

# INSPECTION REPORT

## LINGS LOWER SCHOOL

Lings, Northampton

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121933

Headteacher: Mrs E. Marston

Reporting inspector: Brian Aldridge  
17454

Dates of inspection: 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> July, 2001

Inspection number: 193478

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Lower School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hayeswood Road Lings Northampton
Postcode:	NN3 8NN
Telephone number:	01604 410369
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs A. Weldon
Date of previous inspection:	10 <sup>th</sup> March, 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17454	Brian Aldridge	Registered inspector	English Art and design Music English as an additional language	What should the school do to improve further The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught How well is the school led and managed
14178	Patricia Willman	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils How well does the school work in partnership with parents
23566	John Iles	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education Equal opportunities Special educational needs	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
23453	Carole Cressey	Team inspector	Science Geography History Religious education Foundation Stage	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is situated in the eastern district of Northampton and is about the same size as other primary schools. The number on roll has fallen since the last inspection and is now 201 pupils (100 girls and 101 boys). There are 31 children in the reception class. Forty-four pupils come from backgrounds beyond Europe. Twenty-nine pupils learn English as an additional language, 18 of whom are at the early stages of learning. The majority of these children speak Gujarati as a first language. Over a third of the pupils (69) are on the school's register for special educational needs, three of whom have statements. All of these proportions are above national averages. About 36 per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is also above the national average. Since the last inspection the school's intake has changed considerably; the proportion of pupils recognised as having special educational needs has increased by one-third and that of pupils eligible for free school meals has almost doubled. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is generally well below average and particularly so in the areas of language and literacy and mathematics. Over the past few months the school has had to cope with the uncertainty caused by town-wide reorganisation.

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

This is a good school in which pupils make good progress and attain average standards by the time they leave. Pupils have good attitudes and their personal development is good. Teaching is good with some very good practice. The very good rate of improvement is the result of the very good leadership of the headteacher, curriculum co-ordinators and governors and the very strong sense of teamwork in the school. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Pupils achieve well and standards are rising.
- The quality of teaching is good overall.
- The school is very well led and managed.
- Pupils are well cared for.
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs and the provision for pupils with special educational needs is a strength of the school.
- The provision in the reception year is good.
- Assessment procedures are very good.

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

- The consistency of teaching, particularly in Years 1 and 2.
- The levels of attendance.

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

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

Since the school was last inspected in March 1997 it has maintained a very good rate of improvement. Standards have generally risen and the quality of teaching has improved. The four key issues identified in the last inspection have been dealt with well. The school is now operating a rigorous analysis of standards to set more specific targets for improvement and the provision for this area of the school's work is now very good. Higher attainers are challenged well in Years 3 and 4 and, although planning to meet pupils' needs is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, there is still some work to do before it is as good as it is for older pupils. The structure of lessons has improved considerably and standards in information and communication technology are now average, resources are now satisfactory and staff knowledge and confidence have risen. The leadership of the school has the capacity to continue to improve the school.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	D	C	E	D
Writing	C	A	D	B
Mathematics	D	B	D	B

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

The table above shows, for instance, that seven-year-olds attain better standards in writing than in reading. From 1996 to 1999 standards rose but there was a set back last year because of a particularly high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Boys do not do as well as girls. Comparisons with similar schools have been recalculated to take account of the above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the above average number of pupils who change school each year.

Inspectors found that attainment in this year's Year 4 is average in English, mathematics and science. Standards are above those expected of nine-year-olds in art and music. In other subjects of the curriculum pupils achieve the levels expected for their age. In the present Year 2, seven-year-olds achieve below average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. In all other subjects they achieve the standards expected of them. Children start the reception year with very low attainment in language and literacy and mathematical development, make good progress and enter Year 1 with attainment in all areas of learning below that expected. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is good in the reception year and in Year 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 and 4 where class teaching is stronger and teachers plan very effective work based on pupils' individual education plans. The progress of pupils who are learning English as an additional language is good. Children in the reception class and Years 3 and 4 make good progress in their learning. Children in Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils like coming to school and like their teachers and helpers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good generally and exemplary in assemblies.
Personal development and relationships	Good. They enjoy helping each other and respond well to challenging tasks.
Attendance	Although attendance is improving it is unsatisfactory

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-9 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Satisfactory	Good

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

Teaching is good overall. Of the lessons seen by inspectors 36 per cent were very good or excellent and a further 26 per cent of lessons were good. In five per cent of the lessons teaching was unsatisfactory, which accounted for two lessons both in the infants. The high quality teaching is concentrated in the reception class, in two classes in the juniors and in the specialist music lessons. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good overall. The teaching of reading and spelling is improving with the introduction of a new scheme. High quality planning, supportive behaviour management and very high quality day-to-day assessment are seen in most lessons. Pupils with special educational needs learn very well and those who learn English as an additional language learn well. Teachers plan work that is suited to the different needs of pupils. Pupils work hard, are interested in their tasks and, because of the targets they are set, have a good understanding of their learning needs. Learning is better in the reception class and in Years 3 and 4. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Generally good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares very well for its pupils.

The school's assessment procedures are very good overall and the use of assessment information is excellent. Assessment procedures were highlighted as a key issue for improvement at the last inspection and as this provision is now very good the improvement has been significant.

The quality of the curriculum in the reception and infant classes is good and is very good in the juniors where teachers are particularly skilled at making links between subjects. The curriculum is varied and meets pupils' needs.

The school works well with parents and has useful plans to increase the co-operation between home and school.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher leads and manages the school very well. The senior teachers, curriculum co-ordinators and governors support her very well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher, teachers and governors check the school regularly and in very effective ways.
The strategic use of resources	Good.

The staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good. The school applies the principles of best value very well.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children like coming to school and behaviour is good.</li> <li>• Children receive the right amount of work, are expected to work hard and are helped to become mature.</li> <li>• Teaching is good, children make good progress and they feel well informed about their children's progress.</li> <li>• The school works closely with parents and they feel comfortable about approaching the school.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A small group of parents thought that too few after-school activities were provided.</li> </ul>

Inspectors do not agree with the comment about after-school activities. For a school of this size and type after-school activities are good. In the questionnaire and during the pre-inspection meeting parents thought that their school was doing well and inspectors agree with this opinion.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS**

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

1. Since the last inspection the proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals and those with special educational needs have risen considerably and now children enter the school with attainment well below that expected for their age. This is particularly so in the learning areas of communication, language and literacy and mathematics. The grades comparing the school's performance with similar schools have been adjusted to take account of the higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the high proportion of pupils who move school during each year. For example, 47 per cent of the current Year 2 pupils have moved school and, throughout the school, mobility is over 30 per cent.
2. In last year's national tests and assessments seven-year-olds attained standards in reading well below the national average and below average in writing and mathematics. In comparison to similar schools reading was below average and in writing and mathematics standards were above average. Boys do not do as well as girls and the proportions of pupils attaining the higher levels of the National Curriculum are low. From 1997 to 1999 standards rose steadily.
3. Throughout the school pupils now benefit from much improved assessment systems that help teachers to track pupils' learning and ensure that teaching and curriculum planning are based on a high quality analysis of standards. Pupils' learning in lessons is good overall and develops well as they move through the school. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in the infant classes achieve satisfactorily and standards in speaking, reading, writing and mathematics are below average at seven. In all other subjects they achieve the levels expected of them. Pupils in the junior classes achieve well and standards in English, mathematics and science are average. In other subjects pupils achieve the levels expected of them with the exception of art and design and music where standards are above average. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved and are now at the levels expected for seven and nine-year-olds. As the quality of teaching, the curriculum and assessment procedures have improved so pupils learn more effectively in lessons and grow in confidence.
4. Children enter the reception year with attainment well below that in most schools. Many have skills that are well below average in all areas of learning. In these areas, with the exception of their physical development, they do not reach the early learning goals set for children as they enter Year 1 of the National Curriculum. In their physical development children reach the early learning goals. Children achieve well in the reception class, they are given a good start to their education and they are encouraged to develop the good work habits they will need further up the school. Children are confident and

talk at length about their experiences but often their words are mispronounced and at times they use hand gestures to convey meaning. Children develop good listening skills participating in stories, rhymes, songs and assemblies with obvious enjoyment. Children make a good start in counting, recognising shapes and learning about capacity and measuring as they play with sand and water. They talk about the days of the week, draw simple maps of their routes to school and choose the materials to complete their creative work. Opportunities to develop imaginative play are less well developed compared to other areas of learning. This means that in some instances learning opportunities in language and creativity are not well developed in imaginative play. Physical skills are very well developed as teachers and learning support assistants intervene very well and children are taught how to use small and large play equipment safely.

5. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 and 4. This is due in general to the higher quality of teaching in these later years. In their speaking skills seven-year-olds attain below average standards. Pupils listen to each other and their teachers with attention and respect. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties at times find concentrating difficult but, where their teachers have planned interesting and challenging work, they sit still and listen. Pupils make good progress in the two junior years so that by the time they are nine they attain average standards in speaking, often using the correct words for technical terms in mathematics and science lessons. Reading is below average for seven-year-olds and average for nine-year-olds. Generally pupils enjoy reading and talk enthusiastically about their favourite authors. Writing is below average for seven-year-olds and average for nine-year-olds. Older pupils use a range of techniques in their writing and younger pupils understand how to write instructions and reports as well as stories.
6. Seven-year-olds count forwards and backwards accurately and they tell the time using clocks with hands and digital clocks. Nine-year-olds understand place value and number order. They use fractions of shapes and numbers and understand how fractions are equivalent to each other. In science standards are broadly average by the age of seven and nine. This is because pupils in the infants and the junior classes make good progress. They show a sound knowledge of the human body and identify differences between living organisms. Pupils in the infant classes set up fair tests. Pupils make good progress in their scientific enquiries. For example, they investigate how the skeletons of other creatures support their bodies. Pupils conduct investigations and develop a useful knowledge of scientific processes.
7. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. Teachers and learning support assistants work well together and support pupils well to ensure their full inclusion in all aspects of the curriculum. Pupils' individual education plans are of very good quality and identify clearly the small steps in learning which enable them to be successful. In literacy, for example, support assistants teach pupils letter sounds and provide opportunities to repeat and practise sounds and letters to improve spelling and reading. The organisation of support effectively enables pupils to follow the literacy and numeracy

strategies with their friends and, because the work is well matched to their abilities, they make valuable contributions to lessons and self-esteem is raised. Achievements in Years 3 and 4 are higher than in Year 1 and 2. This is mainly because the quality of teaching is better in the classes of older pupils and older pupils have benefited from this well structured support over a longer period of time. The coordinator monitors the needs of the high number of new entrants who regularly join and leave the school.

8. The grouping of pupils according to ability enables those with special educational needs to work at an appropriate pace and to be fully challenged. Staff ensure that pupils know exactly what is expected of them. For example, when Year 4 pupils played a computer game of 'Fractions Snap' the activity was adapted to ensure the program used enabled pupils to match fractions and shapes and extend the earlier work covered in the numeracy lesson. Pupils with special educational needs use computers with confidence and recognise how new technology can support them in the important areas of reading, writing and mathematics.
9. Pupils who learn English as an additional language make good progress and are well represented in the average and above average groups of pupils in each class. They have structured support and the careful records maintained of their progress show that these pupils achieve as well as other pupils.
10. The standards achieved in ICT have improved since the last inspection. The school has invested heavily in new equipment, setting up a computer suite, and in staff training. These developments have increased teachers' confidence and the appointment of an ICT learning support assistant has helped pupils achieve well and reach the levels expected of seven and nine-year-olds.
11. The standards achieved by seven-year-olds in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music, physical education and religious education are at the levels expected for pupils of this age. By the age of nine pupils continue to achieve the expected levels in these subjects, though in art and design and music their standards improve to above those expected. This is due to good quality resources in each subject, the systematic teaching of skills and, in the case of music, high quality specialist teaching.
12. Pupils' learning is satisfactory in the infant classes and good in the juniors. The level of challenge has increased since the last inspection but needs to be increased further in the infant classes. In the junior classes the brisk pace of lessons, the good levels of teachers' subject knowledge and consistent management of behaviour promotes high rates of achievement.

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

13. Pupils' attitudes to school, their behaviour and personal development are good overall. However, the level of attendance is slightly lower than it was at the time of the last inspection; it is below the national average and is unsatisfactory. The relationships pupils have with each other, with their

teachers and with all adults who work with them and care for them are good. Most parents support the positive values promoted by the school and the majority of pupils respond well to these expectations. Pupils' response to these aspects of their development has been maintained well since the last inspection.

14. The children in the reception year, including those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language, are full of enthusiasm for learning. They settle happily into the wide range of interesting activities prepared for them, developing their personal and social skills through sharing resources and helping each other with their tasks. They respond well to instructions, trying hard to please their teachers and gain their praise. They get on well with each other and have very good relationships with the adults who work with them and care for them. They feel happy and secure in a structured and familiar environment and clearly understand the routines of the classroom. The children know what type of behaviour is expected of them and usually comply. The wonderful assembly presented by the reception children, excited to be performing for their parents, showed total confidence in their teacher and great pride in their own achievement. The kindness of one child paired with a classmate with special educational needs enabled her to be fully involved in the presentation and her enthusiasm and happiness was evident to all. The children tidy up sensibly when asked and are careful when handling books and other resources. They take their classroom responsibilities seriously. During their time in the reception class, the children make good progress in their personal development and this helps them to settle quickly to the more structured learning in Year 1. Although attendance for many of these children is not compulsory, most come to school regularly and on time.
15. Throughout the school, the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language have good attitudes to school. The majority of parents who expressed a view prior to and during the inspection indicated that their children like school and this was confirmed by many of the pupils. However, there are a significant number of pupils who do not attend regularly and several arrive late at the beginning of the day. In lessons when the teaching is good and behaviour is well managed, pupils listen carefully and their participation and response are good. They enjoy listening to stories and respond well to the structure of the literacy and numeracy sessions. In a Year 3 and 4 literacy lesson, for example, exploring the use of language in poetry, because pupils considered their responses very carefully, the quality of the discussion was very high and they made excellent progress. When the weather is very warm, the long mid-day break has a negative impact on pupils' enthusiasm for learning in the afternoon lessons. Their response is noticeably lethargic when compared to their eagerness to contribute during the morning lessons. Many pupils take part enthusiastically in the good range of clubs organised during the mid-day break and after school.
16. The behaviour of the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language, is good. This

supports the view expressed by parents prior to and during the inspection. Pupils respond well to the mostly consistent, firm and fair management of all members of staff, they understand what is expected of them and know the boundaries that are clearly established within the school community. Behaviour in most lessons is good and older pupils behave particularly well in some of their lessons. On occasion, when lessons lack sufficient interest, pupils become unsettled and restless and do not learn as much as they should. Their behaviour in assemblies is usually excellent. They sit quietly, listen carefully and generously recognise the achievements of others. At play times and during the mid-day break, pupils' behaviour is mostly good. They are very active and the younger pupils play enthusiastically with the excellent range of games equipment. Older pupils enjoy the challenge of the mini-assault course and make full use of the grassy playing area for ball games. Inevitably there are disputes from time to time, but these do not usually develop into serious incidents. One boy has been excluded permanently during the year for anti-social and inappropriate behaviour.

17. Pupils with special educational needs respond very well in lessons, especially when the quality of teaching is very good. They behave well, remain on task and are pleased when they are praised for their efforts. They have positive attitudes to their work and are keen to succeed. Younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 are learning to work together. However, there is some challenging behaviour that occasionally is not managed as well as it could be.
18. The personal development of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language, is good. Most pupils get on well together and have good, and often very good, relationships with their teachers and other adults in the school. This forms the basis of the happy and caring community atmosphere in which each pupil feels valued. They co-operate well in lessons, sharing ideas and resources and this contributes well to the good progress they make. Pupils have the opportunity to talk about their feelings and views during their personal, social and health education lessons and in circle time. They listen carefully to each other and take turns to speak. Many pupils clearly know how what they say and do may impact on their friends. Although pupils and parents talk about instances of bullying, all are confident that any such instances are dealt with quickly and fairly. Pupils clearly understand that it is unacceptable to be unkind to others. In a personal, social and health education lesson in a Year 3 and 4 class, in a discussion about Chinese customs, one pupil showed instinctive sensitivity for the feelings of her friend who originated from China. The pupils carry out their classroom responsibilities sensibly and many show good levels of initiative when choosing resources and tidying up. This is particularly evident when distributing and collecting the playtime games. They treat the resources and the school environment with appropriate care and respect. The Standard Bearers take their responsibility seriously and most are conscientious and kind in their care of the younger pupils. Pupils are open, friendly and curious individuals. They are usually polite and enjoy adult attention.

19. Although attendance this year shows a slight improvement over last year, it is still unsatisfactory. It has been consistently below the national average since the last inspection with a comparatively high level of unauthorised absence. There are a significant number of pupils who do not attend as regularly as they should and this has a detrimental impact on the standards they achieve. Despite the school's efforts to follow-up absence, over one quarter of the pupils have been absent without authorisation. Although most of the authorised absence relates to childhood illness, there are many parents who take their children on holiday during term time. A significant number of pupils are persistently late to school. Arrival after the start of lessons disrupts the learning of their classmates. Registration is quick and efficient and most lessons start on time.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT**

20. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. In 33 per cent of the lessons teaching was very good or better, with 5 per cent being excellent. In a further 28 per cent teaching was good and in 33 per cent teaching was satisfactory. The two unsatisfactory lessons (five per cent) were seen in infant classes where a higher proportion of the satisfactory teaching was also seen. Learning in the infant classes is satisfactory and in the reception class and junior classes it is good. Achievement parallels the quality of teaching.
21. Teaching has improved since the last inspection; a smaller proportion is now unsatisfactory and more lessons were seen in this inspection where teaching was very good or better. Teaching has improved because of new appointments made since the last inspection and because of the high quality monitoring by the headteacher, curriculum co-ordinators and governors. Teachers receive very high quality feedback about their teaching and are given targets for improvement. The school is aware of the differences in the quality of teachers, and in the new school year they will be redeployed to provide a better balance of skills and experience.
22. In the successful lessons, teachers set a brisk pace that does not allow pupils to rest on their laurels. They tell pupils what they have to learn and how they should complete their work successfully. They have good and at times very good subject knowledge, which they use to highlight the links between subjects. Perhaps most importantly, where teaching is good or better, pupils' behaviour is managed well and their interest is captured. This was observed consistently in music lessons, in the reception class and in two classes in the junior section of the school. There were examples of good teaching in Year 2, notably in physical education, information and communication technology (ICT) and art and design. In these lessons the teacher's subject knowledge was developed sufficiently to be able to hold and enthuse pupils and the systematic teaching of skills paid dividends in higher rates of achievement.
23. Teaching in the reception class is never less than good and is at times very good. Lessons are interesting and capture pupils' imagination. Story time becomes an adventure, which has children gasping in horror as the Three

Bears choose the wrong house to get back at Goldilocks. Lessons have a good structure and in a physical development lesson children made very good progress as the teacher's clear instructions and the challenging activities that had been well planned ensured children gained confidence and skills using ropes, balls and quoits. At times in this class children are not challenged enough in the activities they choose themselves and learning support assistants and teaching staff need to be aware that more could be asked of children in these sessions. A major strength of the teaching in this class and others is the very high quality of day-to-day assessment. This ensures that teachers have a very good understanding of pupils' learning. The information they gather by making notes of how well children and pupils do and the records they keep in each subject are used very well to plan the next stage of work. In this class children's behaviour is managed well. Homework in a variety of forms is used well to support learning in the classroom and prepare for the next stage of work.

24. Teaching in the infant classes is satisfactory overall. Lessons are planned which at times are too long and this causes some pupils to lose concentration. However, in most lessons teachers plan work that meets pupils' needs and is based on how well they have done in previous lessons. For example, in a good art lesson, the teacher's good subject knowledge and very good relationships with pupils meant that they were interested in their work and were taught how to use a limited range of colours to produce high quality artwork. In a lesson in the school's computer suite the teacher reviewed the previous work well and systematically taught pupils new skills about making graphs on the computer. The management of pupils' behaviour in these classes is satisfactory. This is because introductions to lessons are at times too long and pupils become restless. The level of challenge is satisfactory in most lessons but it is not as high as in the reception and junior classes. Teachers do not expect pupils to produce enough work of sufficiently high quality. In the unsatisfactory lessons subject knowledge was lacking and, therefore, explanations were not clear. Pupils did not understand what they had to do and consequently time was wasted and pupils' attention wandered, so that enthusiasm for the task and for completing their work was slight.
25. The very good and excellent teaching was concentrated in the junior classes and in two classes in particular. These lessons were marked by a very brisk pace, high levels of teachers' subject knowledge and interesting work which captured pupils' imaginations. For example, in a mathematics lesson pupils in Years 3 and 4 showed very high levels of enjoyment and learning. Excellent teamwork between the teacher and learning support assistant ensured that pupils worked hard and at the end of the lesson were asked to explain what they had learned and what they had discovered about fractions and decimals. In this lesson, as in other lessons in English, art, geography and music teachers used the correct terms and insisted that pupils use these words to explain their ideas.
26. In the very successful lessons teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well. Often the work that is set is interesting enough to keep pupils busy but when



attention wanders or when pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties show themselves all teachers have to do is look sternly or gently remind pupils of their work. This is not the case in all of the junior classes and at times some teachers find it difficult to hold pupils' attention. The teamwork between learning support assistants and teachers in these classes is good and assistants are well briefed by teachers, often maintaining good quality notes of pupils' learning.

27. The teaching of basic skills is good in the reception and junior classes and satisfactory in the infant stage. The introduction of a new reading and spelling scheme has increased the rate of learning of younger pupils and they are gaining in confidence when attempting to read and spell new words. The introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies has helped provide a good structure to most lessons and the school is now adapting these schemes to provide more pertinent lessons, particularly in reading.
28. The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is mainly good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 and 4. This is because of the very good support of the teaching assistants. Individual education plans are of very good quality and clearly state pupils' targets. The strength lies in teacher assessment and the way in which teachers record pupils' progress. They use this information to plan subsequent activities and ensure that support assistants are fully involved in the assessment process. Consequently, all staff have a very good knowledge of pupils' individual needs and work together to enable the pupils to achieve their best.
29. This partnership is particularly strong in the teaching of literacy and numeracy. For example, the staff ensure pupils understand and use the technical language which is introduced through consistent reinforcement and encouragement. Also, pupils who confuse letters, for example b and d, are given word lists. Additionally, programmes are planned to support pupils' needs in numeracy.
30. The teaching of pupils who learn English as an additional language is satisfactory and teachers and learning support assistants work together to provide useful programmes of work. Good quality records are kept and pupils new to the school are very well supported in high quality assessments of their needs.
31. All members of staff work very hard in this school. The above average proportions of pupils with special educational needs and the high turnover of pupils joining and leaving the school means that teaching has to be of high quality to enable pupils to achieve well. This is managed well by the headteacher and curriculum co-ordinators and the quality of pupils' work in displays and the settled and calm learning environment show how well the school is working to help pupils.

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

32. The school provides a curriculum that is broad, balanced and relevant to the ages, needs and interests of the pupils. It includes all subjects in the National Curriculum and religious education and complies with all statutory requirements.
33. In the previous report the school was criticised for insufficient provision for information and communication technology (ICT) and monitoring and evaluation procedures were not strong enough. The need to include numeracy in the individual education plans for some pupils with special educational needs was also identified. Inspection evidence confirms that the provision for ICT is now very good. A new computer suite has been installed and is used regularly by all classes in the school to develop computer skills and to support the teaching of subjects across the curriculum.
34. The appointment of a technician to support teachers and pupils ensures that hardware and software are sufficient to meet the learning and teaching needs of the pupils. Teachers' knowledge and confidence have increased greatly since the previous inspection. This is due to the appointment of an enthusiastic coordinator and the targeting of the subject as a priority to raise standards. Very good arrangements monitor and evaluate the curriculum. The headteacher and governors review how effectively the curriculum provision supports raising standards in the school. The special needs coordinator liaises closely with the local authority to identify effective ways of ensuring that the needs of pupils with special educational needs in mathematics are addressed. Programmes are planned to support these pupils' needs in numeracy and are included on individual education plans.
35. The quality of planning the curriculum is very good. Staff work together using a common format which is monitored by the headteacher. A priority is that the curriculum ensures progression in learning for all pupils. All subjects have very good quality schemes of work. They are reviewed systematically and amended as appropriate to ensure that they meet the requirements of the school. The school has very successfully implemented the national literacy and numeracy strategies. They are very well linked to other subjects. There are very good opportunities to develop writing skills, for example, in design and technology when pupils prepare notes about the designs they make for various projects. There are very good links between English and geography, history and religious education and mathematics and ICT; for example, recording information using graphs to illustrate fractional parts and to reflect personal choices of sandwiches in design and technology.
36. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good and is taught throughout the school. In a lesson in Year 3/4 pupils identified changes that have influenced their lives. A significant proportion of pupils at the school have had their lives disturbed by the frequent changes in their addresses. Pupils consider how the attitudes and actions of others have influenced their lives. They understand that they have to develop strategies to deal with changes and have a growing awareness of the difficulties that some of their friends have to address. Appropriate policies are in

place for sex education and for heightening awareness of the dangers of drug misuse.

37. The personal development of pupils is good and significant importance is placed on this aspect of the school's work. For example, older pupils support younger pupils in the playground and the field. They were particularly careful to ensure that the youngest pupils were protected from the hot sun during the inspection period. The older pupils are pleased to share responsibilities, for example, they help to monitor lunchtime telephone calls and are pleased to help their teachers prepare materials for lessons. Through these activities they reflect the pride they have in their school.
38. Pupils with special educational needs are included fully in all aspects of the curriculum. Through the good use of assessment the activities are planned to match precisely the stages of learning. The coordinator who ensures that pupils' needs are met through a balanced range of experiences monitors the provision systematically. This includes one to one provision for those with statements and those supported within the local banding structure. Learning support assistants know how teachers plan and deliver the curriculum and model their practice on that of the teachers to ensure the delivery of the curriculum is consistent and all pupils receive their full subject entitlement. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The requirements of the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs are met in full.
39. There has been a big improvement in the school's provision for ICT since the previous report. Many pupils in Year 4 work independently, accessing the Internet and sending e-mail. The purpose built computer suite and improved teacher confidence are accelerating progress in this area. ICT supports subjects across the curriculum and is making a significant contribution to raising standards.
40. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities. Computer, craft, gymnastics, choir, nature, mathematics and dance are very popular and enjoyed by a large number of pupils, including infants. A very valuable three-day residential visit to Irthlingborough Frontier Camp gave pupils opportunities to experience a range of challenging activities, including abseiling and tests of initiative. Visits, for example, to Twycross Zoo and Wicksteed Park extend pupils' learning beyond the classroom. The school has developed satisfactory links with the community, particularly with environmental projects. They benefit from their work associated with The Friends of the Lakes and Lingswood groups. Pupils from the school share Christmas and Harvest celebrations with the nearby old people's centre. Links with other schools are not strong. While meetings take place at headteacher level there are few curriculum meetings organised, particularly with nearby middle schools.
41. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. The requirements for a daily act of worship are fully met and daily acts of worship are very special times that are used very well to promote pupils' positive values and

attitudes to each other and their community. A sense of spirituality is successfully fostered through carefully chosen music which creates an atmosphere of reverence and calm as pupils enter for assemblies. Fundamental issues, such as the battle between feelings of greed, hatred, jealousy and those of kindness, humility and love are examined through well thought out dramas and the writings of people such as Nelson Mandela. Throughout the school, teachers make good use of incidental and planned opportunities to raise pupils' awareness of special moments and the wonder of their creation. A very well planned personal, health and social education lesson provided pupils with very good opportunities to talk about the things that concern them or have had a profound effect on their lives. Pupils shared their feelings about death, divorce and what it meant to move from country to country as a refugee. Sensitive comments helped pupils to look on changes as a beginning rather than an end, providing them with strategies to come to terms with traumatic events and experiences. Successes in both academic and personal achievements are recognised and valued by all. Well planned and integrated religious education and personal, health and social education lessons develop pupils understanding of what it means to belong to a different faith from their own and help them to develop a respect for other religions and cultures.

42. Provision for moral development has improved since the last inspection. It is effectively supported by a good behaviour and discipline policy that contains clear aims and objectives based on the school's belief in the value of each individual and their right to respect and self esteem. The school rules are prominently displayed and have been devised through close consultation with the pupils themselves. They are all realistic and achievable and pupils are aware of their own responsibility in ensuring they are adhered to. Pupils are encouraged to think about the choices they have to make and the implications on themselves and others. Pupils are beginning to internalise the rules and regulations and even the youngest of children indignantly 'shushed' an older child during an assembly.
43. Provision for social development is good and pupils are encouraged to become aware of their responsibilities to the school and their local community. The 'Standards Bearer' system provides pupils with numerous opportunities to develop responsibility, self-confidence and independence. They willingly take responsibility for duties, such as answering the telephone, taking care of younger children, or working the overhead projector during assemblies. The organisation of lessons provides many valuable opportunities for pupils to work with a partner or as part of a small group. In a carefully planned science lesson pupils worked very well together in groups which had an identified leader. Pupils responded well to the leader's advice and suggestions as he provided an effective link between the group and the teacher. This has a positive effect on pupils self esteem and confidence. The very good relationships apparent in lessons ensure that pupils feel comfortable, discussing sensitive issues that concern them. A sense of citizenship is developed as pupils take part in raising money for good causes and inviting senior citizens to the concerts and assemblies. Through subjects such as geography pupils are learning about

their responsibility in protecting the environment and have been involved in initiatives to recycle waste and consider schemes to improve their own school environment.

44. Provision for cultural development is good. Assemblies, celebrations and religious education lessons effectively foster an awareness of other cultures and faiths. Pupils have opportunities to learn about and appreciate the richness of their own and other people's culture through literature, music, art, geography and history. However, the school is less successful in deepening pupils understanding of the many different cultures represented in the school. Local initiatives, such as the one developing an awareness of African-Caribbean heritage, have been very successful in developing pupils' awareness of the art, music and food of a culture different from their own.

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

45. The welfare of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language, is an important priority for the school and this is reflected in the very good level of care provided. Parents value the care that the school takes of their children. All the adults who work with the pupils have a very strong commitment to their welfare and the often very good relationships they have with them monitors and supports the pupils' personal development well. The last inspection highlighted the need to use more rigorous analysis of current standards to set specific targets for improvement. This has been done very successfully. The school's use of assessment information is excellent and pupils make good progress during their time in school. This is beginning to improve the academic standards achieved. The school monitors the academic performance and personal development of pupils very well and the overall educational support and guidance for the children in the reception year and for pupils throughout the school is very good. The overall quality of the care provided for all pupils has improved since the last inspection.
46. Children in the reception year are cared for very well. There are good induction procedures for both children and parents and they settle quickly and happily into the routines of the classroom. There are very good opportunities at the beginning of the day for parents and staff to pass on any small matters of concern. All staff know the strengths and weaknesses of each individual child very well and plan activities accordingly. They are consistently kind, firm and fair and this ensures that the children learn what is expected of them and develop a desire to gain adult approval by working hard and behaving well.
47. The special educational needs coordinator works very well with pupils, parents, support staff, teachers and outside agencies to ensure that the needs of each pupil are met fully. The school has very effective procedures to identify the specific needs of pupils and follows national and local guidance well. The school has very good procedures for assessing and monitoring progress. This involves frequent and regular tracking of progress, which is regularly shared with parents at termly reviews. Progress is best when parents

support their children and attend these meetings. Despite the school's efforts to involve all parents in the process, some choose not to attend these reviews. The individual education plans are of very good quality and identify the steps in learning that pupils need to take to make progress. The support and guidance provided for pupils with statements of special educational needs are very good. There are appropriate links with outside agencies that provide professional guidance and help.

48. The school's procedures governing health and safety and child protection are very good. There is a good health and safety policy and regular inspections of the premises ensure that the school is a safe and healthy environment for the staff and pupils. The Site Supervisor is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the procedures and ensuring that all adults in the school have a good awareness of safe practice in their work in and around the school. He has a very good awareness of the fundamental importance of a healthy and safe environment and is rigorous in his attention to detail. The pupils are taught strategies to keep themselves safe and the basics of healthy eating and good hygiene. During the hot weather pupils are encouraged to bring a hat to school and learn about the dangers of too much exposure to the sun. The provision for first aid is good with an appropriate number of trained personnel. Fire drills take place each term and reception children are introduced to the procedures carefully so as not to alarm them. Records are kept and equipment checked. The school's provision for child protection is very good. The headteacher has received an appropriate level of training and all members of staff have a good awareness of this aspect of care. Procedures follow recognised guidelines. The school monitors the progress and development of Looked After pupils as well as those who have other social services involvement.
49. Because of the often very good relationships between the pupils and their teachers, the support and guidance provided for pupils' personal development is very good. The school has good procedures for following up absence and has identified specific pupils whose absence is followed up immediately. The high level of unauthorised absence is primarily related to a lack of response from a minority of parents. The headteacher checks the registers regularly and the school receives satisfactory support from external agencies. This has resulted in a small improvement in the reported level of attendance this year. However, the school is conscious that more needs to be done and has plans to contact parents and carers on the first day of unexplained absence and to install a computerised system for record keeping. There are currently no incentives to motivate the pupils to improve their attendance and those pupils who attend regularly and on time are not rewarded. Morning and afternoon registration procedures comply with legal requirements. The school has very good procedures, both formal and informal, for recording and monitoring instances of unacceptable behaviour and bullying and for ensuring consistency amongst staff in their application. The school and class rules are prominently displayed around the school and this ensures that all pupils have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and the benefits of compliance. Parents are contacted if their child is giving cause for concern and the school

values their co-operation in providing an element of consistency in dealing with the problem. Because staff have a very good awareness of the needs of the pupils, any bullying or unkindness is picked up early and dealt with quickly and effectively before becoming a major issue. The mid-day supervisors have benefited from an extensive training course in managing behaviour and they have a range of useful strategies to deal with playground disputes. The games and activities available for the pupils during playtimes and the mid-day break give them a sense of purpose and encourage co-operation rather than confrontation. Pupils' good behaviour is recognised in assemblies and celebrated by the display of their names in the hall. Staff constantly reinforce good behaviour with praise and this effectively motivates those who have difficulty in controlling their behaviour to try harder.

50. The school's procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress are very good. The excellent use of the data collected ensures a very good level of academic support and guidance for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Since the last inspection, the school has established an extensive range of assessment systems and comprehensive record keeping which is constantly being refined and developed. Teachers make effective use of the information gained to plan their lessons. Key skills have been identified in English, mathematics and science and in some of the other subjects of the curriculum and pupils' acquisition of these skills is tracked. Analysis of the results of the standard assessment tests together with the on-going assessment data has identified particular weaknesses in curricular provision, for example, in reading. As a result, a scheme has successfully been introduced to provide targeted support for specific pupils to improve their confidence and skill. Each individual pupil's attainment in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology is recorded and their progress is monitored by cohort, ethnicity, level of special educational need and gender. This information is closely analysed and used to set and monitor targets for school performance and pupils' achievement. Whilst each pupil has specific targets in reading, the group targets in some other subjects have not yet been refined for each individual.

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

51. The school has a good partnership with the majority of parents and this has a positive impact on the progress the children make and on the quality of life in the school. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. The governors, headteacher and staff are committed to improving the quality and effectiveness of this partnership further and are continuously seeking ways in which to involve parents further. The lack of response of many parents is indicated by the very low rate of return of the pre-inspection questionnaire. Those parents who expressed an opinion prior to and during the inspection have positive views about most aspects of school life. They value the care the school takes of their children and the opportunities the school provides for them to be involved in their learning. Inspection evidence confirms these positive views. The only significant issue identified by parents relates to

insufficient opportunities for extra-curricular activities. Evidence shows that there is a good range of activities provided and these are well supported by the children.

52. The school provides good quality information for parents about the school. The prospectus and governors' annual report for parents contain useful and practical information and regular newsletters keep parents up-to-date with activities taking place. Parents have opportunities for formal and informal consultation with staff about their children's progress, although not all choose to take up these opportunities. They know that they are welcome to talk to the teachers or the headteacher if they wish for more information. The annual reports on children's progress are satisfactory. They give parents detailed information on what their children have done, but there is insufficient emphasis on identifying weaknesses and setting targets for improvement. The good induction process for parents of reception children introduces them to the routines and expectations of the school and the value placed upon their active involvement in their children's learning. Parents have been given information about the literacy and numeracy strategies and the newsletters give them a very brief outline of what their children will be learning in the next half term. The school has obtained funding to provide courses in September for parents to improve their skills to help their children with their learning at home.
53. Parental involvement is welcomed, valued and actively encouraged and the school provides good opportunities for parents to work in partnership with the school for the benefit of their children. Many parents help their children at home with reading, spelling and other homework and a small number of parents regularly help in classes. This help is valued by the school and makes a positive impact on the standards achieved by the children. Many parents help with visits and attend class assemblies with enthusiasm, watching their children perform with immense pride. Although the majority of parents have signed the home/school agreement, a significant number do not fulfil their responsibility to ensure that their children attend regularly.
54. The school makes every effort to involve parents in the identification and provision for the special educational needs of their children. Although most parents are willing to work in partnership with the school to support their children, some parents do not take up these opportunities. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited to be involved in the decision making process and are kept well informed about the needs of their children. Parents are invited to termly reviews and their children's targets are shared with them. Where the partnership is good there is evidence that pupils are removed from the register when their needs have been met, particularly at the early stages of intervention.
55. The "Friends of Lings Lower School" are well organised by a small group of committed parents. The funds raised are used primarily to supplement resources. The recent installation of the mini-assault course has proved very popular with the children and has contributed significantly to the quality of the playtimes. The "Green Room" which was paid for by lottery funds from a bid



submitted by the “Friends” is already a delightful addition to the school environment. Parents were asked to complete a survey about various aspects of school life during the Autumn term and, after analysis of the replies, appropriate action has been taken to incorporate parents’ views into the decision making process. This is an indication of the value the school places on parental involvement in school improvement and strengthens the partnership for the overall benefit of the children.

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

56. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. With the governing body she has appointed and developed a good team of teachers. She has encouraged curriculum co-ordinators to run their own subjects very well and to contribute to the overall management of the school in a very effective manner. For example, each co-ordinator makes very good plans for their subjects and sets out each year the developments that will take place. Each co-ordinator meets with a partner-governor and subsequently each person makes a report to the governing body. The headteacher has set up very clear and effective systems for tracking pupils’ progress and for ensuring that teaching and the curriculum meets pupils’ needs. A very good example of this is the new scheme being used to increase the amount of tuition pupils receive in reading and spelling. Assessment results showed low results in reading and the English co-ordinator, in consultation with teachers and governors, decided to supplement the work of the literacy strategy. This is beginning to bear results and pupils’ skills and their confidence in reading and spelling is improving. The inspection team agrees with parents’ and governors’ views that the school’s aims are reflected very well in the school’s atmosphere of learning.
57. The school has maintained a very good rate of improvement since the last inspection. All of the issues identified during the last inspection have been tackled rigorously.
- This school has addressed in an excellent manner the need to analyse assessment to set more specific targets for improvement and this area of the school’s work is now very good.
  - Planning different levels so that higher attainers do better is good overall, although there are differences between classes.
  - The organisation of classes is now good and the structure of lessons has improved considerably.
  - Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are now up to national expectations and staff knowledge and confidence have risen.
58. Another area the school’s work that has improved is the curriculum for children in the reception year. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and pupils’ progress have also improved and systems are now very good. The provision for special educational needs and pupils’ spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is now very good. The satisfactory relationship with parents seen at the last inspection is now good and the school has very good plans to make further improvements to this relationship. The school development plan is very

good; containing a very useful mix of long-term plans which cover the work of the whole school and short-term plans covering subjects.

59. The work of the governors' in all areas is very good. They have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses as they visit the school regularly and look at its work. Because of the very good levels of knowledge of the school's work they participate in the school development planning process. They ask searching questions of the teachers and headteacher and review the school's progress against the targets they set. The headteacher and governors also use this information to judge the effectiveness of spending. For example, comparing the performance of this school with local and national schools. With the procedures for ensuring that contracts and purchases provide value for money, the school applies the principles of best value very well. Information and communication technology is used well to track the school's budget and the recent and continuing development of the good quality computer suite has had a positive effect on pupils' achievement.
60. The special educational needs coordinator is a very competent and knowledgeable teacher. She is eager to attend courses to extend her own expertise to provide very good support for teachers and support assistants. She organises reviews and ensures that parents and staff are well informed and work in partnership. She provides support for individual pupils and ensures that they receive their entitlement. A behaviour checklist enables staff to alert the coordinator to behavioural difficulties as they arise and this enables distressed pupils to be dealt with swiftly. Special educational needs enjoys a high profile at the school. The coordinator is based in the centre of the school and is readily available to pupils, staff and parents for immediate support and guidance. This arrangement gives very good support to the significant proportion of pupils who have special educational needs. The governors fulfil their responsibilities for special educational needs in full. Regular reports are written and presented to the governing body.
61. Financial planning is very effective and resources are used well to support educational priorities and developments. For example, the school has made very reasonable plans for the use of funds to maintain a healthy pupil teacher ratio, a difficult task when rolls are falling, and prudent budget management has enabled the school to set up good computer facilities. Good awareness of future pupil numbers, financial commitments and the impact of staff appointments ensure that governors have a firm grasp of the school's financial position. Budget monitoring is secure. A key factor in this secure financial position is the competence and awareness of the headteacher, the high quality work of the finance officer and very good school-based systems. Good use is made of specific funds, especially in relation to special educational needs.
62. Accommodation is good and the facilities for ICT, music, art and design and special educational needs are good. The quality of resources for learning is good overall. The very high quality of the school's displays is a tribute to the quality and range of learning experiences provided by the school and to the dedication of a hard-working staff.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

63. In the light of the school's many strengths, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

(1) \*Improve the consistency of teaching in the infant classes so that the quality of teaching rises to at least the high levels seen in other classes by:

- ensuring teachers apply the school's behaviour policy consistently;
- improving teachers' subject knowledge;
- increasing the pace of lessons.

(Paragraphs 3, 5, 12, 20, 24, 27, 79, 84, 93)

(2) \*Improve the rates of attendance by implementing the school's plan to:

- contact parents on the first day of any absence;
- install better systems to track attendance, and
- reward pupils for improved attendance.

(Paragraphs 13, 19, 49)

**\* Issues already identified by the school and included in the school development plan.**

Other issues governors should consider for inclusion in their action plan:

- Improve the links with partner middle schools, particularly regarding the curriculum; (Paragraph 40)
- Take steps to improve pupils' understanding of the many different cultures represented in the school; (Paragraph 44)
- Improve pupils' annual reports to better reflect areas for development and include targets; (Paragraph 52)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	39
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	28	28	33	5	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR-Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		201
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		71

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR-Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		69

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	29

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	41
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	27

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.0
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.8
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	16	22	38

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
	Total	28	32	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (84)	84 (90)	92 (84)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	14	15
	Girls	19	19	20
	Total	29	33	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (87)	87 (87)	92 (97)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	8
Indian	17
Pakistani	4
Bangladeshi	3
Chinese	5
White	129
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

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

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

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

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y4-Y7**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.3
Average class size	25

#### **Education support staff: Y4-Y7**

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	180

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	488,616
Total expenditure	480,312
Expenditure per pupil	2,389.61
Balance brought forward from previous year	61,870
Balance carried forward to next year	70,174

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	201
Number of questionnaires returned	34

### **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	3	0	3
My child is making good progress in school.	56	29	9	6	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	44	0	3	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	50	6	0	0
The teaching is good.	76	15	3	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	47	12	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	15	12	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	15	12	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	50	38	6	6	0
The school is well led and managed.	59	21	6	9	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	26	3	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	71	9	9	12	0

## **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**

64. As at the last inspection the school's provision for children in the reception class continues to be good and remains a strength of the school. The curriculum is based on the 'six areas of learning' and provides the children with very broad and balanced experiences. The school provides a wide range of stimulating, challenging and focussed practical first hand experiences to promote the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world, and mathematical, physical and creative development.
65. The overall attainment levels of most children entering the reception class are lower than at the last inspection and are now well below those expected nationally. This is confirmed by baseline assessment, which shows that children have particular delays in their early reading and writing development. Teaching in the reception is consistently good and this has a very positive effect on children's learning. As a result, most children make good progress in relation to what they know and can do on entry to the school. By the time they enter Year 1 the highest attaining quarter of children are close to reaching the early learning goals in all six areas. However, a significant majority of children will not meet the early learning goals except in their physical development.
66. Teaching in the early years is consistently good and sometimes very good. It captures children's imaginations, building on their eagerness to learn. All staff have a very secure understanding of how young children learn and of the importance of play and first hand experiences. This has a very positive effect on the good progress children make towards the early learning goals and provides a good start for learning in Key Stage 1. Lesson plans and schemes provide a very good framework for learning. They are very clear and detailed, with appropriate learning objectives linked to the early learning goals. Most experiences are interesting, challenging and of a very high quality and are focussed very closely on what children need to learn in relationship to the stepping-stones. Activities are usually well organised and appropriate to promote communication, language, literacy and mathematical development. There is a very good balance of teacher directed activities and child initiated ones. Praise and encouragement are very effective in promoting positive behaviour and personal, social and emotional development. Staff use questions, comments and observations very well to extend learning and to assess children's progress in order to plan for future learning. Baseline assessment is shared with parents and is used very effectively to help teachers plan an appropriate learning environment for children under five. Assessment is closely related to the activities provided and informs a very useful record system to indicate children's progress towards the early learning goals. Provision and support for those children



with special educational needs is very good, ensuring that such children take a full part in all activities and make very good progress in relation to their agreed targets. Staff work very well together and this has a positive effect on the quality of the learning. They are experienced, enthusiastic and have very high expectations of the children. They make school an enjoyable experience that promotes a love of learning. Parents are actively involved in their children's learning through sharing early reading and writing games and supporting events and outings. They are welcome into the reception class at anytime and whenever they can they work alongside their children in the reception class.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

67. Children's personal, social and emotional development is given a very high priority as children enter school with often very poorly developed social skills. Very effective teaching ensures the majority of children make very good progress even though they will not all meet the early learning goals before they move into Year 1. Children enjoy coming to school and happily leave their parents and carers at the start of sessions. They eagerly choose from the wide range of stimulating activities available and are evidently keen to learn new skills and to explore new ideas. The very caring ethos and well planned activities and 'talk times' helps children to understand the need for rules and routines. Emphasis is placed on helping children to develop an understanding of appropriate behaviour and what is right and wrong. The understanding of the need for rules was developed well as children took bikes and cars onto the playground to learn the importance of road safety. Children are learning to share and work together in a variety of situations, such as role-play and outdoor play. In the craft area negotiations are conducted in an atmosphere of sharing and co-operation as they share resources and wait their turn to use scissors and cutters. Older children work independently for sustained periods of time and take pride in their successes. They work very hard at difficult tasks, such as weaving materials or improving their skipping skills. One child was very proud of her considerable efforts in improving her catching skills from five to fourteen. Relationships are very positive and children are encouraged to reflect on their feelings, actions and experiences. They are encouraged to consider the feelings of other children and understand the consequences of their actions. There are well planned opportunities for children to develop a sensitivity and awareness of other people, their different religions, cultures and ways of life. During the reception class assembly one of the higher attaining children very thoughtfully took the hand of a child with special needs, ensuring that they both took full part in the performance and enjoyed the applause and appreciation of the audience. The self-esteem of both children was evident and was fully appreciated by parents and visitors.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

68. The teaching of communication, language and literacy is good and this ensures children make good progress and achieve well. Communication,

language and literacy are given a very high priority and the school provides a wide range of effective experiences and activities to develop and extend children's language and literacy skills. However, despite good progress, the low levels of attainment on entry mean that the majority of children are unlikely to reach the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Children are encouraged to become good listeners and enjoy stories and rhymes. Structured play situations, together times and planned formal activities provide opportunities for children to develop their speaking skills as they are encouraged to talk about their own experiences and extend their vocabulary. In an assembly all the children contributed, confidently telling the story of 'Rosie's Walk' to their parents, staff and visitors. Considerable emphasis is placed on developing thinking skills with adults asking children challenging questions during planned activities such as writing their own stories or planning an activity. However, although children are eager to engage adults in conversations their vocabulary and sentence structures are often very restricted. Many children have difficulty responding to open-ended questions, preferring to use one word answers, point or nod their heads or simply to demonstrate practically what they know. This obviously delays their progress towards the early learning goals. For example, during a lesson to develop children's skills in weaving, the teacher introduced the vocabulary of 'under' and 'over'. Although she linked it well with the familiar story, 'We're going on a Bear Hunt', many children still had to use gestures to show their understanding of the vocabulary being used. Well structured teacher directed activities help children to recognise familiar letters, sounds and words and to use these when writing independently. Classroom support assistants are usually well deployed to provide support for children as they learn to establish a connection between symbols and sounds using the schools recently introduced scheme. Above average children in the reception class write their own simple sentences about a favourite story with recognisable letters, sounds and words. Children are learning to recognise their own names but a significant number are unable to write their names unaided. A comfortable book corner promotes a love of books and children are learning to handle books with care. A few children are becoming confident independent readers as they read simple books from the reading scheme. They are beginning to link sounds with symbols and with adult support use these to read unfamiliar words. Most children confidently 'read' stories from memory or with help of pictures. Children choose books as an activity and enjoy sharing stories with adults. There are missed opportunities to extend children's early reading and writing skills further through imaginative play situations, for example in the home corner. Appropriate elements of the literacy strategy are implemented for children in the reception class and this has a positive effect on their achievements.

### **Mathematical development**

69. The teaching of mathematics is good. The reception class provides a wide range of activities to promote mathematical understanding. However, the low levels of attainment on entry means that, despite good progress, the majority of children are unlikely to reach the early learning goals by the end of the

reception year. Through well-planned topic work they explore number, pattern, shape and measurement. Children join in with the teacher and count how many children are present. Higher attaining children are developing problem solving skills as they hold 25 in their heads and count on three more to find out how many children are present altogether. Number lines are used effectively to develop an understanding of order and position. With support, above average children order numbers to 20 while lower attaining children order numbers to five or ten depending on their attainment levels. Teachers place great emphasis on developing appropriate mathematical language. Displays are interesting and extend children's learning by asking questions such as, 'Estimate how many beads will fit into the box'. Children consider size, shape and position when playing with small world toys or emptying and filling containers in the water and sand play. They discuss with their teacher the height of their constructions and measure them using cubes. Colourful shape pictures of storybook favourite characters such as 'Rosie the Hen' develop children's recognition of triangles, rectangles and circles. Activities and games are usually matched to children's attainment levels. Appropriate elements of the numeracy strategy are implemented for older children in the reception class and this has a positive effect on children's achievements. However, many children need considerable support to develop fully their knowledge and understanding of mathematics.

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

70. The teaching of knowledge and understanding of the world is good. Children progress well but the majority, because of low levels of attainment on entry, are unlikely to reach the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Children are developing a good understanding of the world around them. The natural curiosity of young children is enhanced as staff continually encourage them to talk about their discoveries and experiences, to ask questions and to explore made and natural materials. Care for living creatures is encouraged as nursery children look after their class fish. They learn about the passage of time through celebrating birthdays, talking about the days of the week and the changing seasons and weather. Early mapping skills are developed as children draw a simple map of the route they took to the park and identify places they pass on the way. Reception children learn about different ways of life through celebrating Chinese New Year or dressing up in a range of clothes from different cultures. A wide range of materials help children develop their skills of cutting, folding and sticking. Children choose from glue, sticky tape, split pins and string to join materials together as they work on their weaving. The computer is a popular choice and many children are becoming confident using the 'mouse' and loading different CD-ROMS to support their learning in mathematics, language and literacy. Construction toys and a range of tools and materials are used very well to encourage children to design and make their own models and to discover how things work. Before making their 'caterpillar puppets' children drew their own designs and decided which materials they were going to use. However, many children need considerable support to express their knowledge and

understanding and explain to adults what they are doing and what they are learning.

### **Physical development**

71. Effective teaching ensures the majority of children meet the early learning goals before they move into Year 1. Very good provision is made for children's physical development. Children's natural exuberance and energy is catered for well. Through planned lessons and routines children are reminded of the importance of healthy eating and exercise. Heads are covered in hot weather and water is always available to quench thirsts and improve concentration. A very good range of challenging large equipment is available on a daily basis to help children develop their climbing and balancing skills. There is a good range of wheeled toys that children manoeuvre well, avoiding other children and obstacles. However, there are some missed opportunities for adults to interact in these situations to further enhance learning. Well-structured physical education lessons promote children's development further. In these lessons children are developing good spatial awareness, control and imagination as they respond to their teacher. They are learning to run, hop, skip, jump and balance with increasing co-ordination and confidence. Very good teacher intervention encourages children to improve their skills such as throwing, catching and skipping and as a result they make very good gains in their skills in a short time. Emphasis is placed on developing children's independence and skill when handling tools, construction toys and malleable materials and they are becoming competent and they handle a variety of tools and materials safely and with care.

### **Creative development**

72. Overall teaching to promote creative development is good: however, though progress is good, the low level of attainment on entry means that the majority of children are unlikely to reach all the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Children enjoy a good range of experiences in art, music and story. However, opportunities for imaginative play are less well developed and there are missed opportunities to enhance children's imagination and extend their language and creativity in this area. Specialist teaching and a very good range of musical instruments, songs and rhymes help to develop children's understanding of sound and rhythm and pattern. Children use their voices and instruments well to tell stories of 'The Three Pigs or the Bear Hunt'. There are many exciting activities available for children to develop their senses through investigating texture, shape and colour. Staff provide materials with interesting natural and man made textures from which children can choose to create their own designs, pictures, models and collages. Children touched, tasted and smelled different fruits before creating high quality observational drawings. Higher attaining children's understanding of colour, shape and pattern is developed well as they print with a range of interesting objects to create repeated patterns. They work with play dough, wood and junk materials to create two and three-dimensional pictures and models. Materials such as paint, sand and water are available for children to explore on a daily basis.

## ENGLISH

73. In the 2000 national tests and assessments for seven-year-olds, attainment was well below average in reading and below average in writing. When compared with similar schools reading was below average and writing above. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected levels has been increasing steadily since the last inspection. The attainment of girls in these tests and assessments was generally better than boys. The inspectors found that, by the time they leave the school as nine-year-olds, standards in speaking, listening, reading and writing are average. Seven-year-olds' standards in speaking, reading and writing are below average but are average in listening. Almost half of the pupils have arrived and left the school in the last year. This is a significant factor because fewer pupils than average attained the higher levels of the National Curriculum. The school has worked hard in recent months to improve reading and has introduced a new system to teach pupils the basic rules of reading and spelling. This is beginning to work well and young pupils show very positive attitudes to working with this new scheme. Given the limited experience children have when they enter the school, effective teaching, particularly in the reception class and in Years 3 and 4, helps pupils achieve well.
74. As pupils join Year 1 their speaking and listening skills are below the levels expected for their age. In the infant classes pupils achieve satisfactorily as they move through Year 1 and Year 2. Pupils of all ages in this school talk easily and at length and are happy and confident to chat about their work or their home lives. But often they do not speak clearly and often younger pupils do not pronounce the beginnings or endings of words. By the time they are nine pupils have average speaking skills. Their teachers take care to build on pupils' listening skills, which are average in all areas of the school, and often in the junior classes pupils repeat word for word what their teacher has said. For example, in a mathematics lesson, two pupils arrived just after the start because they were helping in the hall. Their teacher asked **the** class to brief the two new arrivals and pupils gave a very clear and well structured explanation, without missing any important points. As teachers recap on what has been learned in the last lesson older pupils often recall well and use the words that help them explain their ideas. Younger pupils find it difficult to use these words and often cannot explain clearly what they understand, at times using hand gestures and searching for the appropriate words.
75. In most lessons pupils are encouraged to use the correct words and to speak clearly as they report their findings. Teachers do a good job in not accepting sloppy speech and asking pupils to correct their speaking skills. Teachers themselves set good examples to pupils. They use the correct words when they talk about important ideas in English and speak clearly. During the introductions and final sessions of lessons pupils listen quietly and with good levels of attention. They are quick to answer the questions their teachers ask and in assemblies pupils' listening skills are very good.
76. By the end of Year 2 reading skills are below average. Higher attaining pupils read words accurately. Other seven-year-olds find it difficult to recognise the groups of letters that make up sounds in English. However, the

recently introduced scheme has increased the rates of achievement and now even the youngest pupils in the infant classes have enough confidence to attempt new words. They understand the structure of words and attempt to sound new words without hesitation. Higher attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 use punctuation to help them read and expression to make their reading interesting. Infants achieve satisfactorily. However, in Years 3 and 4 pupils achieve well. In the junior classes pupils read at average levels and, because most teachers use a good subject vocabulary to describe the sounds letters make, most of them sound difficult words. They change their voices to make sense of what they are reading. Average and lower attaining pupils sound words accurately and they understand what they are reading. Pupils know how to use a library. They understand the numbering system, which allows them to find the book they are looking for, and then to use the index, contents page and glossary to find the information they require. Pupils who learn English as an additional language are well represented in the average and above-average groups. Pupils with special educational needs are helped to make very good progress towards the targets set out in their individual education plans. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, talk about the pleasure they receive from reading. They talk about their favourite books and older pupils about their favourite characters and authors. Often pupils choose books they have read at school and only a very small minority talk of having books at home.

77. Seven-year-olds achieve standards below the expected levels in writing. Nine-year-olds achieve average standards. Generally pupils write neatly and join their letters in handwriting practice. Letters are usually formed correctly and teachers use their good subject knowledge in this area to teach pupils the shape of letters. At times in a very few instances, usually in Year 2, the good quality handwriting seen in practice books is not carried through to other work books. Spelling is below average for seven-year-olds and average for nine-year-olds. Pupils tackle familiar words with self-assurance and younger pupils are developing confidence when trying new words. Most of the older pupils have a useful working knowledge of common words and spell them accurately in their day-to-day writing. Teachers use positive strategies to teach spelling, including setting weekly spellings to be learned at home and they are tested on a frequent basis. Most pupils know how to use full stops and capital letters and brighter pupils use these punctuation marks in their writing. Some brighter pupils use speech marks to show when pupils are speaking and, at times when they are reading, use exclamation marks to show excitement. Above-average and average pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 understand how to use punctuation to shape their writing. For example, they write instructions and reports of their work in science and understand the forms that this writing should take. They set out their work correctly often using numbers or bullets to help make their writing clear.
78. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 use what they have learned in their writing. For example, a pupil wrote of the Iron Woman; 'She spoke with a loud, low, slow booming voice.' Another pupil wrote, 'Anansi found a light and wanted to give it to one of his sons, but what one to give it to?' These complex and

descriptive sentences help to lift the quality of the writing and are taken from the examples given to pupils by their teachers. Pupils are very keen on listening to, reciting and writing poetry. Pupils know how to rhyme effectively and equally important when not to.

79. Pupils' achievements parallel the quality of teaching. For example, rates of achievement are higher in Year 3 and 4 than in Years 1 and 2. This is because the quality of teaching is generally of a higher quality as teachers have higher expectations of pupils. This means that pupils' learning in lessons is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 but more work could be expected. In Years 3 and 4 pupils work hard and are interested in their lessons. They concentrate well and show they are keen to do well.
80. The quality of teaching is good overall. There were no observations of unsatisfactory teaching although there are variations in teachers' skills. For example, there are notable examples of very good and excellent practice in two classes in Years 3 and 4. In these lessons pupils were encouraged to think of themselves as writers and poets. They were given the confidence because relationships were based on mutual respect as well as firm class management. Pupils were left in no doubt as to how they should behave and often a glance from the teacher was enough to quieten pupils and return them to their work when their enthusiasm grew. In both of these classes the teacher's subject knowledge was very good and plans clearly set out how, for instance, homework would be set to help prepare pupils for the next piece of work. Teachers encourage pupils to join in discussions and, for instance, judge the quality of their work and how the rhythm of a poem changes when the tense of verbs is changed. In Years 1 and 2 lessons were, at times, too long and this meant that pupils could not concentrate. Their attention drifted and the quantity and quality of their work dropped. The major differences between very successful and satisfactory lessons are that the rate of learning is quicker and teachers are quick to show the links between other subjects and English.
81. The management of English is very good and the coordinator leads the subject very well. Assessment results are used very well to identify what should be done to improve the teaching of English. Observations of lesson by the coordinator and the headteacher have provided very useful information that has been useful in planning improvements.

## **MATHEMATICS**

82. In last year's National Curriculum tests for pupils aged seven the school's results were in line with the national average and above those of similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was below the national average and those of similar schools. Standards have improved overall since the previous inspection when they were described as below average, with few pupils achieving the higher level. Inspection evidence indicates that standards remain below average at the end of Key Stage 1. This is because 47% of the pupils have moved school during the past year. Standards are in line with the expected levels when pupils leave the school at nine. There is an upward trend of improvement, particularly for pupils in Years 3 and 4. This represents good progress. The performance of boys is better than that of girls and this is an improvement since the previous inspection.

83. The school has been very successful in raising the standards of pupils in the junior classes. This has been achieved through good quality teaching overall with 50 per cent of lessons being judged as very good or excellent. The remainder were satisfactory. A programme to monitor teaching and learning is well established at the school and staff have also visited other schools to observe good practice. Very good quality assessment procedures inform planning to precisely meet pupils' needs. Pupils are set targets and are aware of the progress they are making. Careful consideration is given to the coverage of mathematics in the individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs. The national numeracy strategy is very well implemented. All of these initiatives have made a significant contribution to improving the quality of teaching and learning.
84. In Year 1 and 2 the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In a Year 2 class the teacher began with a lively question and answer session, challenging pupils to count forwards and backwards to sixty. The work was extended with pupils being further challenged to identify the number of minutes between points on the clock and to count in fifteen-minute intervals. Good quality teaching aids enhanced the quality of teaching and supported learning. Pupils practised their skills at telling the time using analogue and digital clocks. In a Year 1 class pupils practised counting forwards and backwards to 30, beginning from a range of starting points. Some pupils experienced difficulty with the tasks set and were unsure of the teacher's expectations and consequently they became restless. Teaching in this class was insufficiently well structured and this reduced the rate of progress made by pupils.
85. There are four parallel mixed ability Year 3/4 classes in the juniors. Pupils are grouped according to ability in each class. Tasks are planned to meet the needs of each group within a differentiated system of adult support. This improves the rate of progress and is an important influence on raising standards further. In a lesson of excellent quality pupils displayed great confidence in rearranging digits to make numbers up to 10,000, including numbers with decimal points. They were sure of their strategy to identify the largest number; "I find the biggest number and put it in the thousands column, the next biggest number I put in the hundreds column and so on." Pupils ordered the numbers and used signs for greater than and less than accurately. This work was extended with pupils comparing groups of fractions with particular attention focusing on equivalence. Higher achieving pupils reduced fractions involving thousandths to their lowest terms. Excellent planning, shared with the IT technician, ensured that all pupils were given opportunities to reinforce their learning using the facilities in the new computer suite. The pupils moved very efficiently from their classroom to the computer suite where the computers were already prepared for operation. Pupils listened intently to their teacher's instructions and began work with enthusiasm. The lesson was completed with an excellent plenary session when pupils precisely described the outcomes of their learning objectives. In a very good quality lesson where challenge enthused pupils, the teacher's high quality knowledge of the stages of learning enabled her to teach with precise pace to ensure very good progress was made by all members of the class. The teacher's relationships with her class were very good and this made a significant contribution to quality of learning. For example, high achieving pupils confidently demonstrated their understanding of the relationship between vulgar fractions, decimal fractions and percentages.
86. The very good attitudes of pupils to learning mathematics contribute to the success in raising standards. Most teachers have high expectations of their pupils and



consequently pupils have a very high level of commitment to tasks and an awareness of the joys of success

87. Pupils throughout the school cover a good range of work across all attainment targets and there is good evidence of how information and communications technology is supporting the teaching of mathematics. The presentation of work is variable and closely related to teachers' expectations. Pupils' work is marked up to date and useful comments guide pupils' learning. Staff predict their pupils' progress and this is carefully tracked. This information informs teaching, enabling pupils to receive precise learning opportunities to support learning objectives. Teachers respond readily to changes in performances and predictions can be modified.
88. The coordinator has very good subject knowledge, a thorough knowledge of how pupils learn and is establishing a mathematical curriculum of very high quality. Resources for the teaching of mathematics are good.

## **SCIENCE**

89. Standards at the age of seven and nine are broadly in line with those found nationally. Throughout the school, pupils at all attainment levels achieve well and make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make very good progress. In 2000, the overall results of the teacher assessments for pupils aged seven were similar to the national average and to those of similar schools. However, fewer than expected pupils achieved the next higher level when compared to the national average and to similar schools. In the present Year 2 a very high proportion of the pupils have arrived and left the school during the last year. This is a significant factor as fewer than expected pupils achieving the higher level. However, overall the school has been successful in addressing the weaknesses identified at the last inspection and across the school standards are now rising. By the age of nine, the majority of pupils are working very competently within Level 3 with a significant number poised to move to the next higher level. The school has maintained the standards seen at the last inspection.
90. By the age of seven, the pupils are developing their scientific knowledge appropriately through a wide range of practical activities. They show sound knowledge of the main parts of the human body and are developing an appreciation of the importance of healthy eating. The pupils identify similarities and differences between living things and are learning to classify and record their observations in a variety of ways. Seven-year-olds now explore a range of natural and manufactured materials as they investigate what happens when water, chocolate and clay are heated. As they move through the infant classes pupils show an increasing knowledge and understanding of physical phenomena. In early work on forces pupils in Year 2 set up a fair test, make predictions and draw appropriate conclusions about the distance a model car would travel along different surfaces.
91. Older pupils cover a wide range of topics that help them to increase their knowledge and understanding significantly. Pupils make good progress in extending their scientific enquiry skills through experimental and investigative work. Pupils understanding of the human body is increased as they study the

skeleton in greater detail and use scientific names for major organs. Pupils investigate how other creatures support themselves and use technical vocabulary such as vertebrate, invertebrate and exoskeleton with understanding. Pupils learning and enquiry skills are extended further as they are fascinated as they carefully examine creatures such as the teacher's pet tortoise. Pupils understanding of materials and their properties have improved since the last inspection. For example, pupils in Year 3 and 4 devise their own fair test to discover which materials are conductors. The ability of some high attaining pupils to use scientific terminology such as 'conductors' and 'insulators' appropriately is a strong feature which indicates the emphasis placed by the school on using scientific vocabulary. Pupils' depth of understanding of physical processes is increased as they use their knowledge of electrical circuits to design working models such as stained glass windows, lampposts and traffic lights. There is very good emphasis on developing pupils' skills in retrieving information using CD-ROMs and the Internet as well as reference books. For example, pupils in Year 3 and 4 researched 'living fossils' increasing their understanding of life processes and living things.

92. Across the school most pupils are able to describe their observations clearly, using appropriate scientific knowledge and record their findings in a variety of ways such as pictures, diagrams, tables, graphs and tally charts.
93. The quality of teaching in science has improved since the last inspection. In the best lessons practical work is well organised and pupils are helped to develop good skills in scientific enquiry. Lessons are challenging and very successful in engaging the interest of pupils. Practical investigations give the pupils good opportunities to develop their scientific understanding and make a good contribution to their social and moral development. In most lessons activities planned for the pupils now provide appropriate challenges to meet the needs of all pupils, including higher attaining pupils. The high quality of questions used by teachers is very effective in consolidating the pupils' previous learning and in extending their existing understanding. The organisation of the teaching and learning has improved considerably since the last inspection. The very good strategies for class management now used by most teachers ensure that pupils behave appropriately during practical activities and make good progress in their learning. Throughout Years 3 and 4 the teachers create a very challenging and positive learning environment for their pupils. This is a very significant contributing factor to the success achieved by the older pupils in science. Weaknesses in the teaching, particularly in materials and processes, have been addressed well through the implementation of the national guidelines, which ensure a balance of coverage for all the attainment targets. Confidence in teaching all aspects of the subject has been improved through in-service and very effective support from the coordinator. There are still some inconsistencies in the teaching of the younger pupils, where a lack of challenge sometimes limits pupils' progress and their attainment is not sufficiently high. Very good support is provided for pupils with special educational needs, helping them to make significant progress in relation to their prior learning. Pupils with English as

an additional language make similar progress to their peers and achieve standards in line with those expected nationally.

94. The subject is very well managed. The coordinator provides very strong leadership in the subject and is well qualified to support her colleagues in their professional development. The monitoring role is well established and the coordinator has a very good overview of standards, subject provision and the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching of the subject. The scheme of work, based on national guidelines, meets the requirements for the teaching of the subject and now gives sufficient challenge to the more able pupils, particularly in Years 3 and 4, by extending the areas of study. The system of assessment built into the scheme is a very effective means of monitoring the progress of pupils against the key learning objectives. The resources and equipment available for science are sufficient in quantity and quality to support effectively the practical activities undertaken by the pupils.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

95. The attainment of seven-year-olds is in line with what is expected for their age and for nine-year-olds it is above. This maintains the standards seen at the time of the last inspection. Good teaching continues and pupils achieve well as they move through the school. By the time they are nine they understand how to use paint and other ways of colouring well.
96. Throughout the school there are many examples of high quality painting, collage and pottery. Pupils are particularly skilled at mixing colour. They are taught how to use small brushes, a variety of kinds of paint and palettes to match colours to those used by famous artists. From pupils in Years 1 and 2 learning to mix colours to pupils in Years 3 and 4 using colour effectively in self-portraits, paintings in the style of Monet and representations of planets in space, pupils use colour with sensitivity. This is because painting and other skills are taught systematically. For example, in Year 2 pupils were taken step-by-step through the process of painting an exotic landscape. Pupils chose their colours with care and, for example, when painting the sea made sure that blues, greens and greys were mixed to good effect. In Years 3 and 4 pupils show an above average knowledge of the work and life of Vincent Van Gogh. Contributing to a group painting of the church at Auvers sur Oise, pupils mixed strong colours to match those used by Vincent van Gogh and their brush strokes were bold and swirling.
97. The portfolio, kept up to date by the coordinator, shows work covering all levels of the National Curriculum appropriate to pupils of this age and a wide range of starting points. Portraits, sewing, collage, fabric work including batik and work using pastels are included. An African artist has recently visited the school and helped pupils develop skills in using clay. High quality masks and bowls were produced showing careful construction and skill.
98. Pupils enjoy art and design and this shows particularly when they talk about the work of famous artists. They know, for instance, that Van Gogh was

tormented and eventually killed himself, even though he was a great artist. Year 2 pupils talked of Mondrian and his designs using bold colours. Pupils in this year group produced their own designs using computers to good effect. There are good links with information and communication technology.

99. Teaching is good in art and at times very good when the subject knowledge of the teacher is very high. Teachers challenge and encourage pupils to learn well by, for example, giving them a limited range of colours in their palettes so that they have to mix the colours they need. Pupils are taught how to use and look after brushes properly. They are given good demonstrations about how to apply paint and how to achieve the effects they want.
100. The management of art is very good and the art room, converted from the school's unused kitchen, makes a positive impact on pupils' learning. It is well resourced and is always well organised. The coordinator keeps a very good quality portfolio of pupils' work. Each piece selected is assessed and is useful to other teachers when they mark pupils' work. Good quality records are maintained which cover the National Curriculum.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

101. Only one technology lesson was observed during the period of the inspection. Design and technology is blocked with art and during the inspection it was the time of the term when art was the focus. Judgments about standards are supplemented by discussions with teachers, a review of the documentation and the scrutiny of work, including an attractive portfolio. The curriculum is based upon modified national guidelines. Standards are in line with those expected for the age ranges and are similar to those at the time of the previous inspection.
102. Every year group explores three topics, each of which has a different focus. For example, pupils in Year 1 made slider pictures to illustrate stories. This work developed pupils' skills in using scissors to cut paper and card. They used a range of tape, glue and fasteners to join materials and followed simple instructions orally. Year 2 pupils explored winding up mechanisms. Pupils worked with construction kits and card to design stable structures. The introduction of vocabulary, such as axle, mechanism, handle and turning, extended learning and made good links with literacy. Pupils in the mixed Year 3 and 4 classes studied a range of topics, including food technology, when they made and evaluated sandwiches. The results of their work were recorded in graphs using information technology skills. A very interesting aspect of work was examining and designing packaging. Pupils collected examples of packaging and took them apart to reveal their net structures. A two year cycle of topics is used with Year 3/4 classes.
103. In the one lesson observed in Years 3 and 4 pupils investigated a 'Lighting it up' topic. This work was linked to a study of Great Billing village. Pupils made models of selected features they saw in the village, for example, traffic

lights, lamp stands and the church tower. Pupils understood the design, make and evaluation processes. They suggested using triangular sections to strengthen sections of their structures. Pupils worked well in groups, discussing how they would construct their models. Learning support assistants gave good quality support. They challenged pupils requiring them to give explanations for their designs, and to evaluate how well their models worked. This work is very well linked to science when pupils are challenged to light up their structures. Some ingenious ways of providing lighting were observed in the design process illustrated in the portfolio.

104. Pupils talk excitedly about their designing and making experiences. They learnt new skills at school and are eager to practise them on activities at home. Many pupils were pleased to share their experiences in discussion.
105. The coordinator is enthusiastic and motivates pupils well. Targets are identified for which prepare pupils well for their middle school experiences. Resources are well organised. They are neatly labelled and centrally situated in the school.

## **GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY**

106. Due to the schools timetabling arrangements and the timing of the inspection only a limited number of history and geography lessons were seen. Judgements are based on a scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussions with teachers and pupils. History and geography are taught imaginatively through a topic approach. This reinforces the pupils' learning well and provides cohesiveness to learning which gains pupils' interest in the subjects.
107. The majority of pupils achieve standards that are broadly in line with those expected for their ages in both subjects. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make good progress in relation to their prior levels of learning.
108. In history, by the age of seven, the pupils show a good understanding of the distinction between the past and present when they examine toys, household objects and homes throughout the ages. Visits to museums and the observation of real objects are used effectively to help pupils make comparisons with their own lives and those of children in the past. In their studies of different homes the pupils in Year 2 recognised some of the differences in household objects using different sources of information about the past, including photographs and real objects. They produce their own detailed accounts of events in their life. Higher attaining pupils are developing a good understanding of why people in history acted the way they did. They discuss with their headteacher the conditions that the soldiers in the Crimean war endured and are aware of the impact Florence Nightingale had on improving the hospitals. This has a positive effect on pupils' moral and social development as they consider the effects of war and the impact of personalities such as Florence Nightingale.

109. By the age of nine, the pupils have widened their historical knowledge to develop an understanding of the more distant past. Through their study of topics on the Romans and Greeks the pupils gain a sound range of factual knowledge. They describe the buildings, work, food and beliefs of the Greeks and accurately locate Athens and Sparta on a world map of the period. However, there is little evidence of teachers developing pupils' understanding of how other civilisations affect the present. Older pupils are developing a secure understanding of chronology and can name significant events and people from the past.
110. Pupils are encouraged to think as historians as they use a range of sources to find out about recent and past events. Year 3 and 4 pupils' skills of enquiry were developed well as they studied pictures of archaeological finds from the Greek period. They were encouraged to use their observations to make deductions about the sort of life the owner might have lived.
111. In geography, by the age of seven, the pupils know that maps and plans and aerial photographs represent a locality. An imaginative use of 'Pirates' as a topic developed pupils' early understanding of map reading as they located 'hidden treasure' on an island using simple grid references. They plot their journey to school identifying features along the way.
112. By the age of nine, the pupils have acquired a sound geographical base about near to home and far away. From their studies of the local area, Year 3 pupils have acquired a sound understanding of the human and physical features of their surroundings. An in-depth study of Great Billing involved pupils making considerable progress in acquiring geographical skills. They looked at the buildings, street furniture, traffic, transport, shops and homes and compared them with their own area. Ideas of sustainable development and pupils' responsibility to the environment are covered well as pupils consider how they can improve their lives through recycling and limiting noise.
113. There are very good links with other subjects as pupils weigh the amount of waste produced each day and record it using a tally system.
114. In both subjects pupils are consolidating their study skills through field trips and the use of maps, atlases, CD-ROMs and the Internet. For example, pupils in Year2 used computers well as they researched homes in different countries of the world, identifying differences.
115. In the limited number of lessons seen the quality of teaching in geography was very good. Teachers use effective strategies for managing lessons and organising pupils. Very good use is made of educational visits to places of interest such as Great Billing and local parks and environmental centres. Teachers' planning and pupils' work indicates that teachers have a very good understanding of the subjects. The teaching is enthusiastic and the very effective use of a wide range of resources brings the subjects alive for pupils. These elements have a positive effect on the quality of learning.

116. History and geography are effectively co-ordinated and make an important contribution to the aims of the school. The schemes of work effectively ensure there is progress and continuity across the school, taking into account the needs of the different age groups within each class. This helps teachers to provide pupils with good opportunities to extend their historical and geographical, knowledge, understanding and skills.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

117. Standards in ICT are in line with those expected for this age group. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when they were described as below national expectations. Raising standards in ICT by improving planning, staff knowledge and confidence and resources was a key issue identified at the previous inspection.
118. The school has made a very good response to the key issue. ICT has been prioritised in the school improvement plan. A new computer suite, equipped with an interactive white board, has improved the teaching and learning of ICT skills. The school has appointed a technician who works very closely with the teaching staff. She provides additional expertise and makes a valuable contribution to teachers' confidence. The staff have received intensive training through a national scheme to improve their skills and this has led to much improved subject knowledge. The coordinator is enthusiastic and anxious to ensure the development of the subject across the curriculum. The curriculum is well planned and reflects national guidance. The school management team provides very good support to ensure the range of initiatives is successful in raising standards.
119. A good proportion of the pupils use the keyboard knowledgeably, for example, the use of upper and lower case letters. By the time pupils reach Year 4 they use a variety of colours, sizes and fonts to make their writing more interesting. They can 'drag and drop' pictures into their writing and on to graphs. They know how to select menu options and print out their work. Pupils access the Internet to cut and paste photographs into their text. Many pupils send e-mails. Their typing skills are improving and this reflects the determination of pupils and staff. Many pupils have computers at home and are supported by older brothers and sisters to develop their skills further and this speeds up the rate of progress. The work on display covers all aspects of the National Curriculum programmes of study.
120. In the two lessons observed, the quality of teaching was very good and satisfactory. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but is improving as staff members are trained. Most teachers have good subject knowledge. Lessons are well prepared and because the pupils are highly motivated there is an enthusiasm for learning. The pupils thoroughly enjoy the work and work equally well as a class, in pairs and individually.

121. In a lesson observed in Year 2, pupils entered data into a database program. The pupils were ready to begin the lesson that had been set up with the additional support of the technician. Enthusiasm and a genuine desire to learn more was a feature of the attitude of pupils. Pupils, with their teacher's help identified fields to complete with data. This work was linked to an investigation in science. By the end of the lesson most pupils knew how to start a new data bank to set up a file. When all the data had been entered the pupils produced answers to a range of questions in graphical form. These skills were taught in the Year 3/4 classes. Year 3/4 pupils have had less time to benefit from the resources and the standards in Years 1 and 2 are rising more rapidly. There is, however, less reliance on the teacher with more pupils working independently.

## MUSIC

122. Standards are in line with the expected levels for seven-year-olds and above for nine-year-olds. The school has employed a part-time specialist teacher who takes all of the classes on a weekly basis. This is a good quality solution to learning in this subject as this teacher provides leadership in music. The music coordinator runs a choir, manages the resources and plans for the development of music. Pupils enjoy music lessons very much; they sing well in assemblies and learn musical skills and knowledge well in their lessons.
123. Music lessons have a good structure. The teacher introduces the work clearly and tells pupils what they are about to learn. The correct musical terms are used and, because they are introduced to these words from Year 1, they use them with understanding. The teacher is careful to repeat the words often and emphasises their meaning. As a result of the teacher's enthusiasm, good subject knowledge and the sense of enjoyment pupils pay close attention and are taught what they need to know to learn effectively. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were encouraged to think about timbre and the quality of a voice or instrument. They defined the term timbre and went on to identify all of the instruments played in 'All you need is love'. The teacher brought in strong moral themes with this music and encouraged pupils to think carefully about the song's lyrics. The teacher's use of the keyboard to explain timbre and his encouragement to use vocal expression meant that pupils' learning was effective. By the end of the lesson for Years 3 and 4 pupils were singing in three parts and following a score. Pupils understand time signatures, maintain a pulse and follow the dynamics of a score.
124. Teaching is at least good and at times, for younger pupils, it is very good. These pupils used instruments to portray the story of the Three Little Pigs. Pupils applied their new knowledge well to compose a sequence of musical themes to describe the houses of straw, stick and bricks. Frequent changes of activity ensured that pupils maintained high levels of interest and playing and singing improved during the lesson. The final session of each lesson is used to review learning and inform pupils what they will be learning next week.



125. The subject is managed well and adds considerably to the quality of the school's provision. The standards in the subject and the quality of teaching have been maintained since the last inspection.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

126. Standards in physical education are in line with those expected for pupils at seven; at nine standards in games are at the expected level. In swimming pupils achieve more highly than most seven and nine-year-olds. Dance and gymnastics could not be judged as they were not taught during the inspection. While standards in games appear to be lower than those described in the previous inspection, the weather was exceptionally hot and teachers placed priority on maintaining an appropriate balance of exercise and rest to avoid dehydration. Curriculum documentation and discussions with the coordinator and pupils confirm that all aspects of the physical education curriculum are taught and the subject requirements are met fully.
127. The school benefits from using the facilities of the nearby secondary school to teach swimming. The secondary school is within walking distance of the school and no additional funding is required for transport. Years 3 and 4 swim regularly and teachers' records indicate that over 90 per cent of pupils can swim at least ten metres and many have certificates for swimming 200 and 400 metres. The school provides a well-structured swimming curriculum.
128. In the two games lessons observed teachers motivated pupils well and provided interesting activities to develop skills. In a very good lesson in Year 2 taught by the coordinator the quality of teaching was very good. The high level of subject knowledge and expertise in managing pupils enabled all the pupils to be included in the lesson and to make good progress. The teacher encouraged independence by requiring pupils to take responsibility for collecting and returning equipment. The lesson was well planned and the structure included warming up and cooling down exercises. Pupils were aware of the importance of this aspect of their lessons and recognised it as a regular feature. The positive and enthusiastic approach of the teacher led to pupils looking forward to their lesson and showing interest in developing their skills and cooperating in team games. Pupils improved their ability to throw balls and beanbags accurately and the teacher skilfully extended this task by organising pupils to work with a partner to develop simple rules and to share and practise throwing and retrieving skills. This worked very well and by the end of the lesson the pupils worked in groups of four and learned to defend and attack within a small team.
129. In the athletics lesson in Year 4 the teaching was satisfactory. The pupils practised their running and relay skills, learning how to pass a baton and work as a team within a race. The teacher taught pupils how to cross over from one to another and showed them how to improve. This prepared them well for their sports day. Pupils behaved well and enjoyed the lesson. The teacher managed the pupils soundly. There were a small number of

occasions when pupils played with equipment in between their activities and this slowed the pace of the lesson slightly.

130. The teachers gave good care to pupils. For example, they ensured drinks were available at the end of the lesson and that the pace of the lessons was appropriate for the hot weather conditions.
131. Facilities for physical education at the school are good. It has a spacious playing field, large wooden apparatus and a plentiful range of small apparatus for pupils to share at lunchtimes. Pupils are very responsible and, with the help of midday staff, they continue to practise and extend their skills in their play. The coordinator is keen to further develop challenging opportunities for pupils. The subject has not been a recent priority for development.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

132. By the age of seven and nine pupils' attainment is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and most pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Similar standards were reported at the time of the last inspection.
133. Work in the infants shows a sound understanding of the basic beliefs and traditions of Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism. Pupils are able to describe some religious ideas from stories about the creation from both the Christian and Hindu traditions. They learn about the significance of other Gods such as the Hindu God of wisdom. There are missed opportunities for pupils in Year 2 to consider how religion can affect peoples actions, for example when talking about the god of wisdom no mention was made as to when and why Hindus might want to pray especially to him. Talking about their own special book is developed well as pupils then go on to learn about the significance of the Bible to Christians and the Torah to Jews. The importance of the family is explored in these holy books as pupils research the family in faiths and cultures.
134. By the age of nine pupils' understanding of Christian, Jewish, Hindu and Muslim religions have developed further. They know about the customs, symbols, festivals, holy books and buildings of major religions. Important festivals such as Eid, Divali, Ei'd and Christmas all play an important part in helping pupils to develop their understanding of the different traditions and religions. The school does not provide visits to places of worship or invite other religious leaders into school which would further enhance pupils' understanding and reinforce respect for all faiths as well as bringing the subject alive for pupils.
135. The significance of the main Christian festivals, the life of Jesus, important biblical characters such as Moses, and important aspects of worship are taught throughout the juniors. Pupils are encouraged to consider the effect that religion can have on

people's lives and why we need rules to live by. Across the school the discussions and reflections on religious issues makes a very important contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

136. Insufficient lessons were seen to make a judgement on teaching. A scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils and staff indicate that there is a systematic approach in the teaching, which ensures that pupils' knowledge and understanding is developed well across the school. Pupils are challenged to consider the effect that religion might have on their own or people's lives. There are good opportunities to compare different world religions and to gain a deeper insight through good quality resources, visits and visitors. Links with other subjects enhance understanding further, as pupils write their own poems about the creation, and design Torah scrolls using Hebrew script. Whole school and class assemblies make a good contribution to pupils' religious education.
137. The co-ordinator is very much committed to raising the profile of religious education in the school. Her enthusiasm and secure subject knowledge has had a positive effect on raising standards, making the subject one that staff enjoy teaching and pupils enjoy learning.