires, all parents felt they could consult the school on any issue and 92 per cent felt the school was helping their child to become mature and responsible.
- 39 The school has very good links with parents to consolidate and extend pupils' learning. Several parents help in school. Parents are very keen to be involved in the life of the school. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept fully informed of their progress at parents' meetings. Many parents undertake to support their children at home through planned activities that are recorded in individual plans. Discussion with school governors emphasised the willingness of parents to be involved as governors.

- 40 The quality of information for parents is very good. Home school agreements are in place. Reports on pupils' progress give an indication of what pupils should do next to improve. The school's prospectus and governors' annual report to parents give a clear indication of the life of the school. Newsletters are clear and helpful. They provide parents with an opportunity to share in the life of the school.
- 41 Parental contribution to pupils' learning at home and at school is excellent. The funds raised by the parents' association provide many extras to support children's learning. They were fundamental in raising money to help with the new computer suite. They organise many events both social and fundraising which enhances the life of pupils in the school and places the school firmly as a hub of village life.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 42 The school has sound leadership and management. It is similar to that reported in the last inspection. The headteacher works closely with the staff and governing body to create an effective team approach. He gives good leadership in maintaining high standards in pupils' behaviour and their positive attitudes towards each other and their learning. Parents valued the good leadership of the headteacher. He has been particularly influential in improving aspects of the building and the opportunities for learning, for example, the computer suite, library and hall. The good team approach is successful in ensuring that many of the school's aims are clearly reflected in its work, particularly those relating to respect and behaviour and the importance of the school's links with the local community. As reported in the last inspection, the headteacher's teaching commitment restricts the time he has to closely monitor teaching and learning. The school has worked closely with the local education authority's numeracy advisor who has evaluated the effectiveness of aspects of the school's numeracy strategy. However, the school has not established a rigorous focus on achieving consistently higher standards of attainment.
- 43 The school has made sound progress overall since the last inspection. It has made good progress in improving resources for information and communication technology. They are being used with increasing effectiveness to raise standards, especially for infant pupils. The school has made good use of national guidance to complete schemes of work for all subjects, except religious education. It has maintained high standards in pupils' attitudes and behaviour. There has been some improvement in standards of attainment, although this varies from year to year due to differences in pupils' ability within the small year groups. Progress in improving writing and mathematics has been unsatisfactory overall, and too few pupils are provided with consistently challenging learning activities. The teaching staff has changed since the last inspection. The headteacher has now established clear delegation of subject responsibilities. Some staff have several areas of responsibility and are effectively involved in working with the headteacher to draw up the school development plan. This process has improved since the last inspection. However, the school has yet to develop rigorous procedures to enable the headteacher and key staff to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning. This does not ensure that key development priorities are identified and specific action taken to improve them. Teachers do not have enough opportunities to share good practice and evaluate the standards being achieved throughout the school.
- 44 The headteacher is using an increasing range of information to monitor pupils' attainment and to target improvement. However, the school's assessment procedures are not developed enough to ensure that teachers' assessments are consistently accurate when compared to nationally expected levels. The school's

attainment targets for the end of Year 6 are not challenging enough to ensure that school is trying to focus consistently on raising standards. The school has not monitored or evaluated the impact of the different strategies for targeting additional support in preparing pupils for their national tests. This does not ensure that this support is always effectively used to target improvement.

- 45 Governors continue to be supportive of the school as reported in the previous inspection. They are actively involved in ensuring a good partnership with the headteacher and his staff, which is strongly focused on improving the school. They receive detailed information from the headteacher about school developments. Governors are linked to different subjects and some come into school regularly to work in classrooms and to monitor teaching. For example, the governor with responsibility for information and communication technology works with teachers and pupils frequently to monitor and promote the use of the improved resources. Governors are increasingly influential in shaping the direction of the school's development. For example, they have established a marketing group to try to maintain or increase the number of pupils as they are fully aware of the strategic impact if pupil numbers drop. The governing body shows a good understanding of their role and responsibilities. They meet their statutory duties, although some curriculum aspects of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education are not in place.
- 46 The school has;
- appointed new staff and created a good team approach since the last inspection;
 - improved pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships;
 - reduced the size of classes and the age range which they include;
 - delegated areas of responsibility;
 - some very high quality teaching, especially in Years 3 and 4;
 - improved some aspects of the building considerably;
 - an active and supportive governing body;
 - very high quality links with parents and the local community.
- It is now well-placed to make rapid improvement in standards of attainment.
- 47 The chair of governors has a good working relationship with the headteacher. They work closely, together with the school secretary and the financial officer from the local education authority, to ensure that the school makes efficient use of its finances. Over the last two years, they have turned a budget shortfall into a positive financial situation. The current surplus resulted from some unexpected savings on staffing costs. It is planned to be used to allow teachers to have some non-teaching time to monitor and evaluate standards within their areas of responsibility. The governors ensure that funds are closely linked to development priorities, although procedures to evaluate their impact, for example, in teaching, are not developed fully. Governors regularly check on spending levels and the effective use of specific funds, for example, to reduce the size of the infant classes. The good information from the school's financial officer, together with the governors' own expertise, is used efficiently to ensure that they apply the principles of best value effectively. The governors' good financial procedures, together with their good knowledge and understanding of the school's development priorities, enable the school to give sound value for money.
- 48 The arrangements for pupils with special educational needs are soundly managed. The special educational needs co-ordinator keeps all relevant documents very well organised. She offers effective support to staff in writing targets for individual

education plans and has brought about significant improvements in these. She does not have enough time or opportunity to monitor and evaluate how teachers ensure that learning activities match consistently these specific learning targets. Teachers work closely with support staff to enable pupils with special educational needs, and those of lower attainment, to be included fully in the range of learning activities. Support staff are kept informed of the learning objectives for the different activities, with key points identified for pupils to achieve. This enables the class teacher to be aware of the progress made, especially in relation to any targets in pupils' individual education plans.

- 49 The number of teachers is good. The school has used funds effectively to appoint an additional teacher and increase the number of classes from three to four. This has reduced the size of classes and the mixture of pupils from different year groups. Most staff have sound subject knowledge, although there are weaknesses in developing literacy skills, for example, in using them consistently in subjects other than English. The number of support staff is sound. They know the pupils well and work successfully, in close partnership with teachers, to support less able pupils and those with special educational needs. This contributes positively to pupils' attainment. The school's strategy for performance management is in place and headteacher and staff have agreed targets. Induction procedures for teachers new to the school are sound. They are given effective support to enable them to become quickly aware of school routines and organisation. This enables individual teachers to know and understand the school's values and routines and contribute to the school community. The procedures to inform them of the school's expectations of standards of pupils' work are not developed enough. This does not always enable teachers new to the school to know if the standards being achieved by their pupils are high enough.
- 50 The accommodation is sound overall. The school has made good improvements to enhance the range of facilities and learning opportunities; for example, the computer suite, the hall and kitchen re-furbishment, and the library. However, there are weaknesses in the accommodation for the foundation stage which restricts the range of activities for children under five. The headteacher has no office in which to interview parents and pupils and to retain and organise the increasing amount of school documentation which he receives. This impacts on aspects of school management and administration. Resources are satisfactory overall. The library has good quality books but they are limited in number. The range of reading books, especially those for the more able Year 5 and 6 pupils, is limited and does not extend reading standards. Many pupils bring in their own books from home to enhance their enjoyment of reading. The school has improved its resources for information and communication technology considerably. These are being used with increasing effectiveness and beginning to promote higher standards, especially for infant pupils. The resources for children in the foundation stage are poor and limit the progress that children make. There is no safe and secure outdoor area for children to work and play outdoors. Children do not benefit from good resources to promote their learning in the other required areas of the foundation stage curriculum. The lack of resources and the limitations of the accommodation do not ensure that children benefit from a challenging and stimulating range of activities. This restricts the progress they make in aspects of their learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 51 In order to raise standards of attainment and improve the school's effectiveness, the headteacher, staff and governors should;

- (1) Raise pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics by the end of Years 2 and 6 by;
 - ensuring that writing skills are extended consistently in a broad range of subjects.
 - enabling pupils to apply their number skills and knowledge more often to solve challenging number problems and investigations.
 - requiring more able pupils to extend their skills and knowledge consistently to achieve above average standards.
(paragraphs 5, 8, 23, 66, 69, 70, 71, 79, 81, 85, 86 and 90)

- (2) Improve the procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainment to;
 - inform them what they do well and how they can improve the standard of their work.
 - ensure that teachers use assessment information to plan activities which are closely matched to pupils' learning needs and to guide their next stage of learning.
(paragraphs 8, 18, 20, 21, 35, 36, 44, 66 and 85)

- (3) Improve procedures to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning rigorously. Establish a clearly planned programme, involving all subject managers, in implementing these procedures consistently.
(paragraphs 43, 78, 101 and 106)

- (4) Improve the quality and range of learning resources for children in the foundation stage.
(paragraphs 21, 50, 53, 56, 58, 61, 63 and 65)

- 52 In addition to the key issues listed above, the following less important issue should be considered for inclusion in the action plan;
- Ensure that the scheme of work for religious education meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.
This can be found in paragraphs 7, 22, 43, 45, 119 and 121.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	31
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	3	2	10	14	2	0	0
Percentage	10	6	32	45	6	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than three percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	80
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	31
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.0
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	6	7	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
	Total	12	7	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92 (80)	54 (70)	85 (100)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
	Total	10	8	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (80)	62 (80)	85 (100)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. The number of boys and girls attaining level 4 or above has been omitted as less than 10 pupils of each gender took the tests.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	68
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR -Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.2
Average class size	19.8

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Financial information

Financial year	2000 / 01
	£
Total income	191,660

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	30

Total expenditure	184,340
Expenditure per pupil	2,169
Balance brought forward from previous year	6,030
Balance carried forward to next year	13,350

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	79
Number of questionnaires returned	35

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	29	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	40	54	0	0	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	26	60	9	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	40	31	3	9
The teaching is good.	43	49	6	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	31	20	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	34	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	49	42	9	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	49	42	9	0	0

The school is well led and managed.

The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.

The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

40	54	6	0	0
43	49	3	0	5
26	37	20	6	11

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

53 The satisfactory quality of education for children in the foundation stage has been maintained since the last inspection. In September all children under five start school in the reception Year, part-time for the first half-term. They are taught, together with six children from Year 1, in a small class of 16 children. Most children start with levels of ability that are typical for children at age four. Teaching is sound overall and children make satisfactory progress in this class. The teacher plans soundly to ensure that the range of activities meets the development needs of most children under five in a mixed-age class. It does not consistently include more challenging activities to require more able children to apply and extend their skills and knowledge. Resources for children under five are poor and limit the progress that children make. There is no safe and secure area for children to work outdoors. The able support assistant takes children onto the playground in small groups to use the 'trikes' for physical development, but it is not possible to teach other aspects of the foundation stage curriculum outdoors.

Personal, social and emotional development

54 Some children find it difficult to work together and share when they begin working in the reception class. They achieve well in this area, reaching the early learning goals² by the time they transfer to Year 1. Teaching is good in this area of learning. The teacher works hard to improve these key skills in a positive and gentle manner; for example, praising children and rewarding them for behaving well. They show curiosity and interest in the activities that are provided; for example, saying, "I like that story" at the end of a class reading session, and asking many questions as the book was read. Children have a significant amount of choice in the activities they want to do each day. They are also directed to work at certain activities with teachers or support assistants every day. However, not all the activities are well structured and consequently children sometimes lose interest and misbehave. Many are still just beginning to consider the consequences of their actions for themselves and others. In addition the classroom is not well organised, so children take little responsibility for finding the resources they need independently.

Communication, language and literacy

55 By the time they start in Year 1, most have achieved the learning goals for children of this age group, except in writing. There is a wide range of ability when children begin school. Most children are confident and articulate, and have plenty of experience with books, rhymes and pencils. Others can barely hold a pencil and do not recognise their names. Many activities are planned to encourage children to talk to one another in quite formal settings; for example, in whole class discussions. Teaching is sound overall. Teaching and learning support staff ensure that opportunities to develop early literacy skills in reading and writing are a daily feature in literacy lessons. For example, children read 'There's a Shark in the Park' together as a whole class. They learn about authors, illustrators and rhymes. However, teachers do not always

² Early learning goals are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the foundation stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with the following six areas of learning; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

structure literacy activities well or at the right level to develop all children's skills effectively, particularly in writing. All the children take a reading book home and many recognise letters but children do not readily know the name and sound of each letter. This limits their capacity to read and write successfully.

- 56 The lack of resources for teaching literacy limits children's learning. The range of books, writing materials and games is inadequate. For example, children have nothing to help them to copy words, writing pencils are not easily accessible and sharp. The alphabet frieze is too high for children to use to help them to write. The teacher has no large board to model writing. Many books are worn and torn and stored in an inaccessible box.

Mathematical development

- 57 Most children achieve the early learning goals for mathematical development. All the children count confidently to 20. Daily activities in the reception class help children to develop these key skills. For example, children practise recording numbers by counting pictures on a worksheet and writing the total in a box. Teaching is sound overall. Teaching and support staff encourage children to use different strategies to add numbers together when working out sums in their head. For instance they use their fingers to count. The teacher provides plenty of similar opportunities each day so that children begin to recognise numbers and what each represents.
- 58 Children are not encouraged into the world of mathematical development by exciting and attractive resources. This restricts the impact of teaching in promoting children's mathematical learning. For example, there are no large books with counting rhymes; counting apparatus is limited to cubes. There are no pegboards for making mathematical patterns; and the few counting, sequencing and sorting games that are available are in poor condition.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 59 In this area children achieve the expected learning goals. They increase their knowledge and understanding of the world through some good discussions. For example, they talk about sources of light confidently putting forward their views about light sources from the past. Teaching is sound. The teacher manages pupils in large groups discussions well, gently ensuring that all make a contribution and valuing the children's responses. As a result they are all keen to tell him what they think about the candles.
- 60 Teaching and support staff use information and communication technology [ICT] effectively. Children make good use of the ICT suite, working in pairs to create a picture using a software drawing program. A few children make very good progress, learning confidently how to click the mouse and change the colours. Other children are much more confident at the start, clicking enthusiastically and purposefully to draw a picture and change the colours. Two girls shriek and giggle with delight as they succeed in changing the background colour of their picture independently. Their faces light up with broad smiles.
- 61 Nevertheless the general lack of resources has a significant impact on learning in this area. There are no large posters, photographs or pictures to stimulate children's imagination and broaden their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children do not have access to basic science equipment for young children, for example magnets and magnifiers. The range of construction toys is limited and in poor condition, as is

the range of small cars. There is no weather chart available, no tape recorder or programmable toys.

Physical development

- 62 Most children run and jump with confidence when they start school. They achieve the learning goals in this area at the end of the reception year despite the lack of resources. The teacher plans good physical education lessons in the hall to improve children's skills at controlling their movements. In these lessons the quality of teaching is good. It enables children to develop good control, for example, when they throw bean bags carefully and pass other small equipment from one hand to the other without dropping it. There is no suitable climbing frame or other large equipment for children to climb on. The few large wheeled toys are of high quality but limited variety. Learning support staff use them soundly to promote pupils' physical skills and develop their awareness of the need to use space safely and carefully. The teacher's sound planning enables children under five to be given additional opportunities to develop their physical skills while the small number of Year 1 pupils in the class are taught National Curriculum, for example, mathematics.
- 63 Children's control of small tools in other lessons is not as good. Around 40 per cent of the children hold their pencils incorrectly. Again the lack of suitable equipment available prevents children from developing these vital dextrous skills sufficiently. For example the range of dough and pliable materials is very limited and there are no cooking utensils.

Creative development

- 64 By the time they leave the reception class most children do not achieve the learning goals for creative development. Children use the limited dressing up materials imaginatively, creating a fantasy police station in the role-play area. One corner of the room has been organised as a hospital and children have completed 'assessment forms' at the clinic for toy animals. Children use cotton wool and other bright materials to make a collage of a snowman after the teacher has read them the book. The happy and relaxed atmosphere that the teacher creates encourages children to use their imaginations well in this guided activity.
- 65 There are few musical resources for children to use, just a few shakers. There are no hand puppets to develop dexterity and imagination, and the range of dressing up clothes is very limited. The environment is not sufficiently challenging or stimulating for young children to explore and communicate their ideas to the expected level.

ENGLISH

- 66 Standards are average overall, although they are not high enough because pupils are underachieving in writing in both infants and juniors. Standards in writing have not improved sufficiently since the last inspection when this was a key issue for the school. There are three main reasons why pupils are still underachieving in writing:
- Older and higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged in Years 1 and 2, and Years 5 and 6.
 - Assessment in English is weak and does not help teachers to identify what pupils already know and what they need to learn next.
 - Writing skills are not developed effectively in other subjects of the curriculum.

- 67 The school has identified that improving standards in writing is a key priority. The co-ordinator has drawn up an effective action plan to improve teachers' skills in this subject so that all pupils' needs are met. The co-ordinator provides a very effective role model for other staff. She has high expectations and is determined to enable pupils to achieve them. New staff in the school readily seek her expert advice and support. As a result the school is well placed to make the necessary rapid improvements.
- 68 In Year 2 standards are not as high now as they were in the last academic year. However, recent changes in the number of classes and the very small year groups mean that no year-on-year comparisons can be reliably made. Last year all pupils achieved the expected level for their age in reading and writing. These standards are among the highest in the country. A significant proportion achieved the higher level in reading, but no pupils reached this level in writing. Pupils in the current Year 2 achieve typical standards in speaking and listening. They are beginning to listen carefully to one another and speak clearly with confidence. Their vocabulary is as expected at age six and seven. There are plenty of good opportunities for pupils to speak in more formal settings, for example, in assembly. Pupils are supported well by their parents in developing reading skills, which are about average. They have good opportunities to read non-fiction as well as fiction, and use a sound range of strategies to work out unfamiliar words. The most able pupils know how to use an index to find information in a reference book, but are less confident in talking about the books they have read. Few pupils express a preference for a style of literature.
- 69 Writing skills are below the expected standards by the end of Year 2. Although many pupils demonstrate a joined neat script in their handwriting books, they do not use this skill consistently in their everyday writing. Exercise books include poor presentation and some pupils' handwriting deteriorates over the term. Pupils do not consistently use capital letters and full stops accurately in sentences, even though they know how to do this. The content of pupils' writing is limited because they are given too many poor quality worksheets. Very often all pupils complete the same worksheets regardless of their ability, for example, filling in rhyming words. Although more able pupils spell many common words correctly most are not developing spelling skills systematically. Pupils are reluctant to write down words they do not know how to spell. There are not enough resources available to help them to remember how to spell simple key words. Pupils have too few strategies to use when attempting to write longer or complex words. Many rely on asking an adult to write each word for them. This limits the amount of work they write down in each lesson. Overall pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to write for a wide range of purposes at an appropriate level. As a result they do not make enough progress in developing their writing skills.
- 70 The results of the national tests for pupils in Years 2 and 6 show that pupils do not make enough progress in English. In 2001, Year 6 pupils did not maintain the standards they achieved when they took national tests at the end of Year 2 at the age of seven. The current Year 6 are not making enough progress. The good standards they achieved in 1998 at the end of Year 2 have not been maintained. In all aspects of English, standards rise sharply in Years 3 and 4. In Years 5 and 6 expectations are not high enough, most pupils are working at average levels. As a result, more able pupils are not challenged to work at the higher level 5. This limits their overall attainment in English.
- 71 Most Year 6 pupils have sound speaking and listening skills and some achieve above expected levels. They listen to each other well, particularly when lessons are lively

and interesting. They speak out confidently and have plenty of opportunities in lessons and assemblies to put forward their point of view. They question each other's ideas in good lessons where pupils are expected to play an active part. Although the new library has only just been opened and the range of books available is rather limited, pupils' research skills are broadly typical. This is because teachers make effective use of non-fiction books in many subjects and expect pupils to look up information on a wide range of topics. The range of resources limits more able pupils' reading skills. Parents are very supportive and provide pupils with a wide range of material to read at home, but in school there are few books to challenge and extend pupils' reading at the higher level 5. Pupils do not receive consistent support in developing more complex reading skills. Writing skills are below national expectations at the end of Year 6. Many pupils know how to write well and use a fluent joined handwriting style. However, they do not use it consistently. Although pupils clearly know how to use basic punctuation, too many pieces of work are not punctuated accurately. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to write in a broad range of subjects, mainly because too many worksheets are used. Consequently pupils do not use the skills they learn in literacy lessons in their writing. Spelling skills are as expected, words with regular patterns are usually written correctly.

- 72 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It ranges from being unsatisfactory to being very good. The teaching of writing is unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 5 and 6. In Years 3 and 4 teaching is consistently very good. Pupils in this class make very good progress in all aspects of English. In good lessons older pupils in Years 5 and 6 are completely involved in the activities. The best teaching provides very well for the mixed age classes. Assessment has been thorough so that lessons focus very well on the next steps that pupils should make to reach a higher standard. In these lessons teachers question pupils well to check their understanding and develop their thinking. The pace of learning is very good. Pupils respond enthusiastically putting their hands up as high as they can desperately hoping that the teacher will ask them the answer. Teachers tell pupils what they are going to learn in the better lessons. They regularly review these objectives at the end of the lesson to make an assessment of how much pupils have understood. Pupils know how much time they have to complete their work and are clear about what the teacher expects. In the very best examples teachers consistently expect pupils to improve their work.
- 73 Some teachers use high quality marking of pupils written work to explain to pupils why the work is good and what they need to do next to make it even better. However, the quality of teachers' marking is not consistent. Too many pieces of work are simply ticked and do not inform pupils how well they have achieved the purpose of the exercise. Some teachers' expectations of pupils' written work are often too low. For example, work is marked 'good' even though it is clearly not of a good standard for that child. Teachers do not expect pupils to use the skills they have already learned in their writing. Consequently pupils' presentation is often poor and key skills of punctuation are neglected. In a small number of lessons teachers do not manage pupils well and time is wasted. They do not challenge pupils enough to extend their writing skills. Many lose interest in the lesson and do not sustain their concentration.
- 74 When teachers' expectations are high, pupils achieve very well. For example, in creative writing pupils are expected to use adjectives that will describe a monster from outer space. One Year 4 pupil writes:

THE MONSTER FROM OUTER SPACE

I looked up and saw a bone-headed, spike winged, balloon bodied silhoete [silhouette]. It looked bigger than the earth. When he came towards me I noticed four arms terribly clawed and four legs with brick like feet. His ruby red eyes like bonfires.

- 75 Pupils with special educational needs achieve appropriately because of the caring support they receive. Their individual education plans include suitable targets. Learning support assistants work well in partnership with teachers. For example, they use special 'feedback sheets' to inform the teacher how well pupils working in small groups are meeting their targets.
- 76 Throughout the school information and communications technology is not used consistently to support work in English. Nevertheless there are some examples of very good newspaper reports on display in Years 3 and 4. Bold headlines shout out "Snow White bullied by Stepmother" and "Wolf attacks Girl in Red". The entertaining articles that follow are printed in columns and have been edited using effective word processing skills.
- 77 Teachers are not using a suitable range of strategies to assess children's attainment in English. There has been some good innovation recently so that results from annual tests are recorded. As yet these results are not used to track individual pupils' progress from year-to-year or to guide the school's target setting.
- 78 The co-ordinator is effective in supporting and advising colleagues and in managing resources. She has a clear view of how she wishes to develop her role further. Currently she has no allocated time to monitor developments in the subject and this severely limits the impact she has on raising standards. Resources are limited and have an impact on the quality of teaching and learning. For example, teachers do not have ready access to large boards that can be used to model writing in lessons. The last inspection reported that many reading scheme books were in poor repair. This remains the case. The range of books available to support teaching is limited; particularly in Years 1 and 2 and for more able pupils in Year 5 and 6.

MATHEMATICS

- 79 Standards are average at the end of Years 2 and 6. The results of the National Curriculum tests over the last four years show that standards have improved since the last inspection for Year 2 pupils. They have varied for Year 6. Inspection evidence indicates that the current Year 6 is not attaining the above average standards reported in the last inspection. The current Year 2 is not attaining the above average levels achieved in the 2001 National Curriculum tests. Staff changes, resulting from the school increasing the number of classes, have not enabled teachers' expectations to remain high enough. Although standards are now in line with the national average at the end of Years 2 and 6 in all attainment targets, they are not high enough because more able pupils are underachieving.
- 80 Pupils from Years 3 to 6 have made significant progress because of the consistently good quality teaching brought about by recent staffing changes. Because of this, inspection findings indicate that in Years 3 and 4 pupils' learning is very good and attainment is above national expectations. In Years 5 and 6, despite good learning being observed in lessons, pupils' overall attainment and learning are only satisfactory because there is still a backlog of underachievement. Pupils still have weaknesses in their prior skills and knowledge. Pupils with special educational needs make sound

progress overall. They make good progress when they are given good support by teaching and support staff. This enables them to be fully involved in the learning activity and achieve well. Their progress is unsatisfactory when the learning activity is not matched closely to their learning needs.

- 81 In all classes other than Years 3 and 4, teachers do not give sufficient attention to planning appropriate tasks to challenge the needs of more able pupils and as a result, these pupils are underachieving. Although the National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced soundly, some staff need further training to increase their confidence to use the framework flexibly to meet the needs of individual pupils. Currently, they spend too much time on using too many informal written calculation methods rather than moving pupils on when the time is right. The school has recognised that there are limited opportunities for pupils to use and apply their skills and knowledge to problem solving activities. This restricts the standards achieved.
- 82 Years 1 and 2 pupils make satisfactory progress overall, although progress for more able pupils is not always good enough. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a secure understanding of number. They count in fives to 100, identify the value of digits within a number up to 100 and show the capability and confidence to handle numbers up to 1000. Pupils have a sound awareness of standard and non-standard measures and tell the time to 'o clock, quarter past, half past and quarter to the hour. Most know some of the properties of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes and identify them accurately within the classroom. For example, one boy confidently recognised the clock he was working with as a circle, the door as being a rectangle and a box as a cuboid. Pupils handle data accurately. Most draw, interpret and talk about simple graphs which show, for example, the number of children who have different coloured hair and eyes. Years 1 and 2 rely too heavily on worksheets rather than consistently providing pupils with the opportunity to explore and investigate numbers. This prevents learning from advancing at a faster rate in using and applying their mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding.
- 83 Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are making good progress. In Years 5 and 6 the progress is satisfactory. Throughout the juniors pupils thoroughly enjoy the brisk mental warm-up sessions. Through good planning, careful preparation and good use of both commercial and teacher-made resources, these warm-up sessions provide challenge and excitement for pupils of all abilities. They provide good opportunities for them to develop and reinforce their calculation strategies and rapid recall skills. In Year 4, pupils use appropriate mathematical vocabulary when talking about common fractions, for example, $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{5}$, $\frac{1}{10}$. Many know how many parts make a whole and most can identify when two simple fractions are equivalent. Higher attaining pupils work confidently with improper fractions. One boy, after being set the challenge of "How many eighths are there in $3\frac{7}{8}$?" explained his solution to the problems as, "Eight eighths make one whole, so three whole ones make twenty-four eighths. Then add on the remaining seven eighths to get thirty-one eighths." They show a good understanding of place value to 1000 and can add and subtract numbers with three digits. In Year 6, pupils are well equipped to deal quickly and accurately with a variety of mental strategies to work out calculations using large numbers in their heads. For example, in a matter of seconds most pupils had worked out the answer to 883 minus 294 using a variety of strategies. However, this level of understanding and competence remains unchallenged in their everyday work when using formal written methods to calculate answers to numerical and written problems. Pupils, particularly the more able, do not achieve the levels of which they are capable within this area of mathematics. Most add and subtract decimals to two places accurately. They use 'inverse operations' to check their answers and understand that larger numbers when

taken away from smaller ones produce a negative number. They recognise two and three-dimensional shapes and reflect simple shapes in a mirror line accurately.

- 84 The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and good overall in Years 3 to 6. Teachers throughout the school have a sound understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy. It has been applied with conviction and enthusiasm. However, there are occasions in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 5 and 6 when the framework and the many examples of different ways of performing calculations are applied too rigidly. This results in pupils practising previously learned skills and consolidating what they already know. It does not allow them to push the pupils on and present them with opportunities where they can use and apply their knowledge and understanding of mathematics in challenging and meaningful contexts. When this happens, progress is not good enough and attainment, particularly for the more able, is too low. Teachers throughout the school use an appropriate range of mathematical vocabulary. This results in pupils using the correct terminology to explain their work. Teachers share the learning objectives with the pupils at the start of each lesson. This is effective. For example, Year 3 and Year 4 pupils when engaged in work on fractions readily accepted responsibility for their own learning. They enjoyed measuring their success in relation to the stated objective and learned what they had to do to improve further. Pupils throughout the school are well behaved in lessons. Year 5 and 6 pupils listen attentively to their teachers and other children and are always ready to ask or answer questions. Numeracy skills are beginning to be applied across the curriculum, for example in science and design technology. They are insufficiently developed to make an impact on standards. Teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to use their information and communication technology skills to support their work in mathematics. However, the school has planned to use the new computer resources more often to extend numeracy skills as pupils' skills and knowledge improve.
- 85 The school has started to use the analysis of test results and other assessment data to raise standards of attainment by identifying strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching, the balance of the curriculum and the tracking of pupils' progress. However, the information is not used to ensure that pupils continually build on previously learned skills from year to year. Consequently, some pupils, particularly the more able, are still not being provided with appropriately challenging activities and cannot, therefore, make the progress they should. There has been limited monitoring of teaching and learning. The headteacher has recognised the need for a more formal and structured approach so that the process can have a more effective impact on helping to raise standards. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. Its effectiveness is restricted by the lack of a coherent and detailed scheme of work which helps teachers plan the next steps of learning, based on the well founded assessment data of each individual pupil.

SCIENCE

- 86 Most pupils attain standards which are in line with the national average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The proportion of pupils achieving above average standards is below average. Standards have been maintained at the level reported in the last inspection for pupils at the end of Year 2. They are lower for pupils at the end of Year 6. Inspection evidence reflects the results of the National Curriculum tests for Year 6 pupils over the last few years. They show an improving trend in the percentage of pupils achieving the nationally expected level 4, although too few pupils achieve above the expected level. Teachers organise a sound range of activities which ensure that pupils learn all required aspects of the science curriculum. They use effective

strategies to revise key concepts and knowledge soundly in preparation for the national tests. However, pupils do not consistently develop their skills of scientific enquiry in all years. Teachers do not always have sufficiently high expectations, particularly for more able pupils. They do not ensure that pupils are challenged consistently to use their scientific knowledge and understanding and to apply skills of scientific enquiry in practical investigations. This does not enable pupils to extend their knowledge and achieve high standards.

- 87 Pupils make sound progress overall in their learning. However, it is not consistent. Evidence from analysing a sample of pupils' work shows that pupils make good progress in Years 3 and 4. This reflects good teaching and high expectations of the amount and accuracy of the work achieved. Pupils do not achieve a similar high standard in other years, although this is affected by the number and range of ability in small years groups. For example, Year 2 pupils are not always required to say what might happen in scientific activities. They do not describe if what happened was what they expected. Many pupils in Years 3 and 4 show an above expected understanding of how to carry out a scientific investigation. They predict what is likely to happen and test their ideas. Many have a good understanding of what must remain the same in order for the test to be fair. They record their findings clearly, for example, using drawings or a table of results. They describe why their results were as expected or were different. For example, this was clearly seen in an investigation into water resistance. Year 3 and 4 pupils were required to design a boat which would travel through the water easily. They drew different shapes and predicted which one would move through water the best. They used plasticine to try out their different designs and drew their results. Pupils then explained their results by describing "how the pointed end moved easily!". There was little evidence of Year 5 and 6 pupils extending this knowledge and understanding consistently to achieve high standards. For example, in an investigation into dissolving substances, pupils predicted that "sugar and salt will dissolve the most". They showed a good understanding of fair testing by noting that 'the number of stirs should remain the same each time!'. However, they were not required to explain the reasons behind their results. This did not enable them to achieve above average standards.
- 88 Pupils with special educational needs benefit from sound, and often good support in their learning. This enables them to participate fully in all practical activities and they make sound progress overall. Teachers provide different ways, for example, simple tables or writing frames, to enable these pupils, some with help, to record their results. They work effectively alongside other pupils in small group investigations, for example, when Year 6 pupils compare different types of soil. They are encouraged to contribute their ideas as well as listen to those of others. This promotes a positive attitude to their learning and encourages them to want to succeed.
- 89 Year 6 pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of physical processes, for example, they predict accurately and record the results of adding another switch into an electrical circuit. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of some topics is extended successfully by the school's use of interesting teaching methods, for example, the visit of a theatre group performing a play focusing on 'forces'. Pupils' knowledge of life and living things is developed soundly. For example, Year 2 pupils knew and labelled body parts accurately. They used their observation skills successfully to record eye and hair colour. Pupils then used this information to draw a bar graph of their results. Year 3 and 4 pupils develop a more detailed knowledge of the main bones of the body through investigating any difference in the lengths of the main bones of boys and girls. Year 5 and 6 pupils have a sound understanding of how plant growth is affected by differences in light, heat and water. They predict

accurately how the colour of plant leaves will change if it receives too little water. A more able pupil confidently describes how photosynthesis enables “ the plant to make its own food and to give out oxygen which we need!”.

- 90 Pupils clearly enjoy science. They talk with interest about some of the investigations they have carried out, for example, when testing out different materials and substances. This enthusiastic, positive attitude encourages pupils to try to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding and to achieve good work. They have some opportunities to use their numeracy skills to support work in science, for example, recording results in graphs and measuring forces in newtons using a force-meter. Pupils do not use their writing skills enough in science as too often they are required to record their knowledge or results in a restricted way. For example, teachers use writing frames or cloze procedure activities too frequently. These only require one-word or very short sentence answers. There was limited evidence of pupils, especially the more able, being challenged to extend their writing skills through a detailed description of a scientific investigation. Some pupils have used the new resources for information and communication technology to support learning in science, for example, by using the Internet to find out about endangered species, such as sea turtles. However, this has yet to be developed fully to promote consistently higher standards of knowledge and understanding.
- 91 Only two science lessons were observed during the inspection. Further evidence was gained through an analysis of pupils’ work from this term and last school year, and from talking to staff and pupils. Teaching is sound overall and sometimes good. Teachers organise their lessons effectively. They make good use of resources to focus pupils’ interest and attention and to develop their knowledge and understanding. For example, in a good Year 5 and 6 lesson, the teacher used soil samples successfully to require pupils to use their observation skills to identify which samples were good for plants and which could provide good animal habitats. He used questions effectively to encourage pupils’ skills, for example, “What do you notice about ...?” and to extend their thinking, for example, “How does that help you to understand how the roots are used?”. Teachers do not always challenge pupils sufficiently to apply their knowledge and understanding. For example, in a Years 1 and 2 lesson, the teacher had organised a very good range of materials to enable pupils to investigate their different properties. They were challenged to find out, for example, which ones were waterproof and which ones would be suitable for making into clothing. The teacher’s good organisation and her good use of support staff enabled the pupils to participate enthusiastically in an interesting practical activity. However, pupils were not required to predict which materials they thought would be suitable or explain the particular properties, for example, texture or shape, which would be helpful. This did not ensure that pupils, especially the more able, used their scientific knowledge and did not enable them to attain above average standards.

ART AND DESIGN

- 92 Standards at the end of Year 2 are in line with national expectations. In Years 3 to 6 pupils make good progress. By the end of Year 6, their standard of attainment is above that expected for pupils of this age. This is a better than that reported in the last inspection. Pupils develop skills and techniques in the style, as well as knowledge of their work, of well known artists such as Kandinsky and Van Gogh. There are good quality displays around the school that show pupils’ skill and ability to work in groups on creative projects. These include work linked with pupils’ writing on ‘Dreams and Nightmares’ and an outstanding collage depicting the story of King Arthur.

- 93 Displays of pupils' work in Years 1 and 2 show how well their skills develop. Examples of confident self-portraits show a growing awareness of careful observation, proportion and use of colour. For example, the significant majority of pupils place facial features correctly and in good proportion to the size of the face. Most pupils achieve a particularly good tone of skin colour. Pastel work, stimulated by a picture of an owl, show attention to detail, care in the application of the different shades and a sensitive awareness of the their qualities to produce effective results.
- 94 Pupils in Years 3 to 6 build on the pupils' enjoyment of art fostered in Years 1 and 2. They talk confidently about their work using relevant terms. The quality of their work shows good levels of skill and understanding of colour, pattern and texture, line and tone and shape. In Year 3 and 4 this is demonstrated by the strong and vibrant paintings produced in the style of Kandinsky.
- 95 Years 3 to 6 pupils each have sketchbooks. These show experiments with pencil and paint techniques and quick sketches. They are beginning to be used well to collect ideas from what they see. In the juniors, the strength of shape and sensitivity of tone are evident in the excellent black and white representations of bowls. Pupils talk about their pictures with considerable pride and were, rightly, keen to show the inspection team their completed pieces of work. They develop very good observational skills and become very competent in the use of watercolours. For example, in the one lesson seen, Year 5 and 6 pupils created their own still life using fruit, flowers, a vase and a choice of backcloths. Their sketches are accurate representations of what they see and the use of colour is sensitively applied after experimentation on pieces of paper. They are not easily satisfied with their results but immensely proud of their achievements
- 96 The range and quality of work available for scrutiny in Years 1 and 2 indicate that teaching of art and design is at least satisfactory. In Years 3 and 4 the one lesson seen and the scrutiny of work indicates that teaching is at least good. The teacher offered good advice and encouraged effective learning by allowing sufficient time for pupils to experiment with a variety of techniques and to adapt and improve their work. Teachers' planning identifies learning objectives and these are made known to the pupils and reviewed at the end of the lesson. Pupils work with a good range of materials and in both two and three dimensions. Teachers are not yet making consistent use of the new resources for information and communication technology to enhance pupils' work in art and design.
- 97 The leadership and management of art and design are good. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and is keen to raise the profile of art by working towards the school's achievement of a gold 'Art Award'.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 98 Owing to the curricular organisation for design and technology, it was possible to observe only two lessons, one taught in the Year 3 and 4 class and the other in the Year 5 and 6 class. Further evidence was gained from an analysis of samples of work and discussions with pupils. Standards of attainment are average at the end of Years 2 and 6. This is similar to that reported in the last inspection. Pupils work on a good range of materials including textiles, malleable materials and food. Good links are made with other areas of the curriculum such as numeracy (measuring and

calculating costs of recipes), science (classification of materials) and personal, social and health education (healthy living posters).

- 99 The Year 3 and 4 lesson observed was excellent and the Year 5 and 6 lesson was good. However, it is not possible, on the range and quality of work available for scrutiny, to make a judgement on the overall quality of teaching of design and technology. The lesson in the Year 3 and 4 class showed that the teacher has good subject knowledge and an effective understanding of the design and technology elements of the National Curriculum. The lesson was planned well and structured to include opportunities for the pupils to study designs, produce their own designs and then make prototype models. Teachers give good emphasis on improving pupils' work through critical appraisal and helpful suggestions. The pupils respond well to this approach and work hard to improve their ideas. In the Year 5 and 6 lesson pupils learned to follow baking instructions. In this lesson the teacher made very good links with numeracy when pupils were asked to find the total cost of the ingredients and then to calculate the cost of one biscuit.
- 100 Year 2 pupils develop skills in a sound range of activities including making models from a variety of recycled materials, plasticine and construction kits. They measure and cut using scissors and use a range of techniques to join materials. In the designing stages of design and technology Year 3 and 4 pupils learn to think about the importance of fitness for purpose. They confidently investigate, evaluate and record their findings using their own systematic process to identify a suitable fabric for a child's purse. They take the task very seriously and discuss strength, flexibility, softness and important points such as, "I wouldn't want that for a purse would you? It's got to be colourful – like this one!" Some go on to investigate the qualities of different types of stitches while others consider design features. Teachers use the end of lesson feedback sessions very effectively to bring together all the best ideas, to introduce next week's challenge in the creation of a purse and to build up excitement in the learning process. In the Year 5 and 6 class pupils develop their skills in communicating their ideas and evaluating their work. Their excellent art work based on the story of King Arthur demonstrates a good understanding of fabrics. Pupils designed clear and bold posters to prevent litter pollution. They show a good understanding of balance between eye-catching picture and slogan. The interesting cooking and baking experiences such as the designing and making of a Christmas biscuit enrich the breadth of the design and technology curriculum and provide fun and enjoyment for all pupils. Pupils know, understand and practise safe procedures for food safety and hygiene.
- 101 The leadership and management of design and technology are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable. However, there is no formal monitoring and evaluating of teaching and learning in the subject. The work in design and technology contributes much to the pupils' social skills as many of the activities are in small groups.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

- 102 Pupils in Years 2 and 6 attain standards in geography and history which meet nationally expected levels. Standards have been maintained at the level reported in the last inspection. The curriculum alternates history and geography topics each half-term. Inspectors only observed one history lesson. No geography lessons were observed as the focus was on history. Inspectors gained other evidence from talking to staff and pupils and an analysis of pupils' work achieved in the current term and in the previous year. Teachers develop specific skills effectively, for example, those

used in map-work, to build on prior knowledge. Many pupils do not have a detailed knowledge and understanding of some aspects of history previously learned or of similarities and differences between places. Teachers make generally effective use of national subject guidance, although this does not always build on previous skills. The new geography co-ordinator plans to check the development of skills and knowledge to ensure that they consistently build on prior learning.

- 103 Pupils make sound progress in their learning. They make good progress in developing their geographical mapping skills. For example, Year 3 and 4 pupils use a mapping key and symbols effectively in drawing a map of a village of their own design. They show a good understanding of where to locate different facilities, for example, the village shop and a children's playground. They use 2 figure co-ordinates accurately to describe the locations of these facilities. Year 5 and 6 pupils extend these skills effectively, for example, drawing a map to show the different uses of water around the school site, as part of their water topic. Teachers and learning support staff support pupils with special educational needs effectively in applying these skills. This enables them to make good progress. Many Year 6 pupils have a sound knowledge of the names and location of some of the main oceans and deserts of the world. However, they do not have a detailed understanding of some of the difficulties encountered by people living in a contrasting environment to that of their own, for example, in desert conditions. Year 3 and 4 pupils know the main factors which enabled the early invaders to choose a site for a settlement. For example, they drew and described a hill site for defence, the need for water, a good soil and wood for use in burning and building. Year 5 and 6 pupils' knowledge and understanding of how these factors have changed in establishing modern settlements is not yet developed effectively.
- 104 Year 1 and 2 pupils have some understanding of how information about the past is gained from different sources. For example, they study a drawing of a Victorian hospital ward to know that conditions were rather dirty and patients often were not looked after very well. Curriculum plans from the previous year show that infant pupils study how children's lives have changed. They study ancient history, through to the Victorian era and then on to more recent times, for example, the 1940's and 1950's. Teachers use the local village as a valuable resource, both for history and for geography, although few Year 2 pupils could recall any interesting facts about how the village has changed in recent times. Many Year 3 and 4 pupils use drawings, paintings and photographs of historical artefacts very effectively to gain a detailed understanding of how the Vikings lived. They write down 'what they can see' and 'what it tells them about the Vikings'. The teacher uses questions very successfully to develop then extend pupils' answers. For example, one pupil described a man sitting in a boat. The teacher's skilfully challenged the pupil to extend his initial answer. She then encouraged others to contribute their ideas. This enables the initial answer to lead on to describing the Vikings as 'seamen; travellers; raiders; traders.'
- 105 There was insufficient evidence to judge the overall quality of teaching. Teaching in the one lesson observed was excellent. The teacher used a good range of resources to gain pupils' attention. She maintained a brisk and challenging pace by frequently re-distributing the pictorial resources. This ensured that pupils sustained their interest and worked well together to suggest and discuss their ideas. The teacher had high expectations of pupils' work. For example, "I know that you can get more from that picture!" resulted in two pupils looking even more carefully at the picture and identifying different goods beside the longboat. The teacher used her feedback activity at the end of the lesson to enable pupils to share their ideas. This improved the knowledge and understanding of all pupils. For example, the pupils who had been

challenged to study their picture in even more detail stated that “the different things beside the boat showed that the Vikings travelled to other parts of this country and to other countries to trade”. This excellent teaching enabled pupils to improve considerably their historical knowledge and understanding.

- 106 The roles of the subject co-ordinators for history and geography are not sufficiently developed to enable the teachers with these responsibilities to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The geography co-ordinator is new to the post and is beginning to improve her understanding of the subject’s strengths and areas for development. The history co-ordinator is responsible for other subjects and curriculum areas, for example, numeracy and Early Years. These have been given a high priority recently which have limited her opportunities for focusing on developments in history.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 107 Pupils attain standards which meet those expected nationally for pupils at the end of Year 2. They are below expected standards at the end of Year 6. Standards have improved, particularly as national expectations of pupils’ skills and knowledge are higher than at the time of the last inspection. The school has recently improved resources considerably by establishing a high quality computer suite in addition to computers in each classroom. This has enabled the school to offer pupils more opportunities to improve their knowledge, apply their skills and to raise standards. Pupils are benefiting from having regular time-tabled lessons which are being used effectively to develop their basic skills, especially in word processing and information retrieval. Their knowledge and skills in aspects of control and exchanging information, especially for pupils from Years 3 to 6, are not at the levels expected nationally for their age. These are planned for development later in the year. Most teachers are not requiring pupils to apply their skills enough in other subjects, especially in Years 3 to 6, to ensure that they are consistently extending them.
- 108 Infant pupils develop sound skills in controlling the mouse and using them to create a picture on the screen. Pupils, especially those with special educational needs, receive very good individual support from teaching, support staff, governors and parental helpers. This enables them to participate fully and to make good, and often very good progress, in their learning. They have a very enthusiastic, excited approach to working on the computers. For example, the youngest pupils are delighted at being able to create a picture and then to use the correct icon to change the shape of the picture or its background colour. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 extend their mouse skills confidently to select the correct rhyming word from a drop-down menu. More able Year 2 pupils use their developing word processing skills effectively to type in missing words. They use their knowledge of ‘Each peach, pear and plum’ to complete sections of the story from which some words are missing. Some weaknesses in spelling and reading limit the progress of some pupils, for example, in recognising and typing ‘strawberry’ and ‘reply’.
- 109 Year 3 and 4 pupils extend their word processing skills successfully in English to create ‘The Weekly Echo’. They use a newspaper format effectively to create eye-catching headlines. They type their own articles accurately on traditional stories and nursery rhymes such as *Little Miss Muffet* and *The Three Bears*. Year 5 and 6 pupils apply their word processing skills effectively to create ‘The Byfield Times’ in which they provide reports about historical events such as The Plague. Pupils consolidate their skills soundly although they do not extend them effectively, for example, by including graphics. Most Year 5 and 6 pupils are confident in their research skills, for

example, using the Internet to gain information about trees. They use search engines successfully to locate information, although some do not know how important it is to ensure that the key words are as accurate as possible. For example, some Year 6 pupils used the prompt words 'British trees' to locate further information but they were unsure why they got 'Canadian Redwoods' as an example. The teacher's effective use of questions enabled them to understand that 'trees in Britain' would prevent them from getting information about trees in British Columbia!

- 110 Teaching is sound overall. Most teachers have sound subject knowledge and use it effectively to promote pupils' skills and knowledge. Teachers make good use of national guidance to develop pupils' skills and to plan to cover all required aspects. They work closely with support staff and other adult helpers to ensure that pupils are given good support. For example, in a Year 1 and 2 lesson, the teacher and support staff ensured that pupils on computers were given good individual support in reading the text on-screen. They also supported those pupils who were focused on a reading activity and waiting patiently for their turn on the computers. Teachers organise their lessons very effectively to ensure that they plan different activities to meet the range of pupils' abilities. For example, they provide three different word-selection programs linked to their literacy book. On the first, pupils select from three rhyming words shown clearly on the screen. On the second, pupils click on an arrow to produce a drop-down word menu from which to choose their rhyming word. In the third activity, pupils have to choose the correct word to type into gaps in the story. This enables pupils to extend their literacy skills, although where pupils have reading or spelling weaknesses, they restrict their progress.
- 111 The school has improved significantly its resources for information and communication technology. Teachers and support staff have benefited from training and advice from the local education authority. They benefit from the support of other adult helpers, for example, the governor linked to the subject. The subject co-ordinator provides effective leadership to developing the subject. The school is making good use of an action plan to improve staff subject expertise and to extend the use of the improved resources. The school is making increasingly effective use of new opportunities to raise attainment and are well-equipped to improve standards rapidly.

MUSIC

- 112 Only one music lesson was observed and so no judgement can be made about teaching or attainment. At the time of the last inspection teaching was good in Key Stage 2 and pupils were achieving well throughout the school.
- 113 The strong commitment to music continues to be a high priority for the school. Music tuition is offered on guitar and recorder, the guitar group played confidently in assembly for the whole school. The school makes good use of very good links with the local community to enhance pupils' skills and knowledge. A local resident volunteers to play piano for assemblies and concerts throughout the year. A parent helps to organise and rehearse the school choir and teaches groups of pupils to play the recorder. The school continues to plan annual musical productions. Many local residents made sure they told the inspection team about the high quality performance last Christmas. The new music co-ordinator has begun a good music club, which is encouraging pupils to appreciate a wide variety of music.

- 114 The lesson that was seen illustrated that teachers use a commercial scheme effectively to plan in detail for music throughout the school. Pupils clearly enjoyed the lesson and made good progress learning about meter. Music lessons also provide good opportunities for pupils to work together co-operatively in small groups. Although the range of resources available is limited to simple percussion instruments they are sufficient to teach the scheme. However they do not provide sufficient challenge or interest for older pupils. The school has yet to use the new computer resources to promote pupils' music skills and knowledge.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 115 Overall standards are at the levels expected of pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6. They are similar to those at the time of the previous inspection. Teachers include all aspects of the National Curriculum for physical education. All junior pupils have swimming lessons. By the end of Year 6, all are swimming at least to the required 25 metres and many further than this. The school ensures that pupils with special educational needs participate fully in this activity. All pupils continue to make satisfactory progress.
- 116 Year 1 and 2 pupils know how to use space and apparatus effectively. They really enjoy these activities and co-operate very well with each other. This was well illustrated by the high levels of understanding between Year 1 and 2 pupils when using apparatus in a gymnastics lesson. They allowed each other to complete a sequence of movements before starting their own. They travel on the floor and on apparatus using a variety of methods, for example, running, jumping, hopping, twisting, turning and balancing. They change direction and use different heights effectively when developing and practising a sequence of movements. Pupils are aware of each other's movements and look and move in relation to everyone else. By Year 6, pupils practise, improve and refine their performance through increasingly complex sequences of movements in individual activity and working in pairs and groups. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to observe others perform and evaluate how well they do. This not only enhances the performance of others but helps the observers to identify how they too can improve the level of their own performance.
- 117 Pupils have very good attitudes to physical education and respond enthusiastically in lessons. This contributes significantly to pupils wanting to achieve good standards. All pupils dress properly, behave well, concentrate on their work and show confidence in their performances. From an early age pupils are taught to put out and tidy away items of equipment with appropriate attention to health and safety issues.
- 118 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In gymnastics the school is using a commercial scheme to good effect. This provides a coherent, systematic and effective series of lessons leading to the successful development of pupils' gymnastic skills. Teachers pay close attention to safety procedures and demonstrate satisfactory levels of subject knowledge. They work hard to provide interesting opportunities for pupils, for example, they take advantage of the Daventry District Council's 'TOPS' scheme, an after-school football club is organised on Friday evenings and a netball club is to start soon. The co-ordinator for physical education is new to the school. He is very keen and enthusiastic and the subject is now well placed to improve further.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 119 Standards in religious education are below those expected in the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Years 2 and 6, because not enough time is planned for this subject. For example, pupils in Years 3 to 6 cover only half of the syllabus and as a result they are unable to meet expectations at age eleven. Additionally, the quality of pupils' writing in the subject limits their attainment overall. At the time of the last inspection standards were broadly in line with those expected. Currently pupils are not working at sufficient depth to achieve the recommended levels of attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6. For example, older pupils' descriptions of Hindu customs more closely match levels of attainment for younger pupils because the writing is simple description rather than understanding. Pupils' oral skills in religious education more closely match expected levels but they have significant gaps in their knowledge due to the limited curriculum. In Years 1 and 2 pupils are unable to make any detailed comparison between Diwali and Christian festivals as they have too little experience of Hindu customs. Judgements about attainment have been made from an analysis of pupils' work, talking to pupils, curriculum documents and school timetables.
- 120 Too few lessons were observed to make a firm judgement about the quality of teaching and learning. Nevertheless the lessons seen for junior pupils had some good characteristics. Pupils were completely absorbed by the special atmosphere created as they discussed aspects of Hinduism. Lights were low, candles lit and incense burning as the teacher talked about Hindu Gods and Goddesses and customs. Later, pupils enthusiastically researched the book collection for more information about Hindu gods and goddesses. There was little evidence of pupils using their information and communication skills to enhance their knowledge and understanding.
- 121 At the moment there is no clear long-term plan for religious education to ensure that pupils cover all the required elements of the locally agreed syllabus at an appropriate level. In Years 1 to 4 staff use national guidelines effectively, then in Years 5 and 6 teachers use units for the locally agreed syllabus to guide short term planning. Some classes teach the same faiths in the same term, for example Years 1 and 2, and Years 5 and 6 are all looking at aspects of Hinduism, younger children learn about Diwali and older pupils research Gods and Goddesses. As a result there are not enough resources to go around; and whilst older pupils have access to brightly coloured posters, books and a range of exquisite artefacts, younger pupils have no visual resources to show them Diwali celebrations.
- 122 The co-ordinator has worked hard to draw together a good range of resources for each of the major faiths, including artefacts and books. In addition the school has very good links with local faith leaders. For example, the local rector is a regular visitor to the school and even accompanied pupils on the residential visit to Normandy. Pupils visit the church for special celebrations and some lessons; for instance, a Candelmas service was held in the church, which had been dressed as the temple. On other occasions pupils have handled the symbols of Christianity in the church, for example those related to communion. Successful links have been built with the local Jewish community, which have led to parents asking if they can attend the next workshop when families will come together to learn about Hanukkah in the school hall.