

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

**OAKDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**PETERBOROUGH**

LEA area: Peterborough

Unique reference number: 110710

Headteacher: Mr. J. Yardy

Reporting inspector: Mr. P.R. Sudworth - 2700

Dates of inspection: October 8<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>, 2001

Inspection number: 193479

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 -11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Oakdale Ave., Stanground, Peterborough
Postcode:	PE2 8TD
Telephone number:	01733 566237
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R. Hales
Date of previous inspection:	14. 4. 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Peter Sudworth 2700	Registered inspector	Mathematics; Science; Information and communication technology; Music; Special educational needs; English as an additional language; Equal opportunities.	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Barry Wood 01311	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with its parents?
Barbara Surridge 11756	Team inspector	Foundation Stage; Design and technology; Geography; Religious education.	
Fiona Ruddick 28007	Team inspector	English; Art and design; History; Physical education.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Oakdale Primary School is situated in Stanground, about two miles from Peterborough City centre, and educates pupils between four and eleven years of age. It has 214 pupils on roll in seven classes and is an oversubscribed school with a waiting list for each year group. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs, at 10.5 per cent, is below the national average. Twelve pupils are at Stage 3 of the assessment process but there are no pupils with a statement of special educational need. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below the national average, although this percentage is not representative of the socio-economic circumstances in the area. The school has a high percentage of pupils who have English as an additional language mainly with Italian as their first language, coming from families with an Italian ancestry, although all are fluent in English except one newly arrived pupil in the Reception class. The pupils in the Reception year are all entitled to begin school full-time in the September of the year in which they have their fifth birthday, although some parents opt for part-time provision. Almost all the pupils are of white European or United Kingdom heritage but about nine per cent of the pupils are from other ethnic backgrounds. Attainment on entry is broadly average.

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

This is a good school with some outstanding features. Parents' opinions of the school are extremely favourable. Links with parents, the school's shared commitment to improvement and its capacity to succeed are excellent, as are the extra-curricular activities. The harmonious atmosphere ensures all get on well together. The environment in classes and around the school is highly stimulating and very conducive to learning. Pupils' work is valued and presented extremely well with particularly high expectations and standards in art and design. Pupils make good progress in science and mathematics throughout the school and in geography at Key Stage 1. In other subjects current standards are at expected levels. The school has a good record in end of key stage national tests. The quality of teaching is good overall resulting in happy and interested pupils and in their very good attitudes to work. The leadership and management of the school are very good with particular strengths in monitoring all aspects of the school's work. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Standards in art and design are high by the end of Key Stage 2 and good in geography at the end of Key Stage 1; pupils make good progress in mathematics and science in both key stages and standards are above expectations;
- The leadership and management of the school are very good with very effective monitoring systems of all its work;
- The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good;
- The curriculum is well organised including that for personal, social and health education; there is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities;
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to their work are very good;
- Great care is taken to present pupils' work attractively and the learning environment is of a very high quality;
- The school has excellent links with its parents and they are very supportive of the school.

### What could be improved

- A more precise focus could be given to assessing whether the learning intentions in lessons have been achieved and to using assessment to match work more closely to pupils' needs day-by-day;
- More opportunities could be given for pupils to develop their word-processing skills and their knowledge in information and communication technology;
- The range of questioning could be developed to assist the development of pupils' speaking skills and they could be encouraged to speak up more in lessons to facilitate the quality of discussion;
- The amount of teaching time in Key Stage 2 is one hour below the minimum recommendation;
- The open-air swimming pool is unsecured; parents and others bring their cars on site; both of these present safety hazards.

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

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

The school was last inspected in April 1997. The school has continued to improve in the core subjects, except in information and communication technology and has made good progress. Good improvement has been made in the provision of religious education. Better records are kept of pupils' skills in information and communication technology. The school has improved arrangements for targeting pupils' progress, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Standards in science in both key stages and in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved. Standards in art and design remain high. Due to the increased time spent on literacy and numeracy, standards in history, design and technology and physical education are not as high as reported previously in both key stages but some pupils achieve well in these subjects nevertheless. The quality of teaching, curriculum arrangements and provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development remain good. The governing body is better informed about the curriculum. Its committee structure is more effective and communication of what happens in committees is now disseminated effectively. Monitoring of the school's work is better developed. The school has good capacity and determination to build on the effective education of its pupils which it already provides.

### STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with				<i>Key</i>
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	C	C	B	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	B	A	B	B	
Science	A	B	B	B	

As the free school meal percentage and general socio-economic circumstances in the area are not reflective of the free school meal banding, the grades against similar schools have been raised by one grade to reflect the background from which the pupils come. Attainment on entry at age 5 is average. By the end of the Reception year, most pupils attain the expectations for pupils of that age. Pupils make good progress in mathematics and science throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress in geography and standards by age seven are above expectations. Pupils make expected progress in most other subjects in both key stages and have made very good progress by age 11 in art and design. Pupils cope well with the English language, despite the fact that many speak Italian at home. Standards in different years reflect the number of special needs pupils but in the past few years, standards in science and mathematics have been above national averages and the trend is set to continue. Standards in religious education by age seven and 11 meet locally agreed expectations and accord with national expectations for pupils at the end of both key stages in other subjects. Whilst pupils' speaking and listening skills are generally appropriate they do not speak at length and sometimes they do not speak up enough so that all the class can hear what is being said. The school's targets are appropriate and are met.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and work quietly. They are very well behaved in and around the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is very good. There have been no exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	Very good opportunities are provided for pupils' personal development. Relationships amongst the pupils and between the staff and pupils are very good.
Attendance	Good. Above the national average. Pupils are punctual for school.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils in:</b>	<b>Reception</b>	<b>Years 1 – 2</b>	<b>Years 3 – 6</b>
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Satisfactory

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

The quality of teaching is good overall. It is good in the Reception class and in Key Stage 1. It is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 2 yet with significant amounts that are good, very good and occasionally excellent. Lessons are well planned. Teachers make effective use of the good quality teaching assistants. All teachers and teaching assistants work with pupils to good purpose during activities ensuring that they understand. A good learning atmosphere is preserved in all classes and pupils work quietly on their tasks with good levels of concentration. Teachers manage the pupils well. Literacy and numeracy sessions are taught well and pupils gain a good understanding of what they learn. In the main, English and mathematics lessons are good in both key stages. Lessons in general are often briskly paced with good use of resources which helps to retain the pupils' interest



and enhance their understanding. The teaching of the Reception pupils is good but occasionally they need more opportunities to make choices and to determine the length of time they spend at activities. Teachers plan different tasks for pupils of different prior attainment in English and these are matched well to pupils' different needs. In mathematics some account is taken of different needs but the match is not as sharp as in English. In other subjects pupils are generally given similar tasks but the pupils with special educational needs receive good adult support.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is well planned and meets National Curriculum requirements and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Children in the Reception class do not always have sufficient opportunities to make their own choices about activities they undertake. There is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good. Good use is made of visits to places of interest including residential visits. The teaching week is one hour below minimum recommendations in Key Stage 2.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Sound provision is made for pupils with special educational needs and they make satisfactory progress. They are well supported in each class. The teaching of the pupils with special educational needs does not use a sufficient range of teaching resources.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Many pupils have English as an additional language but all speak English fluently and they do not need extra teaching provision.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall very good. It is very good for their moral, social and cultural development and good for their spiritual development. Teachers do not plan formally opportunities for spiritual development into the curriculum.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good care is taken of the pupils. There are good procedures for child protection. There are two health and safety issues relating to the school swimming pool and parents' cars coming on the premises.

The school has excellent links with its parents and the parents have high opinions of the school. The parents are very supportive of the school

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher's leadership is very good and he sets the harmonious tone and atmosphere which are a special feature of this school. The headteacher and deputy headteacher form an effective working partnership and have complementary skills. Monitoring of all that happens in the school is particularly good.

How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Sound. The governing body fulfils almost all its statutory responsibilities. There are a few omissions from the annual report to parents. The committee structure works effectively. The governing body is kept well informed through visiting the school, involving itself in activities and in the sharing of committee minutes.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is a strong feature of the school's work. Monitoring procedures are very good and enable the school to focus in on specific items for improvement. The school improvement plan is monitored at regular intervals.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school looks ahead to its needs and the school improvement plan is well costed. The school seeks to obtain best value on its purchases.

The school has adequate teaching staff and they are supported well by an above-average number of teaching assistants. The accommodation is good overall and there is a plan for a new information and communication technology suite to improve on the present more diffuse arrangements. Some problems are caused by parents' cars coming on to the premises, including parents of the separate non-affiliated pre-school establishment. The swimming pool is not secure and could be dangerous. Learning resources are adequate overall and generally of good quality. Resources for art and design, religious education and history are good, with many artefacts which are a stimulus to learning. Good arrangements are made to secure best value for purchases made and all grants are used for their specific purposes.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p><i>All respondents to the questionnaire stated that</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• their children enjoy school and the teaching is good. (100%)</li> </ul> <p><i>Very high percentages of replies stated that</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school is well led and managed; (99%)</li> <li>• the pupils make good progress (96%), work hard and achieve their best (97%)</li> <li>• the school is helping their children's level of maturity (98%), and the pupils exhibit good behaviour (98%).</li> <li>• The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons ((99%);</li> <li>• The school works closely with parents (97%);</li> <li>• They are kept well informed (95%) and feel comfortable about approaching the school (96%).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils do not get the right amount of homework.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with the positive views of parents. The inspection team feels that homework amounts are about right given the age of the pupils.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The attainment on entry to the school is broadly average overall. The children make a good start to their education making solid progress in the Reception class, receiving a good grounding for their future work and attaining the expected standard for the end of the Reception Year. Some are already embarked on the National Curriculum Programmes of Study by the start of Year 1. The children in the Foundation Stage are sociable with one another and well behaved. They begin to learn their phonics and make a start to reading simple books. They start to recognise numbers and improve in counting accurately. They learn about the world through their various studies and investigations and in their role-play experiences, such as at the clinic.

2. Pupils' progress is generally good in Key Stage 1 because of the good teaching. Results in end of Key Stage 1 tests, although they fluctuate from year to year, have generally been better than the national average, although in 2000 they were lower because of the larger number of pupils with special educational needs. They picked up again in 2001 and the pupils' results were good. Almost all pupils gained the expected level in science and this was higher than the national average percentage of teacher-assessed results in the subject. In mathematics too, Key Stage 1 results have generally been above the national average and boys have been doing significantly better than boys nationally and much better than the school's girls. There was a significant improvement in the most recent national tests (2001) in mathematics and just over two-fifths of the pupils gained the higher level with one pupil reaching the standard for the end of Year 6 in the subject. English results at the end of Key Stage 1 have generally exceeded national averages except in 2000. In 2001 the Key Stage 1 results in reading, writing and spelling were better than the national average and both boys and girls did better than their national gender counterparts and also better than pupils in similar schools. Currently most Key Stage 1 are in line to gain the expected level at the end of Year 2 in all aspects of English and they are making steady progress at this stage of the academic year. They are also working at expected levels in mathematics and science. The cohort does not contain as much flair as last year's Year 2 pupils.

3. The school's eleven-year-olds performed adequately in the 2001 national tests in English and a slightly higher percentage than the national average gained the expected level. The proportion of pupils gaining the expected level was similar to the national picture at Key Stage 2. Currently they are making steady progress overall. Throughout the school in both key stages, a significant proportion of pupils lack confidence to put forward their views when speaking opportunities present themselves but almost all pupils listen well when others are talking and are polite when responding to questions. Key Stage 2 pupils' reading skills are satisfactory and they can find information in books when researching. However, pupils often read aloud without sufficient expression. Pupils have good skills in finding appropriate books, for example by sampling a page for the level of difficulty or turning to the back page to read the synopsis. They know how to find their way around non-fiction texts and can use the Dewey system effectively. Standards in writing are at expected levels.

4. In both mathematics and science Key Stage 2 pupils build steadily on the good progress made in Key Stage 1 and the good results they obtain in national tests at age seven. The standards observed during the inspection indicate that the trend is likely to continue. Standards in these two subjects have improved since the last inspection. Both boys and girls have been performing better than their national gender counterparts in mathematics. Results in 2001 in both mathematics and science were better than the national average overall with a similar percentage obtaining the higher level to that nationally in both subjects and one pupil gaining the higher level 6 in mathematics, the near equivalent to a GCSE standard. In science, as in mathematics, the school's results have traditionally outstripped those nationally but the school's boys have been doing better than the girls on average.

5. A major strength of the school is the standard pupils reach in art and design in both key stages. By age seven, standards are above those expected nationally and by age eleven well above national expectations. Key Stage 1 pupils' achievements are good and by the end of Year 6 very good. This is because of the teachers' good knowledge and skill, the environment provided to show good work to best effect, the range of media which pupils use and the time which pupils have to experiment with different tools and media and to build up their skills.

6. Standards in design and technology are broadly in line with expectations in both key stages and achievements are sound but a few pupils in each key stage equip themselves well and attain more highly. In geography standards are above expectations by the end of Key Stage 1 and pupils make good progress. They are at expected standards by the end of Key Stage 2 because the widening of demands across the curriculum in Key Stage 2 do not allow for in-depth teaching. Nevertheless, a few attain well and develop the thinking skills of geographers in their approach to environmental and world issues. Pupils acquire a good understanding of history in both key stages through the wide range of historical artefacts which are a feature of the school's quality display and environment and through their research into times past, particularly in Key Stage 2. Standards are appropriate by ages seven and 11.

7. Standards in information and communication technology are satisfactory and achievements are generally sound in both key stages. However, the lack of classroom opportunities and structure in teaching skills and the heavy reliance on cross-curricular work restrict pupils' opportunities to learn skills in a structured and more effective way. The school recognises the present arrangements are not ideal and hopes to build its own multi-media room in the near future to improve standards. Pupils' current skills in control technology are unsatisfactory but the school has just purchased some new equipment and intends to ensure Key Stage 2 pupils develop skills in this aspect of work before the end of the academic year.

8. A group of 14 Key Stage 2 pupils learns the recorder at an advanced level, including tenor and treble, and plays to a high standard often accompanying the singing in assembly. Another 25 pupils also learn the recorder. There is a good culture of the school's recorder group entering music festivals and they have achieved a good level of success. More generally it was not possible to judge standards in music because many of the music lessons were taking place outside the inspection period, including those for the end of each key stage. In lessons observed Year 4 pupils listened maturely to music and Year 3 pupils could follow graphic scores with a good deal of accuracy. In Key Stage 1, Year 1 pupils were able to clap simple rhythms with good levels of accuracy.

9. Standards in physical education are broadly in line with expectations but a few pupils in both key stages are attaining more highly in both dance and in gymnastics. In religious education standards are in line with those agreed locally and better than at the time of the last inspection.

10. Although a significant number of the pupils are of Italian ancestry and several speak Italian at home, all are fluent in English and they do not need extra help. Language is not an impediment to their progress. Only one pupil was at an early stage of language acquisition and this pupil was acquiring language naturally by playing and working alongside her peers in the class containing the youngest pupils. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The individual education plans are of good quality and reviewed regularly. Currently the work is thorough but the teaching approach to skills development is too focused on one method and not enough use is being made of a range of material or computer programs to enliven the learning and to speed up the acquisition of letter blends.

11. Since the last inspection standards have continued to improve in the core subjects, except in information and communication technology. The school has improved arrangements for targeting pupils' progress, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Standards in science in both key stages and in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved. Standards in art and design remain high. Due

to the increased time spent on literacy and numeracy, standards in history, design and technology and physical education are not as high as reported previously in both key stages but some pupils achieve well in these subjects nevertheless. The school has met its locally agreed targets.

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

12. The school continues to have very high expectations of the attitudes, behaviour and personal development of all its pupils, as displayed in its comprehensive aims. The picture has changed little from the previous inspection report, and all aspects of the pupils' attitudes, behaviour, personal development and relationships are very good. Parents show an excellent approval level of the school's calm and purposeful ambience and their children's behaviour.

13. Pupils in the Reception class are confident, and show few anxieties, after a good grounding at pre-school. Although they can take time to form friendships with other children, they take turns and share resources well. They are very responsive to their empathetic teacher and staff, and listen well, mostly without calling out. The children's behaviour is often very good, with only occasional sulking if feelings are hurt. They participate easily in the daily routines, and are enthusiastic when used to demonstrate to others.

14. Most pupils arrive early at school, accompanied by their parents. They are obviously happy, wear their school uniform with pride, and represent their parents well. They have very good attitudes and are keen to get to grips with the day's agenda. Their listening and concentration skills allow the teachers to establish a productive teaching and learning environment for all pupils. As they progress through the school, they develop very sensible and controlled approaches to activities and realise that hard work will produce good results. Pupils are consistently responsive to their teachers. They want to answer their questions with well deduced answers that stimulate the interest of their colleagues, as was evidenced in a lesson considering Victorian artefacts. They are efficient when activities change within a lesson, and move quickly and quietly to a new task. They are equally effective in independent and group learning situations, where they share resources and enjoy co-operating to produce good practical outcomes.

15. The behaviour of the pupils throughout the school, including the pupils with special educational needs, is very good and allows the school to operate effectively. All pupils have a very good understanding of the school's expectations for self-discipline, and they want to be part of a disciplined society, where they work and play in harmony. This leads to a calm and happy work atmosphere throughout the school, with a determined and productive buzz. Staff do not need to exert an overt control, but pupils seldom take advantage, and are easily corrected by a quiet word. The close interaction of older pupils and younger pupils has a calming and regulating effect on each other. No bullying, sexism, racism or bad language were observed and no evidence that they are part of school life. Arguments are few and easily resolved. The school has not had to use exclusions as part of its behaviour strategies.

16. The quality of relationships, at all levels, is very good and is a fundamental part of the ethos of the school. Staff provide very good role models and pupils totally trust their teachers and support staff. This allows pupils to be honest with teachers regarding the extent of their knowledge and learning in lessons. The stability of the school is very high and has led to a well bonded community, in which mutual respect and harmonious relationships help to promote an effective teaching and learning environment. Older pupils consistently and effectively help younger pupils, through a 'Buddy' system. In the classroom, pupils listen to each other with respect and value each other's opinions and qualities, even when shyness or reticence can limit some pupils when developing ideas. They work well together in the same age groups. They have considerable success in school representative teams, where their pulling together and pride in the school come to the fore. Boys and girls eat amicably together at the very sociable lunchtimes. A distinctive feature of all pupils is the courtesy and politeness, which they extend to visitors.

17. The personal development of the pupils is very good throughout their time in school. Pupils feel that they have a democratic ownership of the school, and this is a strong feature of the school's ethos. All pupils, from the early years onwards, are encouraged to participate in the many aspects of the school agenda, both in and out of the classroom. There is a very good personal, health and social education curriculum, which develops an awareness of life in the outside world, and has a due regard to health and safety considerations. All pupils display a well developed sense of moral and social awareness. They are taught to value their community locally and their Italian heritage, where appropriate. Good assemblies explore varied spiritual, moral and social themes and celebrate achievement within the school family. There are many class and whole-school routines and pupils gain a good degree of independence, and are allowed to take initiatives for their own learning. The School Council is given good status and is an effective medium for the discussion of real issues. The school undertakes residential visits for all pupils except those in the Reception class, and makes many visits to the local community to places of interest to support their learning. Pupils maintain the environment of the site well through litter squads, and there is no litter, graffiti, or vandalism. The school has an excellent range of extra-curricular activities, and pupils are fully involved in inter-school competitions, where they enjoy considerable success, both in sporting and non-sporting events. This is a very caring society where pupils are encouraged to look after each other, as well as having an awareness of others less fortunate than themselves, through charity work.

18. During the last four years, the school has achieved a good level of attendance and in line with the judgement in the last inspection report. All classes, except one, have attendance rates well above the national average, and attendance rates improve as pupil's progress through the school. Historically, unauthorised absence has been at a very low level, but this has sharply increased during the present term, due to some inconsistent recording in registers. There are no indications of any truancy and no exclusions. Family holidays, taken during term-time, are a major reason for authorised absence. The staff calmly take registers at the beginning of each session and pupils use the time well for reading or working productively together. Registers are completed in a statutory manner, and are routinely scanned to detect absentees, but the school could give a more conscientious focus to using summary data for control purposes. Lessons are not affected by any lack of punctuality, as most pupils are careful to arrive at school early. The school has only required limited help from the educational welfare service, but this support is effective, when requested.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

19. The overall quality of teaching is good. Of the lessons observed during the inspection week, four per cent were excellent, 18 per cent very good and 44 per cent good. Almost all the remaining lessons were satisfactory except for three lessons (5 per cent) which were unsatisfactory. This picture is very similar to that at the time of the previous inspection.

20. The quality of teaching in the Reception class was good overall and also in Key Stage 1. It was satisfactory in Key Stage 2 overall with a range from excellent to unsatisfactory, but with significant amounts of good, very good and occasionally excellent teaching in Years 4 and 6.

21. Teachers manage their classes well throughout the school, which ensures that pupils pay attention and profit from their time in school. They interest the pupils in lessons through good explanations, good opportunities for discussion, albeit often the same pupils contributing, and usually a good balance of activity and explanation. As a result when pupils begin their activity they pursue these with good levels of concentration and they apply themselves well. They work quietly on their tasks and pursue them to a conclusion discussion quietly and appropriately on occasions with others. During activities teachers work with groups continuously ensuring that pupils understand their work.

22. Opening plenaries are often purposeful and brisk with a good introduction to the purposes of the lesson with objectives shared with the pupils so they are clear of the lesson focus. However in some lessons, particularly in English, pupils are seated on the carpet for too long in the opening plenary and they can become restless and uncomfortable as a result. In many lessons the concluding plenary is used to assess pupils' understanding of what they have been doing or to take learning even further forward but in some instances it is merely a résumé of what has taken place.

23. Teachers use time effectively and plan their lessons well. Resources are well prepared and set out in groups ready for the pupils to use before the lesson begins and often used imaginatively. In a Year 3 lesson the teacher used the overhead projector and transparent coloured disks effectively to help the pupils appreciate the concept of multiples and how some numbers can have more than one multiple. Teachers use praise effectively and this is mostly well deserved but very occasionally there is over-use of praise and it becomes repetitive and sometimes undeserved. Teachers make good use of the good quality teaching assistants and use them effectively in lessons. On occasion, however, they do too much for the pupils, as in a Key Stage 2 design and technology lesson when the pupils were making masks out of papier mâché and not enough of the facial features were designed by the pupils. Teaching assistants are well briefed about the lesson beforehand.

24. Teachers often match the work well to pupils' prior attainment in English. In mathematics this is variable. The teachers often set separate tasks for the special educational needs pupils but these are not always well matched to pupils' prior attainment and they are sometimes too difficult or not sufficiently developmental, although they are given good support by the teaching assistants. There is not always enough differentiation of task between the average and higher attaining pupils. In other subjects, such as science, whole class tasks are usually given.

25. A particular strength of teaching is the high degree of teacher activity. They introduce the lessons well, ensure pupils know the purpose of the lessons and involve themselves effectively in the activities which follow, checking pupils' understanding and clarifying point of learning. Teaching assistants often assess pupils' comments during the plenary and note down pupils' responses for the teachers.

26. Teachers usually have good subject knowledge and incorporate good use of technical language such 'array', 'multiple' and 'product' in mathematics and 'prediction' in science. They often demonstrate correct techniques well. This was clearly demonstrated in a Year 6 art and design lesson when the teacher demonstrated a mixture of pen and pencilling techniques to obtain the effect of shading and engendered tremendous enthusiasm as pupils made observational drawings of Victorian artefacts. In a Year 1 physical education lesson there was good demonstration of rope climbing and this helped pupils to ascend and descend ropes correctly. In an excellent Year 4 religious education lesson about Divali, the teacher showed very good subject knowledge, involved the pupils sensitively as if they were about to celebrate the festival. The activities in this lesson were time constrained for the different elements and this technique added much pace to the lesson.

27. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and there is an honesty and trust in the relationships. Teachers often discuss openly any difficulties the pupils have found in their work, although occasionally they rely too much on general opinion rather than questioning and checking on pupils' understanding. Humour is used to good effect in some lessons, which adds to the enjoyment and happiness that the pupils show in their learning.

28. In some lessons, particularly in history, good use is made off deductive processes making demands on pupils' logical thinking and getting them to justify their answers. In a Year 5 lesson about the Tudors, the teacher gave possible answers to a question in the form of a popular current quiz game and the pupils had to explain their answer. For example, she held up £500, a jewel and a letter of thanks as possible answers to the question 'What did Queen Elizabeth give her Vice Chancellor after the Spanish Armada?' This approach fostered a good level of class discussion.

29. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is supportive of their difficulties. The teaching assistants and teachers give them much help. One teaching assistant has a particular special educational needs focus. Progress of the special educational needs pupils is sound as a result of the focused teaching but a greater variety of resources and use of programs for special educational needs pupils on the computer would improve the teaching and add breadth and more interest to the provision. Awareness of the needs of the higher attaining pupils is good in English and their needs are catered for well but in mathematics the tasks given to pupils of average and above average attainment are sometimes too similar.

30. Teachers plan their lessons well and involve the teaching assistants in the planning so that they are clear of the teaching points and know exactly what they have to do in lessons. Despite the concerns of few parents, homework arrangements are satisfactory and similar to those in many primary schools.

31. There were a few weaknesses in teaching. On occasion the pace of lessons was slow, including queues for attention, which resulted in boredom for the pupils. In some instances teachers forget to open the windows and the classrooms can get stuffy and hot. Very occasionally class management was not sufficiently firm and tasks not appropriate for all pupils. Sometimes teacher's knowledge is insecure resulting in inaccurate explanations. In a Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson, the teacher's explanation of the 'mode' and 'average' caused the class to become confused. The teacher realised her mistake at the end of the lesson and her own self-evaluation was a strength. These weaknesses were not consistent features in lessons and related only to very occasional lessons. The school's culture of self-improvement and self-analysis is one of the reasons why the school's teaching is good overall. The teachers are keen to take on suggestions and improve themselves and several teachers took on suggestions made during the inspection with an immediate positive effect on pupils' learning.



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

32. The school meets its statutory curriculum responsibilities and the obligation for an act of worship each day, although the teaching time in Key Stage 2 is one hour below the recommended minimum. The quality of the curriculum is very similar to that at the time of the last inspection with a particular strength in art and design. It provides a good range of learning opportunities for children under five years of age in most areas of the curriculum. Although there is a small covered area with appropriate large toys and equipment there is insufficient facility and opportunity for outdoor play. The appropriate statutory curriculum is well in place in each stage of the school in most respects, although children in the Foundation Stage could have more opportunities to make choices and to determine the amount of time they spend at some activities. The information and communication technology curriculum in both key stages is not yet strong and there is room for further development in the range and quality of opportunities in the subject. In both key stages, schemes of work are in place for each subject. There is a good range of activities and learning opportunities within most subjects enabling the pupils to receive a good curriculum breadth. The school meets the expectations in the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. A very useful document assists the overall quality, helping staff to plan the curriculum in the long-term and specifying what every class will do each term.

33. There is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities open to all pupils, continuing this very positive feature of the school's work. Clubs at lunchtime and after school include sport, music, chess, languages, computer, art and craft and there are some changes each term which further extend the range. Outdoors pupils can play chess and draughts during their break-times with large plastic pieces. Smaller pieces of equipment are taken out each day for each class to use in rotation at lunchtime and further assist the pupils in physical skills. The school provides teams to play against local schools in football and netball, often including both genders, and extra coaching is given to those identified as being more gifted. Pupils have the opportunity to use the nearby college facilities for swimming. There are residential visits for different age groups which are very well supported and classes make visits most terms which help to consolidate and extend the pupils' learning in different aspects of the curriculum.

34. The school provides a very good level of personal, social and health education and pupils have a good awareness of issues relating to this aspect of their development, including attention to drug misuse. This aspect is taken seriously by the school and reported on to parents. Citizenship is in the process of being added into this provision. There is an effective and democratically elected School Council which meets half-termly and members report back to their respective classes on what takes place at the meetings. Pupils receive good information about human development and the sex education policy is practised effectively. A nurse talks to Year 6 pupils in whole class and separate groupings about aspects that affect them directly.

35. The school has very good relationships with the local playgroup from which most pupils come. There are also good transfer links with the secondary school which shares the same campus and which most pupils attend when they leave. The local vicar comes into the school regularly and various local firms make contributions in some way to the school's activities. Parents play an important part in the life of the school and are often in classrooms first thing in the morning reading with their children. Because the school has a high proportion of pupils of Italian extraction, there are important links with the Italian Consulate which provides a teacher of Italian, although at the time of inspection a new teacher of Italian was awaited and no Italian lessons were taking place. These classes are open to all pupils in the school regardless of family culture. The school is well established as part of the local community. It has very good links also with teacher training institutions and four trainees were in the school during the week of the inspection assisting in lessons and carrying out observations.

36. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs pupils is generally appropriate but not always well matched to their needs. It is better matched in English and mathematics but in other subjects similar demands are often made of them and they need the help of the teaching assistants in order to manage their work. In withdrawal sessions, usually arranged for individuals, the work is well focused and rigorous but lacks a variety of approach.

37. Since the last inspection the school has continued to make good provision for spiritual development, and very good provision for moral, social and cultural development. This provision is still a significant strength and a distinctive feature of the school.

38. The school has sharpened its focus on planning for spiritual development but there are still some missed opportunities in both lessons and assemblies. Not all staff are aware of the importance of a spiritual dimension to enrich the curriculum. In some lessons there continues to be insufficient time following, or during, an activity for pupils to reflect on experiences, or to tease out issues in order to get an insight into values and beliefs.

39. Where provision is good, pupils' understanding is correspondingly good. In one lesson pupils paused to consider the impact of the gold on the Temple at Amritsa. In another, pupils have been helped to address issues resulting from the death of a young child from leukaemia. Year 6 pupils learn that quotations provide information about peoples' thoughts and feelings. Some teachers are good at creating learning opportunities for spiritual development from spontaneous classroom situations, for example by deviating from a lesson plan to look in wonderment at the skyscape. The aesthetically pleasing and high quality displays throughout the school also provide ongoing opportunities for pupils to marvel and to reflect.

40. Pupils of all ages are introduced to the concept of a deity and they are used to formal prayer within the act of worship, although at times this is rather mechanistic. Good use is made of a local clergyman to lead the act of worship several times each term. Pupils know a range of hymns and sing out well, supported by high quality recorder playing. The act of worship fully meets statutory requirements. Pupils participate well in assembly and show appreciation for the efforts of children who lead it on occasions.

41. The school provides a very strong framework for moral development and good manners and behaviour are the norm. All adults in the school provide excellent role models. Pupils are very clear about the difference between right and wrong. They are involved in making the school rules. These are simple and understood by all. Pupils of all ages know the sanctions and rewards that apply. The school council is an important part of the school's life.

42. The school has an excellent ethos, and social development is very good. Pupils help each other and they play well together. New pupils, and visitors, are quickly accepted and made welcome. Pupils are used to sharing and co-operating, and they take an interest in each others' achievements. The school provides both before- and after-school child-minding clubs.

43. Pupils have an increasing range of responsibilities as they move up the school. The youngest pupils tidy away the apparatus that they have used, and take the register to the office. Older pupils take good care of younger ones. Year 6 monitors are proud of their role and carry out their duties conscientiously. They assist before school in their assigned classrooms by putting out materials, or sharpening pencils. At lunch-times they put out, and later store, a range of apparatus for younger pupils to use.

44. The school scrap books record a very wide range of diverse activities, all well supported. There is an impressive range of clubs. Pupils participate in external competitions. In the recent past the school has been a music festival winner; and a pupil has won a handwriting competition. The school takes advantage of many local initiatives such as first-aid training for pupils. Pupils regularly raise money, for example for a local baby care unit, and a cancer charity.

45. Provision for cultural development is very good. The school teaches pupils to value their own cultural traditions and to appreciate the diversity and richness of others. The school has made good use of digital cameras to make a record of these occasions, for example when pupils show mendala patterns on their hands, wear Hindu, Muslim or Jewish special clothes, or handle and talk about sacred books and special festivals. Labels in the school are written in English, Italian and Urdu.

46. The school makes appropriate use of the immediate environment, and of the many places of interest that pupils visit. From Year 1 upwards classes have a residential visit. The youngest ones visit Stibbington, the oldest go further afield to Scarborough or to Wales. Day visits are made, most recently to Sacrewell Farm. Immediately following the inspection, Year 1 pupils were to visit Peterborough Cathedral in conjunction with religious education and the Year 5 pupils a history trip to Kentwell Hall.

47. Festivals and traditions are celebrated, and at the time of the inspection the school was preparing for its harvest festival. This is one of many ways in which it is involved in the local community. Performing arts groups visit on occasion. There are many opportunities for music, drama, and sport both within school and in the wider area. Where this involves competition the school has been very successful.

48. Girls and boys have equal access to the curriculum. Both girls and boys belong to the football club, and engage in cooking and sewing. There are both male and female nurse outfits in the Reception class 'clinic'.

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

49. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained most aspects of its support, guidance and welfare agenda at an overall good level, with behaviour and welfare procedures at a conspicuously very good level. It continues as a very caring school, in line with its stated aims. The high quality welfare agenda positively contributes to the good learning and development of all pupils.

50. The headteacher and staff have a very good knowledge of all their pupils, including those with special educational needs, and most parents. They show an enthusiasm to be involved with the pupils and promote their well-being, often outside the hours demanded by the normal school day. Their knowledge of pupils is reinforced by their close relationship and friendship with parents and by their frequent informal meetings with parents in a totally harmonious atmosphere, at either end of the school day. The headteacher and his colleagues accept their pastoral role with determination and dedication, and they display a diligence and enthusiasm that communicates well to parents and pupils alike. Pupils feel constantly supported by this integrated family community, without any loss of their individuality, and in turn identify with, and promote, the caring culture and ethos of the school. Parents greatly admire the headteacher and staff for their efforts, and appreciate the school's safe, sensitive and caring environment, although the inspection team draws attention to two safety issues- the swimming pool and the cars entering the site.

51. The personal support and guidance for pupils is supported by very good procedures. Teachers, from the early years onwards, have been used to keeping comprehensive formal records of each pupil's personal development, and transferring records with the pupil at the end of the school year. This system is presently under review as it has been time-consuming, but the merits of this system are significant. Informal conversations at staff meetings, regarding pupils' personal development, are well supported by data. Pupils are well used to having targets for curriculum and personal development, though these could be improved by being for a shorter time duration. Pupils, additionally, keep records of achievement, which raise their self-esteem. The school's very good knowledge of each child allows it to involve outside agencies as required for pupils with special educational needs. The school has a good special needs provision, promoted by good individual educational plans, which include attainable targets and are agreed with parents on a termly basis. All pupil-based information systems are sufficient in scope and accuracy and effectively support any medical need or emergency. Induction procedures for parents are especially effective, and guarantee that pupils make a confident start to their school lives. There is a good liaison and relationship between the school and the pre-school playgroup, and the local secondary school, so that parents receive good support at transfer, and parent and pupil anxieties are minimised.

52. The school has a broad range of relevant and updated support, guidance and welfare policies to underpin its actions. Policies are implemented consistently across the school and with a good understanding by all staff. The staff handbook consolidates information for new staff, so they can contribute effectively to the school's care agenda. The school is very welcoming to outside agencies to support the pupils on a routine basis, or if there are specific problems. The school nurse is prominent in assisting the school's provision for sex and drugs education. Parents are well briefed regarding the comprehensive sex education lessons. There has been no withdrawal of pupils, indicating a high level of parental approval. Although the educational welfare officer has only a limited role in the school due to the good attendance level, he is effective when required.

53. Child protection procedures are good. The school is very vigilant in this aspect, and perceives that all staff have a role to play. The child protection co-ordinator is well trained, but all staff would benefit from further refresher training. There is good support from the outside agencies, but incidences of problems have been low, and presently there are no pupils on the register.

54. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour, which have been developed through the headteacher's and staff's long experience, but are better in their consistent implementation than in their definition by a written policy. The school gives a very high priority to the establishment of a calm and relaxed community, and the development of a very good teaching and learning environment through an all-pervasive culture of good pupil behaviour. In line with its ethos of consultation of pupils, all classes involve pupils in the formulation of rules for behaviour and their accent is on self-discipline. Good relationships foster strong mutual respect and adults use praise effectively. Some aspect of the moral provision is assessed and reinforced by pupils and staff during assemblies, or during the personal health and social education lessons. The school has a good array of appropriate awards, including stickers, which are greatly prized. Where necessary, effective strategies have been designed to the individual child and have been very effective in controlling the minor occasions of challenging or oppressive behaviour.

55. Attendance procedures and systems are generally good and have produced a consistently high performance level over the last four years. Registers could, however, include summary data. The school has communicated well with parents on attendance issues, so that they are very aware of their statutory obligations. It has not felt the need to implement a first day telephoning system to counter any poor attendance, but unauthorised absence has been historically at low levels. The incidence of parents requiring holidays within the term is high, despite the school's determined efforts. Punctuality procedures are appropriate at the start of the school day, as both pupils and parents are usually determined to attend school early.

56. The school is a generally safe environment for all pupils and staff. However, the use of the car park by parents at the start of the school day, and the open access to the outdoor swimming pool, both represent significant health and safety hazards. The hard playground space does lead to an above average level of minor accidents as it is somewhat restricted, particularly when the school field is out of bounds in poor weather. The school has a very good complement of staff first-aiders, and Year 6 pupils are distinguished by their achievements in first-aid competitions. First aid facilities are inadequate due to the lack of an on-site medical room. Health and safety procedures are good and well enforced. Pupils are well acquainted with health and safety principles in the home and at school, through the personal health and social education provision and prior to lessons where appropriate.

57. Since the last inspection the school has carried out a major review and overhaul of assessment procedures. Formal assessment is now very thorough and makes a good contribution to long- and medium-term planning. However, in most classes there has been little improvement in the use of day-to-day assessment as a tool to inform short-term planning.

58. The school undertakes a thorough assessment of children's capabilities during the first few weeks after entry into the Reception Class. This enables children to settle into school quickly and to make a good start to the individual curriculum plans made for them. Ongoing assessment procedures in the Reception class are very thorough, labour intensive and used very well in daily and weekly planning.

59. The standard assessment tests (SATs) at the end of Years 2 and 6 are carried out according to requirements. Data analysis is undertaken on these scores, together with the scores from other end of term tests. Staff in various groupings discuss the results of the analyses and highlight key issues. They use the assessment results to set targets for the following term, and in particular to identify pupils who might need extra help. These assessment procedures enable pupils to be tracked effectively through the school.

60. Teachers compile a 'Progress Book' of work in the core subjects for each pupil. Generally the comments alongside the piece of work make it a valuable form of appraisal. There is also a termly assessment of a piece of work for each foundation subject. Digital cameras are used very effectively to provide a record of some work, especially that which is three-dimensional. Portfolios that include pupils' assessment of their own work are especially useful. Agreement trialling has made a useful contribution to assessment procedures in the school. Some assessment of information and communication technology is particularly thorough with a skill-expectation spreadsheet and a vocabulary check sheet.

61. Assessments of pupils with special educational needs are good and their individual education plans are appropriate to their needs. Assessments by support teachers and classroom assistants working with these pupils show good understanding of the learning objectives and make a valuable contribution to the assessment process.

62. Day-to-day assessments in many classes lack precision and teachers do not assess consistently whether the learning intentions have been achieved. Occasionally assessments carried out by classroom assistants lack credibility. For example, in a Key Stage 2 design and technology lesson, the teacher failed to notice that the design activity had largely been done by the teaching assistant and not by the pupils. On other occasions teaching assistants have not been briefed sufficiently well regarding assessment points to check up on when hearing individual pupils read. Most teachers modify their short-term planning to take account of what pupils find difficult, but it is rare to find assessment leading to plans being changed to extend bright pupils further. Home-school reading diaries vary greatly. Some just record books read. Others include diagnostic testing and targets, and are a valid assessment record. Satisfactory records are kept of pupils' personal and social development.

63. The school meets its statutory requirements for reporting progress and attainment to parents outlining progress and identifying targets. Parents and pupils have the opportunity to add their own comments to the report and most do.

64. The newly appointed co-ordinator for assessment is focused and motivated. Her duties are carried out in partnership with the deputy headteacher. She has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the present systems.

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

65. The last inspection report indicated that the school's links with parents were excellent, and that the partnership with parents had a positive effect on the quality of education provided by the school. Parents were satisfied with the information provided. The school is very aware that the success of its work hinges on the quality of relationships with parents. They continue to work hard to foster these relationships, which are a fundamental strength of the school. The school has been used as an example of good parental practice by the local education authority. The quality of information is good and all other aspects of its partnership with parents are very good. The school involves the parents successfully in the reviews and targets for pupils with special educational needs.

66. The school enjoys an enhanced reputation in the locality, and particularly with the Italian community. Overall, parents express an excellent level of approval of the school, and they respect the efforts of the headteacher, in particular, and the staff and governors. Parents genuinely feel relieved to be part of the school, as it is over-subscribed, and they are proud of its quality. The latest parents' questionnaire and interviews with parents indicate an almost universal approval level. Some parents are dissatisfied with their own personal commitment required for an excessive amount of homework, particularly when they have more than one child at the school, although the inspection team found amounts of homework to be suitable. There are no significant levels of parental dissatisfaction.

67. Although it does not have a parents' policy and its aims do not mention parents, in all other dimensions the school indicates that it wants effective links with all its parents. It has an open door policy, whereby, all parents are encouraged to enter the school at the beginning and end of the day, and to come and play a role within the school. Many pupils are brought to school by parents so that the staff can establish good informal links from the Reception class onwards. The quality of these relationships allows many parents to have a very beneficial impact on the work of the school. Parents, as volunteers or paid employees, provide additional resource both inside and outside the classroom on a regular basis. Although the school has recently lost a parent governor, the four elected parent governors are enthusiastic and knowledgeable and have good access to information and all aspects of the school. The Parent Teacher Association is an essential element in promoting and developing the distinctive happy family ethos that pervades all aspects of the school. Its initiatives for essential fund-raising are well respected by the headteacher and staff.

68. The quality of information for parents is good overall. The prospectus is a high quality document that represents the school well. The annual governors' report to parents does not contain all the points of statutory information, but is essentially a satisfactory document that values its parents. Induction procedures are very good so that parents understand how the school functions. The school's policies and procedures are well written, but parents could benefit from their display in the school. Other written communications, including the newsletters, are of good quality, friendly, sufficient and respectful to the role of parents, and give them enough time to respond. The school's annual reports to parents are good, and parents can recognise their children's key strengths and weaknesses in each subject of the National Curriculum. Parents and pupils make significant contributions to the report process. The school's communications with parents are based on a commitment to an open door policy and easy access to information. However, parents' notice boards both in the main school and outside classrooms tend to be of poor quality or not apparent, and the school lacks any Parent Teacher Association notice board. The school is always keen to find out parents' current opinions, and conducts its own questionnaires on a regular basis.

69. The contribution of parents to their children's learning is very good, as most parents have a passionate interest in their children's education. All parents have signed the home-school agreement, and want to comply both in the spirit and the letter of the agreement. Good attendance and punctuality are distinctive features of the school.

70. The school has held information evenings in many aspects of the National Curriculum including literacy and numeracy, and national test arrangements, and these are well attended. Meetings with teachers, to discuss their children's progress, are almost universally well attended. Many parents attend the school for celebration assemblies. Parents conscientiously discharge their responsibilities to helping with homework. In the main they approve of the present homework arrangements, even though some feel pressured by either the volume or their lack of knowledge. Reading diaries are well used by parents to record their joint efforts with their children. There is a close collaboration with the parents of special educational needs pupils, and together they produce meaningful individual educational plans, with targets which produce sound progress. Parents receive much advice from the school at the time of transfer to secondary school, which minimises parental anxieties.



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

71. The leadership and management of the school are very good, a similar judgement to that at the time of the previous inspection. The school is very well managed by the headteacher who has a very close working relationship with the governing body. The successful blending of the complementary skills of the headteacher and deputy headteacher facilitates a very good working relationship at senior management level.

72. The headteacher preserves a very pleasant atmosphere in the school despite there being effective, rigorous and evaluative monitoring systems in place. His relationships with parents, staff and pupils are excellent. Lesson monitoring, scrutiny of medium-term and weekly planning and work samples are an established part of the whole school's procedures. This very good range of monitoring results in an improvement in the teaching quality because of the clear targets set for improvement as result of observations made. Staff are accountable for their attendance at courses and evaluate the impact on themselves and on the school provided by the course attendance. Clear targets are set for individual pupils in literacy and numeracy which has helped to keep standards at a healthy level.

73. The staff feel well supported in their work and there is a strong culture of mutual professional self-development. The school has achieved 'Investor in People' status. Staff monitor their subject responsibilities effectively through observing teaching and scrutinising standards of work. Coordinators check progress of their responsibilities against the targets in the school improvement plan.

74. There is good involvement of the staff and governors in determining the school's appropriate priorities for improvement, which are clearly indicated in the school improvement plan. The plan is of good quality, well formulated with costings, performance indicators, time scales and monitoring techniques and is currently on schedule.

75. Advance planning is a strength and the focus for staff meetings and senior management meetings is known well in advance. Key decisions are minuted.

76. The school's aims are of good quality and include sectional aims for the school as a provider and separate aims for the pupils, although none refer to parents. Despite the omission, the school's relationship with parents is excellent and the forging of these links is one of the headteacher's strengths. A major focus of the aims is in developing the child to become a person. The aims are fulfilled.

77. The governing body fulfils almost all of its statutory responsibilities, although there are some omissions in the annual report to parents, such as attendance statistics. It has more effective systems for knowing about the school's strengths and weaknesses than at the time of the last inspection report. The committee structure now works effectively and facilitates the cohesiveness of the governing body. Members keep themselves well informed about the school's strengths and needs and examine carefully the impact of their decisions on pupils' academic and social development. Financial planning is good and takes into account both short- and long-term considerations. It has a high carry-forward balance but it has a large capital project in mind, for which plans have already been drawn up. This is intended to improve the quality of information and communication technology provision in the school and is very appropriate.

78. The school had a very favourable financial audit twelve months before the inspection. The minor recommendations have been attended to.

79. Resources are adequate overall. They are good in geography, history, religious education and art and design but the tuned percussion in music is in an unsatisfactory condition. In other subjects amounts are satisfactory and quality often good. There are satisfactory amounts of books which are in good condition and attractive to the reader.

80. Staffing provision is good. In addition to the class teachers, each class has a teaching assistant and an extra teaching assistant has a specific whole school brief to support pupils with special educational needs. The special educational needs co-ordinator manages the special educational needs arrangements soundly and there are regular termly reviews of individual education plans and involve parents. Individual education plans are of good quality. In-service training provision is good and combines the needs of the school and individual professional development. Administration is managed well and the school office runs smoothly. The school's day-to-day financial management systems are good. Money for capitation spending is based on need.

81. Since the last inspection the school has continued to use and develop its building as a valuable resource. Recently a courtyard has been covered in to provide a rich and stimulating area for the youngest children. The learner swimming pool, deemed non-cost effective by the school, is to be converted into an interactive technology suite. At present this is uncovered, accessible, half-filled with water, and is a potential hazard.

82. The building is very well maintained and is enriched by beautifully mounted and inspirational displays. Classrooms and corridors are spacious and there is generous provision for storage, and for soft seating areas throughout the school. There is very good provision for offices and a staff room, all of which are used effectively. Access routes for the wheelchair bound are good, and there is an excellent disabled toilet and shower facility.

83. The school does not have a medical room. Pupils who are unwell sit in the main entrance hall. This enables good supervision and monitoring from the office but does not provide privacy, if the child is distressed or needs to rest.

84. The thermostats in some classrooms are poorly linked to the ambient temperature, children work in a hot stuffy atmosphere and some children become lethargic. Some teachers do not open the windows enough to let in fresh air.

85. Outside there is a hard surface playground, which satisfactorily provides scope for a range of games, and for links with curriculum subjects, particularly for mathematics and geography. The grassed areas are generous in size and there is satisfactory provision for a variety of games and sports. There are a few man-made hillocks on the perimeter of the grass, a small weather station, and hard pathways around the building.

86. However, in contrast to the aesthetically pleasing and richly stimulating interior of the building the outside is rather sterile. There is no fenced outside area for the Reception class pupils, no garden area except by the main entrance, no seating for pupils and no large fixed apparatus.

87. There is generous parking within the grounds but the very sharp blind bend in the access driveway is a serious hazard. The large number of parents who drop off their children in the school grounds, including those from the private nursery on site, also comprise a potential safety hazard.

88. Considering the average attainment on entry, some below average socio-economic indicators, the good trend of results in mathematics and science, standards in art and design, the overall good quality of teaching, pupils' very good attitudes to their work and their often mature personal qualities set against average income per pupil, value for money is judged to be good.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

89. Oakdale Primary School provides a broad education for its pupils and has maintained some good standards since the last inspection. Pupils enjoy their schooling and the school has the whole-hearted support of its parents. In moving the school further forward from its already good position on standards, the headteacher, staff and governors should consider attending to the following issues:

- Improve the arrangements for assessing pupils' progress on a day-by-day basis by:
  - a) clarifying what is meant by assessing pupils' progress in lessons;
  - b) making the assessment targets more precise and measurable;
  - c) using the records of assessment to plan the next stages of learning for different groups of pupils more accurately.  
(Paras 24, 57, 62, 111, 115, 119, 123, 153, 159, 178 )
  
- Move more quickly to meeting the specific targets in the school improvement plan for the Foundation Stage and in particular refining the planning so that the children have a greater say in the choice of some activities and the length of time they stay at them.  
(Paras 32, 90 )
  
- Improve the pupils speaking skills by:
  - a) improving the range and quality of questioning to give pupils greater scope to speak at length;
  - b) encouraging the pupils to speak up more in class to improve the quality of discussion.  
(Paras 3, 21, 110 )
  
- Attend to the dangers posed by the unsecured swimming pool area and parents, including those parents of children who attend the on-site Nursery, dropping off their children in the confined space of the school car park.  
(Paras 56, 81, 87 )

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

55

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

23

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

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	10	24	16	3	0	0
Percentage	4	18	44	29	5	0	0

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

#### **Pupils on the school's roll**

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		220
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		11

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Special educational needs**

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		22

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

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	15

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

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	3.8
National comparative data	5.2

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)***

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	01[00]	15 [12]	17 [19]	32 [31]

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14 (11)	14 (11)	15 (11)
	Girls	17 (14)	17 (15)	17 (17)
	Total	31 (25)	31 (26)	32 (28)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 [81]	97 [84]	100 [90]
	National	84 [83]	86 [84]	91 [90]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14 (11)	15 (12)	15 (12)
	Girls	16 (15)	14 (17)	16 (16)
	Total	30 (26)	29 (29)	31 (28)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 [84]	91 [94]	97 [90]
	National	85 [84]	89 [88]	89 [88]

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	01 (00)	19 (23)	17 (13)	36 (36)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14 (19)	16 (21)	17 (23)
	Girls	16 (12)	14 (9)	17 (11)
	Total	30 (31)	30 (30)	34 (34)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 [86]	83 [83]	94 [94]
	National	75 [70]	71 [72]	87 [79]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17 (19)	17 (21)	18 (23)
	Girls	15 (11)	14 (8)	16 (10)
	Total	32 (30)	31 (29)	32 (33)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 [86]	86 [83]	94 [94]
	National	72 [70]	74 [72]	82 [79]

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

***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	4
Indian	8
Pakistani	4
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	172
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.8
Average class size	31.4

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	172

***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

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

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

***Financial information***

Financial year	00/01
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	£
Total income	423,242
Total expenditure	393,318
Expenditure per pupil	1,788
Balance brought forward from previous year	45,000

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	220
Number of questionnaires returned	89

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	35	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	36	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	76	22	0	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	51	17	0	1
The teaching is good.	64	36	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	57	38	4	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	76	20	2	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	21	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	57	40	2	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	74	25	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	36	0	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	84	15	1	0	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**

90. The school has a specific target for the Reception class to be taught the new national Foundation Curriculum with effect from this year. A stated performance indicator is that planning and delivery will show the 'stepping stones' and 'early learning goals' of that curriculum. This Foundation Curriculum is not yet fully in place. In particular, despite the increased provision of a covered play area, the school does not address the guidance that children of this age should be able to work both outside and in. Neither does it address the aspect that children should have plenty of opportunities to follow activities of their own choosing for lengths of time determined by them.

91. Despite this teaching is otherwise good, and based on sound early years practice. The good teaching is having a positive impact on children's learning. Children of all abilities make steady progress. Statutory requirements are being met.

92. The class is well organised. The learning objectives for the day are written on the board for all adults to refer to. The input made by the classroom assistant is of a consistently high standard and complements that of the class teacher. Very thorough baseline and other assessments carried out by the teacher show that on entry to the Reception class, children are clustered around the average across all aspects of the curriculum. The majority of children from last year's Reception class have entered Year 1 already started on the National Curriculum. Standards are similar to those at the time of the last inspection.

93. The entry at the start of the autumn term is staggered chronologically and at the time of the inspection the youngest children had only been in school for ten days. Once they start most children complete a full day. All the children have settled in extremely well.

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

94. On entry most children have personal and social skills appropriate to their age. The teacher and classroom assistant hone these skills and encourage children to feel confident about what they can achieve. Some procedures are a little formal but this is a temporary measure and to be expected whilst children learn the classroom routines. Early evidence indicates that all children will achieve the early learning goals in this area by the time that they leave the Reception class in the summer.

95. Children play and work well together. They take turns fairly and consider others. They understand why there is a limit to the numbers of children who can work at some activities. They know how to apologise when necessary. Children are generally enthusiastic about their learning right across the curriculum. Children need only the minimum help with dressing, and almost never with toileting needs.

96. The teaching of religious education meets the requirements of the locally agreed framework.

97. All adults working in the Reception class provide good role models. They treat each other, and the children, with courtesy and respect. There are many opportunities for pupils to consider a range of different viewpoints. Resources and equipment are set up by adults in ways that encourage children to 'have a go' and become independent.



## **Communication language and literacy**

98. Children enjoy listening to stories and most will confidently share books with each other and with adults. The teacher has a range of strategies to engage the attention of the very small minority that are reluctant to share a book with her. Standards are at expected levels by the end of the Reception year. The children all know that print conveys meaning, and the most able know that in English print is read from left to right. The adults generally use talk to good effect, though this impact is lost when there is closed questioning. 'Did you enjoy that?' got a one-word answer; 'What did you enjoy about that?' provided an opportunity for the children to formulate and refine their answers and to draw on the vocabulary that had cropped up in an activity. Teachers show children that they listen carefully and this encourages children to communicate effectively, to clarify their thinking, and to explain reasons why. The telephone in the 'clinic' gives further opportunity to refine this skill.

99. There is a high profile interactive system for teaching phonics. The children really enjoy this and make good progress. This activity is based in the Literacy Framework and the children are already building up words. The pupils who have just transferred from Reception to Year 1 have all mastered beginning sounds and the most able have a bank of blends to use in decoding words.

100. The children are strongly encouraged to become writers. There are white boards and pens, and booklet and pencils around the room. Children have free access to these, and confidently make marks and know that writing has purpose. Most children have established which hand they write with and a correct pencil grip. All adults support the children's work well as they write.

## **Mathematical development**

101. Most of the children are progressing appropriately with their mathematics and some well with a few still at an earlier stage of understanding. Current indications are that most children should have transferred to the start of the National Curriculum by the end of the Reception year.

102. The children can all recite numbers to five. Most recite to ten, and some beyond. Most can match one to one accurately. There is a wider spread of ability of matching numerals to names. Singing games such as 'Five Current Buns' introduce children to subtraction and the concept of 'none'. The higher attaining pupils know the name and symbol for zero and its position relative to a one-to-ten number line. Children engage in many activities that encourage a mathematical vocabulary, at present with a particular focus on that for shape. Most pupils can name common two-dimensional shapes and explain similarities between pieces. Children work at the water tray and use fractional words such as 'half full' accurately. Mathematical thinking and vocabulary are also developed in work with construction toys, in the physical education lesson and in collage making.

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

103. Children are achieving appropriately in this aspect of their work and are expected to attain the expectations by the end of the Reception year. Children investigate and explore. They look at rocks in the water tray through magnifying glasses. They can describe differences between themselves as babies and now; they select resources and build and construct, and understand the purpose of basic tools, for example a screwdriver.

104. Children use the two computers in the room regularly, both unaided and with adult help. Some children are particularly confident in using the computer. All know how to use a mouse, to highlight and use the up and down keys. They use a variety of educational programmes to support literacy and numeracy and all have used the digital camera under supervision. The most able can shut down a programme.

## **Physical development**

105. Most children are expected to meet the expectations by the end of the Reception year and their achievements are sound. The newly covered courtyard area is an excellent resource. It gives children room to balance and climb and they do this with confidence and some with dexterity. In this and in the formal physical education lesson in the hall, children showed an awareness of the needs of others in the space around them. Children have only the fixed playtime sessions for outdoor play.

106. Children show average attainment in using their bodies for large movements such as climbing and jumping. There is wider variation in the attainment of fine motor control but it is average overall.

## **Creative development.**

107. Children are making appropriate progress in this aspect of their work and are expected to attain the expectations by the end of the academic year. Children interact together in various role-play situations for example the baby clinic or medical centre. They take their lead from adult modelling and sustain interest for long periods of time. The most able empathise naturally with the role that they are playing. Children handle glue well and make interesting collages with a range of materials including those that require fine motor control such as sequins. They use paint appropriately to record experiences and feelings.

## **ENGLISH**

108. There have been considerable fluctuations in standards over the last five years due to the fact that there are differences in the numbers of pupils with special educational needs in any one year and the absence of any one pupil can affect results significantly. Overall, standards are similar to those reported previously. In national tests for 2001, the school's results for seven-year-olds were above the national average for reading, writing and spelling and both boys and girls did better than their national gender counterparts. They also performed better than pupils in similar schools in both reading and writing, an improvement on the results obtained the previous year. Scrutiny of pupils' work and hearing them read indicate that most pupils are in line to obtain the expected standard at the end of the Key Stage 1 in 2002 national tests.

109. In 2001, results in English for pupils aged eleven were slightly better than the national average overall with a similar percentage of pupils to that nationally gaining the higher level. Results were broadly average when compared to similar schools. Scrutiny of pupils' work suggest that results for eleven year olds in 2002 should improve as overall standards of work seen are securely in line with national expectations for the age group. This is reflected in the fact that a higher target has been set for the percentage of pupils expected to achieve the national average at eleven.

110. In Year 1, most pupils can retell a story giving the salient facts in the correct order and many remember unusual words they have learnt. For example they can name unfamiliar fruits like guavas and avocados. Most can state that sentences start with capital letters but not all carry this into practice. A few can write quite elaborate sentences but spelling, although usually recognisable, is not always accurate. By Year 2, most pupils can write in a variety of styles such as informative text, letters, stories or poems. There are some pleasing examples of developing awareness of style in writing such as 'Crying, creepy, crafty scarecrow'. Many can extend their vocabulary by discovering with many other ways of saying 'He said'. Reading skills progress steadily as pupils move through Key Stage 1 and a significant minority in Year 2 are reading at a level above that expected for their age group. Some are beginning to use their knowledge of letter blends to work out unfamiliar words and can correct their own mistakes. Most pupils listen well to both adults and their peer group but many are under-confident in speaking and lack a depth of vocabulary to express themselves. The presentation of work is mostly neat and most is dated and titled. Some attempt to join up their letters.

111. As they move into Year 3, many pupils increase the depth and accuracy of their writing and most present work neatly with joined up letters. In some, the use of complex sentences enriches their style and many can evoke a particular setting well, for example 'Shaking, I went through the deadly wood'. By Year 4, spelling of commonly used words becomes more accurate and presentation is mostly neat. The school's preferred style of handwriting is more often apparent, and by the age of eleven most take pride in the look of their work. Punctuation becomes largely accurate including the use of paragraphing, speech marks and commas to clarify the meaning of a sentence. The range of styles in which the pupils write widens considerably as they grow older, including broadcast reports, diaries, for example of life on a desert island, science fiction or arguments for or against a particular topic like foxhunting among others. Many can evaluate what they liked or disliked about a particular piece of work quite perceptively and are aware of how they could improve their own work or why they enjoyed or did not enjoy a particular text. Pupils become more confident in expressing themselves verbally when asked directly but many lack the confidence to put forward their point of view unprompted. They listen respectfully when others speak. Reading skills of most pupils are in line with the expectation for their age, and some pupils do better than expected. Some can work out the definition of new words from the context of the sentence. Others, although they can work out how the word should be pronounced, cannot suggest the meaning. Although reading is fairly accurate for most, many read without much expression to enliven their interpretation of the text. In some lessons most pupils make good progress but overall progress is steady as pupils move up through the school. Pupils with special educational needs make steady progress.

112. Since the last inspection there have been some improvements. More structured procedures have been introduced for assessing and recording pupils' progress and the standards they are achieving. Areas which need further development have been identified and appropriate action has been taken to remedy any weaknesses. For example, a policy has been produced dealing specifically with improving the quality of pupils' written work and the style in which they write. This document details the targets pupils need to aim for at each level of the literacy curriculum. Booklets are now sent to each parent every term giving guidance about how they can better help their child's literacy development. Time has been allocated for the co-ordinator to observe lessons and to offer support and guidance where needed to improve teaching quality and planning to bring a more consistent approach throughout the school. The pupils continue to show a good attitude to their work. The resources used in literacy have been reviewed and are now appropriate for teaching this subject. Drama has been given more prominence and there is a termly programme of study for each class which ensures that pupils' skills are developed as they move through the school. The quality of teaching remains good overall. Much has been spent on the library areas and the range of books is adequate but they are not used to their fullest effect. Pupil's familiarity with library use is well developed. Every effort has been made to buy in books which will appeal to boys to increase their pleasure in reading and bring their reading standards into line with the girls. Standards of work are not as high as reported last time and progress overall is steady, although good in some classes.

113. The quality of teaching is good overall and good or very good at Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2 it is never less than satisfactory and more often good. Where teaching is most successful, lessons start briskly and pupils are immediately drawn into the topic being studied. There is a high expectation of good behaviour and pupils respond appropriately so there are few distractions. Enthusiasm for the subject is communicated to the pupils who respond with heightened interest and participation. The goals to be reached are shared with the pupils so that they can see the point of their learning. Both teacher and pupils can then assess to what extent these have been achieved or perhaps what further work still needs to be done to achieve them. Good subject knowledge enables the teacher to ask suitably challenging questions to stimulate pupils' thinking processes and language development. Resources are often imaginatively chosen to stimulate pupils' interest and enjoyment, for example through word games in Key Stage 1. Throughout most lessons, teachers constantly consolidate and reinforce teaching points to give pupils a secure base on which to build their learning. Role-play is sometimes used well to add to the variety of ways in which pupils can learn. For example, in one class, the teacher demonstrated 'narrowing of the eyes' to ensure pupils' full understanding. Pupils are sometimes asked to act out a short scene from the text to reinforce

character or to clarify the meaning for those who might find it more difficult. There is a good balance between teacher input and pupil activity and the pace of a lesson is maintained. As a result, pupils remain focused and involved throughout. In some lessons, the tasks set for groups are very carefully matched to their prior attainment and the volume of work required from each defined. Pupils then have an identifiable target to aim for by the end of the lesson and thus gain a sense of achievement when this is reached. An example of this was seen in Year 1 where some pupils were asked to write sets of clues to define three different wild animals and to challenge their peers to guess which was which. The success of their definitions was then put to the test and considerable satisfaction gained when their animals were guessed correctly. At the end of lessons, pupils are often asked to share their work with the class and occasionally encouraged to suggest why it was good or how it could have been improved. Where this happens it is a valuable exercise in developing pupils' awareness of how to make their work better and they can thus learn from each other. However, significant numbers of pupils do not make much contribution to such opportunities.

114. Where teaching is less successful, pupils are kept too long on the carpet area and become restless and inattentive as a result. Sometimes pupils do not have a clear line of sight to the teacher or to the text being studied and again tend to 'switch off'. Teachers occasionally allow inappropriate behaviour and pupils shout out their answers or chat among themselves. Valuable time is then spent in reprimanding miscreants and the impact and pace of the lesson are thus lost. The tasks set for groups are not always well matched to what they can already do and work may either be too easy or too difficult for some as a result. Quite often, the learning objectives for lessons are too vague, for example 'To find out more about... ' and the amount of work required not stated. An opportunity for assessing how precisely desired outcomes have been achieved is lost. Other means by which pupils' work is to be assessed are not defined in the planning and this makes it more difficult to alter each day's plans to take into account what happened the day before. Although the whole class session at the end of lessons often reinforces what has been learnt, too few opportunities are offered for pupils to evaluate their work and that of others. Role-play does not yet play a sufficiently important part in consolidating understanding. Homework is often marked with constructive comments as to how pupils can improve but sometimes comments suggest that a greater volume of work is required without guidance as to how this should be achieved.

115. The management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has a clear vision of what still needs to be done but has already introduced the means by which standards can be raised and this is now bearing fruit. All issues relating to literacy are discussed regularly with the whole staff and there is a very good level of support and whole school involvement in improving standards. In-service training to implement the National Literacy Strategy has been effective in raising staff confidence and there is on-going further development of professional skills among the staff. Systems for recording progress and assessing standards are very thorough and are effectively used to inform planning and set targets for pupils in the long- and medium-term. However, assessment on a daily basis is not yet being used to feed back into planning in the short-term. There has been useful class observation with development points well identified to help teachers to improve their classroom techniques. There are very good links to other subjects in the curriculum and ample evidence that literacy skills are improving writing in history, geography, science and religious education. Some use is made of computers as word processors to offer pupils the opportunity to present their work in different ways. The range of books in the library areas has been greatly improved but more needs to be done to encourage more frequent use by pupils of this facility. The resources for teaching literacy provide a suitably wide range of texts and the overhead projector is often well used to reproduce work for pupils to study in detail.

## MATHEMATICS

116. Standards achieved by the end of Key Stage 1 pupils in recent years have generally been above the national average, although results in 2000 were below average due to there being a significant number of special educational needs pupils in the cohort. Boys have been doing significantly better than boys nationally, even in 2000 and much better than the school's girls in the subject. Results in 2001 improved significantly. All pupils gained the expected level and just over two-fifths gained the higher level and one pupil the expected level for end of Year 6. Results in Key Stage 2 have similarly been above national averages. Both boys and girls have been surpassing their respective national gender counterparts in recent years. Overall the pupils throughout the school make good progress in the subject. In 2001 the school's overall performance was better than the national average with a similar proportion of the pupils gaining the higher level to that nationally and one pupil gaining a level almost equivalent to GCSE standard. Standards in Key Stage 1 remain good as at the time of the previous inspection but they have improved at Key Stage 2 to be good. Currently most Year 2 pupils are on target to attain the expected level by the end of Year 2 but as there are not as many able pupils in the year group as last year, not as many are expected to gain the higher level. Results in Key Stage 2 are expected to replicate the good record obtained in national tests in recent years.

117. Key Stage 1 pupils understand the concept of perimeter, can name several two- and three-dimensional shapes and develop a good understanding of tens and units both addition and subtraction. They learn to do vertical and horizontal addition of two digit numbers and some progress to working with three figure digits. They can interpret simple bar graphs for example hours of sunshine per day and the number of biscuits sold at the tuck shop. They become familiar with and understand simple fractions such as a half and a quarter and the concept of sharing. They acquire a good understanding of mathematical terminology such as product, multiple and array.

118. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have a good understanding of metric equivalences in different forms of measurement. They can indicate the place value in large numbers and in decimals. They appreciate the equivalence of percentage, fraction and decimals and many can state these accurately. They gain a good understanding of symmetry including translational and rotational symmetry. They learn to apply the mode, mean and range to statistical data. Pupils can round up numbers to the nearest tenth, hundredth and thousandth.

119. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was good. It was good in Key Stage 1 with a range from satisfactory to very good. It ranged from very good to unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2 but overall it was good. The good teaching is contributing to the pupils' good achievements in both key stages. Much emphasis is being placed on pupils' gaining good conceptual development through the use of resources and good quality discussion of the strategies pupils use to work things out mentally. Teachers make good use of time and circulate amongst the pupils as they work, checking their working and understanding. They build well on previous learning, give good attention to the special educational needs pupils but sometimes their tasks are not well matched to their capabilities. Occasionally the tasks given to able and average attainers are too similar with insufficient challenge for the higher attainers. Pupils' efforts are valued even if their answers are wrong and they are praised for trying. This gives pupils the confidence to try hard. Teachers are often imaginative in their demonstrations and ideas. The Year 3 teacher used the overhead projector effectively and coloured disks to demonstrate the multiples of different numbers and this approach gained the pupils' interest. The Year 2 teacher cut out sections of a hundred square blanking out some of the numbers and got the pupils to state what numbers the blank spaces should contain. Pupils enjoy the subject and work quietly and with good effort during lessons..

120. In a Year 6 class in a study of pie charts, untitled pie charts were presented and the teacher asked the pupils what the diagrams might represent. The pupils rose well to the challenging approach and some pupils responded well with their suggestions. As the challenge of the lesson increased they came up with some very good ideas as to why the distribution of population by age was different in pie graphs of two different towns. Teaching was weakest when subject knowledge was insecure, explanations unclear and pupils' discrepancy in answers not seized upon as a learning technique. Pupils made unsatisfactory progress as a result. However, teachers' self analysis at the end of lessons is a real strength and they often know when a lesson has fallen short of its target. However there is not enough sequential development in their understanding of graphical representation, particularly in graphs and many are repetitive in demand of what has been done earlier. Suitable use is made of mathematics across the curriculum, for example in science to record and calculate results and in map work in geography.

## SCIENCE

121. Key Stage 1 teacher-assessed results in science in 2001 were above the national average and improved on the previous year. Key Stage 2 results were better than the national average overall with a broadly similar proportion to that nationally gaining the higher level. Current standards seem set to continue that pattern in large measure due to the good quality of investigational work which is helping the pupils' scientific development throughout the school, representing an improvement in standards since the previous inspection report. In recent years the results in the end of Key Stage 2 national tests have outstripped the national average. Both boys and girls have been doing significantly better than their national gender counterparts. The school's boys on average have done better than the school's girls in the subject. They have done as well as might be expected against similar schools. Pupils make good progress in the subject in both key stages and standards are higher than at the time of the last inspection in both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils know the difference between the forces of push and pull. They appreciate that objects are made from different materials and have different textures and can give examples in the real world of objects made from glass. They can carry out simple experiments demonstrating good observational skills as for example when noticing the effects of water on treated and untreated wood. Through practical experiments they appreciate that some sounds are high and some low and they investigate the possible reasons for this by experimenting with elastic bands and different sized straws.

122. By age 11 pupils have a good understanding of a fair test and undertake a series of interesting investigations as when they filter the dirt from leaves gathered in different locations as a check for pollution and test different kinds of paper for their absorbency qualities. They make good use of prediction, although this is not always reasoned, work together to set up investigations and communicate their findings precisely making good use of labeled diagrams. They are sometimes surprised by their results as when they predicted that toilet tissue would not be as absorbent as other kinds of paper. They have a good understanding of food chains, friction and different degrees of friction dependent on the material. They look at rocks, examine their features and can follow a branch diagram to name them.

123. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection in science was good in both key stages and good overall. A good emphasis is given to practical exploration, prediction and discussion, although there is a tendency for similar demands to be made of all pupils with the special educational needs pupils receiving more adult support. With this support they make satisfactory progress. Often it is the same pupils who contribute to whole class discussions.

124. In a very good Year 2 lesson pupils were exploring sound. They focused on sounds they could hear at different times of the day and during the lesson observed the effect of their voices on a sound meter. They considered the types of sound produced when they made pan pipes from straws and a guitar from different sized elastic bands on old shoe boxes. They were encouraged to acquire scientific terminology such as 'method' and labelling their diagrams. The carefully crafted blend of

discussion and investigation helped the pupils to make good progress in the lesson and they profited from the well chosen resources and carefully structured and paced teaching. Some good questioning at the start of the lesson 'Are all sounds the same?' and 'Where do sounds come from?' probed the pupils' thinking and through working practically with tuning forks and looking at guitars they began to see that vibration was linked to the formation of sound.

125. In Key Stage 2 Year 4 pupils examined various rock samples carefully and followed branch diagrams to discover their names, although the hand lenses were not of sufficiently strong magnification to get the most out of the activity. Year 6 pupils applied their knowledge of electrical circuitry to make questions and answer quiz games on boards whereby the bulb lit up when the correct answer was matched with its question. However they did not have enough knowledge about battery capacity and bulb capacity to prevent some of the bulbs blowing. There was a good link with design and technology in this lesson. A key feature of all lessons is the way teachers in both key stages work with pupils during activity questioning them and helping them to focus on the specific learning involved.

126. Pupils work effectively in science activities in both key stages. They enjoy their practical investigations. They show good levels of maturity in cooperating with others, sharing equipment, taking turns, listening whilst others are speaking. They present their written work and diagrams neatly.

127. The recently appointed co-ordinator has good skills and manages and monitors the curriculum well. She monitors the subject effectively. The policy is due to be updated and a consistent record keeping system inaugurated which will help to track pupils' progress throughout the school. Resources are satisfactory, of good quality and well stored. More powerful magnifying lenses and the purchase of microscopes could benefit pupils' observation and contribute to their spiritual development.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

128. Art is a considerable strength of the school. At the age of seven standards of most pupils' work in art are above what is expected for their age. By eleven standards are well above national expectations. They achieve well in Key Stage 1 and very well in Key Stage 2, maintaining the good standards reported previously. By Year 2, pupils have been given the opportunity to work with a wide range of media. In each of these most show a considerable dexterity, for example in sewing felt appliquéd fruit and finger puppets. Many begin to have a feel for architectural shapes using simple house outlines cut out in cardboard to create pleasing crayon rubbings. Many develop good skills in observational drawing. Some gain good control when mixing and applying paint. Most can work with clay to produce three-dimensional figures.

129. As they move up through the school, most pupils extend their skills and experiment with an ever increasing range of materials, often mixing different materials to good effect. This was seen in Year 3 work where pupils combined sequins, fabric, glitter and paint to produce designs based on animals of the countryside. Their observational pencil drawings of feathers capture well the texture and shape of individual quills. Many pupils are inspired by the work of other artists, not simply to copy, but to integrate the artists' style in their own work. In Year 4, for example, some beautiful studies are based on Van Gogh's 'Irises' to try to match his colour intensity and the impressionistic form of his flowers. Many can use watercolours to create seascapes which show a good appreciation of how to shade and blend colours to represent the changing nature of the sea.

130. By Year 6, most pupils have worked progressively on their techniques to improve on previously acquired skills to very good effect. Most can explain how they are looking at an object, for example a piece of Victorian household equipment, to be able to reproduce its proportions, shape and three-dimensional quality. Most become adept at different shading techniques, like ink and water, and are aware of the properties of pencils of different hardness. Some are able to use rolled up newspaper and paste to create 'Tudor' heads in three dimension. Many learn to use computer software 'Colour Magic' to produce designs for wallpaper inspired by the designs of William Morris. Many pupils work well in pastels, blending and shading well, to produce terrifying African tribal masks. They then experiment with other ways of producing work on the same theme using low relief cardboard templates. Some make a good attempt at brass rubbing using different colours of crayon to create different effects. All pupils make good, and many very good, progress as they grow older.

131. In the last inspection standards in art were judged to be above national expectation. They have continued to rise, being now well above national expectation by the age of eleven. Pupils continue to have a good and often very good attitude to this subject and greatly enjoy their lessons. They continue to discuss and evaluate their work and are often aware of how to improve. Assessment procedures have been reviewed and each class teacher now fills in an assessment sheet weekly to gain a clearer picture of how pupils are progressing. The quality of teaching and of the resultant learning continues to be good and often very good.

132. It was possible to observe only one lesson during the inspection which was judged outstanding. Overall judgements about the quality of teaching are based on this, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussion with staff and pupils. From the volume and standard of work seen and the very good learning this involves, the quality of teaching is never less than good and often very good. There is obviously a strong commitment to maintaining standards of work in the school. Activities are well planned and varied to stimulate and interest pupils' creative development. Skills and techniques are progressively built up as pupils move through the school. Teachers encourage pupils to discuss various aspects of their work and to understand how these could be improved. Many of the staff are able to demonstrate different techniques effectively giving a good role model for pupils to emulate. Pupils are encouraged to increase their powers of observation and to draw what they see. There are very good relationships between staff and pupils ensuring a good learning climate. Pupils are given judicious praise for their efforts which brings a sense of achievement and pride in their work. The work each class produces is very well displayed which helps pupils to appreciate their own efforts and those of others. Work is shared with other classes so pupils of different ages can learn from each other. Support staff are well used to help groups with different aspects of a particular topic, for example with using software or mixing paper and paste to create three-dimensional masks, although occasionally too much is done for the pupils in these group sessions.

133. The subject co-ordinator has very recently taken over this responsibility. There continues to be a very high level of enthusiasm for providing art throughout the school. There is an excellent basis from which the new subject manager can proceed. The co-ordinator is allocated time to oversee all planning to ensure that learning objectives are realistic and match the scheme of work. There has been some in-service training and more is planned. All pupils have a portfolio of their work which goes with them through the school and helps the staff to gain an overview of progress and standards. It is planned that this process will become more structured and provide a better tool for assessing pupils' work. The scheme of work is based on government guidelines but extra care is taken to ensure that skills are progressively built up. Art continues to have a very high profile in the school and permeates all subjects in the curriculum. Topic folders in history, geography, religious education and literacy are greatly enriched by the creative way in which they are compiled and illustrated. Resources for art are good with a wide range of different materials in which pupils can work. Care is taken to choose paper and paint of sufficiently good quality to do justice to pupils' work. Sketch books are correctly used to give pupils the opportunity to plan and draft their work. In these they are encouraged to experiment with different methods of blending colours, varying intensity of shades or attempting different perspectives of the same study.



## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

134. The school has maintained the standards outlined in the last inspection report. At the end of both key stages attainment is well in line with national expectation and some pupils attain more highly than this. Pupils' achievements are at least sound in both key stages.

135. All pupils have specific design and technology lessons and these are further supported by planned opportunities for design and technology as part of integrated studies covering history, geography, and religious education. Design and technology enriches learning across the curriculum, and the subject has strong links with the science programme of study. The subject meets statutory requirements.

136. In Key Stage 1 pupils experiment with a range of construction kits, and also with disposable materials. They make a variety of models, including those that will push along. Pupils sew patterns on felt, make stained glass window designs, and consider the arrangement of a variety of fruits as part of an English lesson. Pupils follow instructions carefully, and learn to evaluate both the process and the end product. They show knowledge and understanding of the materials and components that they use. They share ideas with others as they modify initial designs. Pupils master skills and techniques to support their work. They use needles, scissors and paste spreaders well. The work that they do is recorded in a variety of ways including by digital camera.

137. In Key Stage 2 pupils work with a variety of materials, textiles and construction kits. They assemble, disassemble and investigate materials. They find out about mechanisms that make things move. Pupils have the opportunity to cook on a rota basis and proper health and safety routines are followed. During the inspection pupils were seen designing model Tudor houses and making three-dimensional Tudor masks. Pupils use an increasingly sophisticated range of tools safely and with confidence. There is some use of the computer as an aid to design but this is in its infancy. Pupils design, make, evaluate and record what they have done. They develop an appropriate technical vocabulary to describe their work. In this process there is a tendency to take too little account of the modifications that they make, or to acknowledge this as an important part of the design process; that the school calls the subject technology rather than *design* and technology might be a contributory factor.

138. Pupils with special educational needs, and one with English as a second language, are well supported. They have full access to the design and technology curriculum and make satisfactory progress.

139. Pupils enjoy design and technology work. They take great pride in their work and show appreciation of work that is on display around the school. Pupils are pleased to discuss their work with their peers and with visitors.

140. Teaching is satisfactory in both key stages and satisfactory overall. Key Stage 1 planning shows that both teachers have an understanding of the key parts of design and technology. There are clear lesson objectives to help pupils build up knowledge skills and understanding in a systematic way.

141. Teaching at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall, but there are wide variations in standards and some was unsatisfactory because there was no clear focus on lesson objectives and pupils spent time colouring or doing descriptive writing rather than planning, making modifying and evaluating. The teacher did not have a sufficient overview of the input made by a classroom assistant and in this lesson the teaching assistant was doing too much for the pupils, denying pupils the opportunity to experiment and to learn from their first attempts.

142. Amounts and range of resources are satisfactory. The classes have a satisfactory range of resources. These are in good condition, accessible and well used. The area in the staffroom that is used for food technology is a valuable asset.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

143. Standards in geography are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection. At the end of Key Stage 1 attainment is above that for national expectation for the majority of pupils. For the remainder, including pupils who need additional support, attainment is in line with their prior attainment and most are reaching the national expectation. Pupils of all abilities in Key Stage 1 make good progress.

144. It is sound overall in Key Stage 2 and closely tied to variations in teaching standards. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is generally in line with national expectation for the majority of pupils. For a small minority of pupils, attainment is higher than this and these pupils think and reason as geographers.

145. There is balanced coverage of the National Curriculum closely linked to a commercial scheme, and the subject meets statutory requirements

146. In Key Stage 1 pupils learn an appropriate geographical vocabulary and demonstrate that they can use this when interpreting the key on local ordnance survey maps. They locate key features such as woodland and churches. Pupils understand the links between aerial photographs and map representation, and make comparisons between different types of settlement and housing. Visits to Sacrewell Farm lead to comparisons between town and country. Pupils learn about the shops that make communities viable.

147. Pupils listen well to the views of others in discussions, and build on these ideas when making their own practical responses in lessons. Both Key Stage 1 classrooms have displays that indicate wide coverage of the geography curriculum. Individual pupils talk about the displays with confidence and understanding. Computer programmes are appropriately used; they are relevant to studies and help to consolidate learning.

148. In Key Stage 2 pupils are able to interpret maps with greater confidence. They use indexes and alphanumeric references when using a world map, for example to locate those places travelled to by Tudor explorers. As they move up the school, pupils trace and draw maps with increasing accuracy, and construct neat keys to their own maps. They use a growing geographical vocabulary to describe their work and the work on display around the school. They support each other well in discussions. Pupils make well founded deductions from secondary sources, for example when considering pollution and sustainable development.

149. Pupils work well both independently and in groups. They present their findings in a variety of ways but sometimes spend a disproportionate amount of the lesson time on low priority activities, for example in colouring vast amounts of ocean blue or in duplicating labels - tasks which could be completed as homework. Pupils make good use of their learning in other subjects. Skills, knowledge and understanding in literacy numeracy, history and religious education support the work that pupils do in geography. However, the use of the computer is under represented.

150. Teaching is good at Key Stage 1. The teachers have good subject knowledge. In the one lesson seen the teacher made the lesson really come alive and the lesson proceeded at a good pace. In the other class the movements of Barnaby Bear introduce pupils to places on a world map.

151. Teaching at Key Stage 2 varies from very good to satisfactory. Where teaching is less secure the pace of learning is slow. Lessons follow the set curriculum but the lesson objectives are not tailored sharply enough to develop geographical skills and in particular geographical ways of thinking. Where subject knowledge and teaching skills are good the geographical focus in topic work is clearly identifiable and expectations are high.

152. In both key stages much care is taken to mount and display pupils' work attractively, and in ways that will promote further learning opportunities.

153. The co-ordinator for the subject has adapted the syllabus to meet new requirements. Her decision to retain the programme about weather from the old scheme enriches the work that pupils do in geography. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge but has insufficient non-contact time to monitor and support colleagues in classroom delivery of the subject. In both key stages there is good assessment of completed projects but too little day-to-day assessment.

154. The school has a very good range of resources for geography. These are in good condition, accessible and well used. Particular mention is made of the resource packs for the Peterborough locality. The school has not got a system to ensure that pupils check the validity of source materials, for example to see if state boundaries have changed, or countries have been renamed. Some attention is needed to the weather station in the grounds to ensure that measurements taken are accurate.

## **HISTORY**

155. Standards reached by pupils aged seven and eleven are broadly in line with what is expected for their age. In the first two years of Key Stage 1, most pupils begin to realise that many things change over the years. They develop some idea of 'then and now' using toys over the years or their own experience of the world to that of their grandparents' and parents' childhood as a basis for comparison. By Year 2, many show a considerable ability to deduce information from looking at artefacts like household utensils and working out how they might have been used and what our modern equivalent might be. They can sympathise with the difficulties people in the past might have encountered, for example with cane carpet beaters instead of vacuum cleaners. As they go up through the school, most become more perceptive of what life might have been like for people of ancient times. Some can write sympathetically about a day in the life of people in the past, for example a Viking child, with some evidence of understanding how hard this must have been. There is some evidence that pupils research their work to discover answers about, for example, how the ancient Egyptians wrote. Pupils were obviously inspired by their visit to the British Museum and used the information they gained from this to good effect. By the last two years of Key Stage 2, many have sound factual recall about periods studied and a few use their developing literacy skills to produce writing with an appropriate level of historical understanding. A few begin to realise that there may not be clearly defined answers about events in the past and that interpretation is often a very personal thing. However, many tend to see events or people in very simplistic terms – either 'good' or 'bad'-without questioning their own judgement. Some still copy too frequently or base their work on questions asked by the teacher rather than expanding their knowledge by independent research. Most pupils are able to use a variety of sources to make deductions about people's character or social position. From studying a photograph of Queen Victoria, taken after Prince Albert's death, some are able to suggest that she looked depressed but wealthy. Some are able to impart the feelings of excitement and national pride engendered by the Great Exhibition. Most can evaluate their work in each topic and describe what they liked best or found most difficult. Throughout the school, most pupils enjoy this subject and take a pride in presenting their work beautifully in topic folders, using their considerable ability in art to enrich presentation. Most pupils make steady and sometimes good progress as they move through the school.

156. Since the last inspection, less time has been allocated to history because of the emphasis given on English and mathematics over the recent years. Standards, although in line with those expected nationally for each age group, are not now as high as those reported last time. There is still some over use of worksheets which tends to limit higher-attaining pupils as this restricts the amount of work they might produce. There continue to be strong links with other subjects and this is particularly evident in the impact of art on the presentation of pupils' work. Assessment procedures for measuring pupils' progress and the standard of work have been reviewed and are now more consistently applied. The method for overseeing termly planning has been made more precise. Plans are checked against the scheme of work by the co-ordinator. This is to ensure that lessons match the agreed learning outcomes and pupils are given the opportunity to build on what they have learnt before. This system encourages a uniformity of approach as the pupils move up through the school.

157. It was only possible to observe four lessons. Overall judgements about the quality of teaching are based on these, discussions with the pupils and staff and scrutiny of pupils' work. Teaching quality is mostly good and occasionally unsatisfactory. Where teaching is most successful the purpose of the lesson is discussed with the pupils so that they are able to see the point of their learning. Pupils are drawn into the lesson by the careful choice of artefacts. For example, a Victorian stone hot water bottle was well used to stimulate discussion and encourage pupils to ponder more deeply about its purpose. This helps to develop language and powers of logical deduction. Care is taken that all pupils have a clear view of both the teacher and the object being discussed which maintains their interest and encourages participation. In most lessons, the teacher is well prepared with necessary equipment or resources laid out on each table so that the lesson flows with little or no interruption. Often the pupils are gently guided into conversation or helped to reach a conclusion without too much over-direction from the teacher. Pupils' enjoyment in learning is often heightened by the use of games. For example multiple choice quiz game cards on the Tudors were well used to consolidate factual recall and stimulate discussion as to why one answer is more valid than an other. The task set for groups is often well planned to challenge each group and ensure that all concentrate on what is required of them. Planning is generally sound and gives a clear structure to the lesson with an appropriate balance between teacher in-put and pupil activity. At the end of the lesson, pupils are usually given the opportunity to share what they have learnt and to consolidate their knowledge. This is effected by pupils explaining to their peers why they have come to the conclusions they have reached, although several pupils are reticent and do not make much effort to contribute.

158. Where teaching is less satisfactory, pupils are kept sitting on the floor for too long. They become restless and their attention wanders. Inappropriate behaviour is not always controlled and this results in some pupils being distracted by others. Occasionally the pace of lessons is rather slow and again pupils begin to 'switch off'. Sometimes the task set is not well chosen to match what pupils already can do and may be too easy for some. They then feel no sense of achievement as the task took little thought. On some occasions older pupils are led into conclusions which lack validity by being too cut and dried when the facts are more complicated than that. Sometimes pupils make inaccurate statements which pass uncorrected, perhaps because of insecure subject knowledge in the teacher, and these become false knowledge.

159. The subject co-ordinator is only very recently in post. Standards of work are monitored each term and measured against the agreed learning objectives as laid down in the scheme of work. However, assessment is not yet used effectively in the short-term to identify a particular area of learning which might need more attention. Information about pupils in Year 6 is collated so that this can follow them when they move up to the secondary school. The scheme of work follows government suggested guidelines to ensure that all programmes of study required by the National Curriculum are covered appropriately. Planning is monitored termly by the co-ordinator to make sure that pupils' skills follow a sensible progression from term to term and year to year. There has been no in-service training of late but there is a good level of sharing knowledge and suggestions for an approach to any topic among the staff which gives support to those less confident. The whole staff is

involved in drawing up the policy document. There are good cross-curricular links to literacy which has helped to raise the standard of some pupils' work. Pupils' high ability in art is well used to produce topic books which are a pleasure to look at. There is some use made of computers and many pupils can research topics on the Internet both at school and at home. The curriculum is enriched by many visits to places of particular interest in the area and also, most productively, to the British Museum.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

160. Information and communication technology remains a developing subject and standards remain similar to those at the time of the last inspection. Most pupils are expected to attain the expected levels by the end of both key stages with the introduction of new control equipment recently purchased. In both key stages pupils' skills are not yet well developed in the subject because the curriculum has lacked a definite structure and there has been too much reliance placed on pupils gaining skills more informally through use of computers across the curriculum but this is beginning to improve. Pupils' achievements are sound overall. The facilities currently do not permit whole class instruction but they have improved since the last inspection.

161. A strength of the subject is the way in which software programs are used to accompany lessons such as in mathematics and English and for research purposes in geography and history. However, there are missed opportunities in using the class based computers to develop pupils' word-processing skills in lessons and sometimes there is an ill-match of the demand of the program to pupils' prior attainment. As a result the pupils need much adult support in order to proceed. There has been some lack of control technology but the school has just bought some new equipment which will enable the Year 6 pupils to fulfil National Curriculum Programmes of Study before the end of the Key Stage. The highly popular computer club gives pupils further opportunities to practise. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils use the mouse to click and drag icons around the screen as seen in Year 2. They can scroll to move the text up and down and make use of the back icon to view the previous page. By the end of Year 6, pupils can merge text and graphics, select different fonts and style and operate simple spreadsheet programs. The pupils take turns and work co-operatively when working in the three small suites, although working conditions sometimes get overcrowded. They are interested in their work and usually concentrate well.

162. No formal information and communication technology lessons were observed during the inspection, although groups of pupils were seen operating the computers under the direction of the teaching assistants. They have good knowledge of the specific programs and are able to help the pupils when they run into difficulty. In one such group session, Year 6 pupils made good use of an art program to design William Morris patterns and their efforts were of good quality, showing good imagination. In another pupils with special educational needs supported by the teaching assistant researched two biographies of Victorian characters. The teaching assistant had to read the text and the disc had been pre-loaded. Their keyboard skills were at an elementary level and they typed with one finger.

163. The co-ordinator has developed a good information and communication technology record and policy. The records indicate that pupils are beginning to develop appropriate skills throughout the school and the Internet policy is well designed incorporating the scheme of work. Resources are satisfactory although headphones would reduce noise interference between pupils working side-by-side. Good use is made of the school's digital camera.

## MUSIC

164. Few lesson observations could be made during the course of the inspection, as much of the music was taking place outside the inspection period including Year 2 and Year 6 lessons. It was not, therefore, possible to make overall judgements on end of key stage standards but standards in lessons observed were appropriate for pupils' ages.

165. Pupils sang well in assemblies and they enjoy singing. A group of 14 pupils plays the recorder at an advanced level, including descant, tenor and treble and they play to a high standard. They often accompany the singing in assemblies and add to the quality of the musical part. They are a keen and enthusiastic group and the group forms one of many extra-curricular activities. Twenty-five other pupils also learn the recorder. A few pupils learn the violin. The recorder group regularly participates in an area musical festival and has equipped itself well on previous occasions.

166. Three lessons were observed during the inspection and in these pupils' attainment was at expected levels and their achievements sound. In a good Year 1 lesson, pupils were gaining an understanding of rhythm through clapping the syllables of vegetable pictures. The teacher's friendly and positive manner enabled the pupils to make good progress as she continually extended the range of challenge for example by adding on an extra vegetable picture or by introducing a rest and finally clapping the rhythm without saying the words out aloud. Two lessons were observed in Key Stage 2, one of good quality and one satisfactory. The pupils made good progress overall in these two lessons. In one of the lessons pupils demonstrated that they could follow a graphic score of spots representing different numbers of beats and observing rests and they did this well. In the other lesson pupils demonstrated that they had good appreciative listening skills. One pupil described the music he had heard the previous week as 'very determined music' and the class had obviously grasped its flavour from the discussion which took place. They contributed good comment to the discussion of a new piece of music played- a piece by Holst. Again their comments were perceptive and mature for their age describing the music as like 'long twilight walks', 'very relaxing like twinkling stars' and 'like walking and walking but never getting there because the music circled round'.

167. The music coordinator has good musical knowledge and trains the recorder group to a high level of performance. The policy is of satisfactory quality and incorporates a broad view of the elements to be taught term by term throughout the school. There is a very good analysis of musical terms as an appendix and how the scheme might link with other subjects. Resources are satisfactory, although the tuned percussion is not in good condition. Good use is made of music in assembly and music is a major item in the school's annual spring concert.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

168. Standards in physical education are broadly in line with national expectations for pupils at the age of seven and eleven with a significant number exceeding these expectations. A few in Year 1 are adventurous in their movement patterns and show ability above the expectation for that age group. Some can climb and descend ropes correctly and many have developed good muscle co-ordination and balance technique. By the age of seven, most pupils can describe which parts of the body are involved in different exercises. Many are able to land so that their hips, knees and ankles act as springs to prevent jarring but some are still landing stiff legged. Similarly in running or moving freely round the room, some have considerable fluidity but others move rather awkwardly. Most understand the need for exercising the body to keep healthy. Some can explain why it is desirable to warm up muscles before indulging in vigorous exercise. Many can move to music making high and low shapes and altering speed and direction with confidence. Some are beginning to interpret music and match it to their dance rhythms. This was seen in a Year 2 class who produced some pleasing representations of how flames move using paper streamers on sticks to enhance the effect. Some can

devise patterns of movement in sequence, for example a jump, balance, and roll routine. Most can balance on different parts of the body for a short time. By the age of seven, most can handle mats and other equipment safely. As they move through Key Stage 2, pupils refine further their skills of combining free movement with the apparatus available. Most become more creative in interpreting and moving to music. Catching and throwing accuracy improves. Most become more adept at controlling a ball either by dribbling, heading or kicking a football or using an implement such as a hockey stick to make the ball behave as they desire. Most learn to work as a group to achieve a particular outcome in relay games or score goals in team games. By the age of eleven most pupils can swim 25 metres using a recognisable stroke. Most pupils make at least steady progress and many progress well.

169. Since the last inspection, pupils continue to strive hard to improve their performance. As was found last time, they have very good attitudes to this subject and most enjoy lessons. They work very well together. Standards are not quite so high as those reported last time but there are still many who achieve above the national expectation for their age. Teaching quality has improved and none is now unsatisfactory. The curriculum remains wide-ranging and affords many learning opportunities.

170. Teaching quality is good overall, sometimes very good and never less than satisfactory. Where teaching is most effective, enjoyment is injected at the start of many lessons by the pupils being encouraged to enter the hall in a particular manner, like a stretching walk or making wide shapes. Lessons start with appropriate warm-up sessions to stretch muscles and prepare pupils for the more strenuous exercise ahead. The purpose of the lesson is shared with pupils so they understand the point of what they do. In some lessons, the class teacher models what is required of pupils so that they have a good example to follow. Pupils are often picked to demonstrate good technique and the class invited to discuss what makes that approach better. This signposts ways in which individual performances can be improved. In most classes, very good class control ensures a safe environment in which pupils can move without risk to others. A wide variety of different activities keep pupils interested and the pace of lessons is maintained. Often, the class teacher encourages the pupils to extend themselves by suggesting different approaches. Music is often well chosen to stimulate pupils' imaginations to create more exciting patterns of movement. Amusing relay games are often chosen for outside activities and the exercise, which has the underlying goal of improving physical co-ordination and team co-operation, becomes great fun. On some occasions, pupils who are unable to take part in lessons on a particular day are integrated by being asked to evaluate what the rest are doing. This gives them the opportunity to feel part of the proceedings and encourages them to think how they could improve on what they are observing. Where teaching is less successful, the teacher does not model different ways of moving so an opportunity to improve pupils' technique is lost. Insufficient time is spent on warm up /cool down exercises so pupils do not learn the importance of this. Occasionally, too much time is taken up with the pupils sitting on the floor listening rather than being active and muscles which have warmed up rapidly cool down again. This is particularly important when pupils are out of doors on a cold windy day. Occasionally the noise level in class rises above what is acceptable and pupils do not hear vital information which could affect their safety.

171. The importance of physical education is well understood in the school. The subject co-ordinator has only been in post for a few weeks. However, she brings great enthusiasm and considerable personal ability to the subject and already has a clear vision for the future. The plans for each class have been monitored and changes suggested where necessary to meet the requirements of the new National Curriculum. The planning ensures that pupils develop their skills progressively. Lesson observation is planned for the near future. Assessment procedures are mostly informal and are achieved by encouraging pupils to evaluate what they have learnt, and how they could improve at the end of lessons. There have been quite a few opportunities for in-service training and the staff are encouraged to go on courses to increase their confidence. There is a very wide range of sporting clubs after school which greatly enriches the curriculum. There is extra coaching for the netball and football teams, which are open to both boys and girls. The school has achieved a good measure of success in matches against local schools. Dance is playing an increasingly important part in the curriculum and contributes to assemblies and school concerts. Pupils sometimes take part in local

dance festivals which adds an extra depth to pupil's appreciation of this creative art. In Key Stage 2, Years 3 and 4 are taught together and also Years 5 and 6. This gives younger pupils an opportunity to learn from the age group above but makes it more difficult to ensure that each age group is being challenged to its fullest potential. There has been valuable in-put from outside consultants and parents who give a good level of support. Pupils gain from being able to use the swimming pool belonging to the nearby secondary school. Each class from Year 3 on has a term each year when they are able use this good facility.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

172. At the end of both key stages, pupils' attainment in Religious Education matches the expectation of the locally agreed framework for religious education. Some pupils achieve highly against prior attainment.

173. There has been a sharp focus on religious education since the last inspection and the subject is much improved. The time allocation has been increased. There are now lessons devoted entirely to religious education.

174. The scheme of work for religious education is based on the detailed and carefully structured Cambridgeshire Agreed Framework and meets these requirements.

175. At Key Stage 1 pupils are forming a developing knowledge of the diversity of religion. They start to learn a vocabulary to describe their work in the subject. Major Christian festivals are celebrated, and symbols, rites and buildings are discussed. Pupils compare and contrast knowledge gained about Christianity with aspects of Judaism. Visits to Peterborough Cathedral consolidate work done in class.

176. At Key Stage 2 pupils build on their Key Stage 1 studies and make comparative studies in further depth. They learn about founders of faiths, places of worship, and signs and symbols in various religions - Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Sikhism. Pupils handle artefacts, use reference books for research, and make good use of the opportunities for first-hand discussion with pupils from different faith groups within the school. They are aware of a range of feelings, and are aware of the feelings of others.

177. Morality and multi-cultural awareness are a significant strength of the school and the religious education curriculum has made a sound contribution to this. Throughout the school, pupils listen well to the views of others before making their own points in a discussion.

178. There is a wide range of training, expertise and interest within the staff for this subject. At Key Stage 1 teaching is consistently good. At Key Stage 2 the situation varies from satisfactory to excellent, and is good overall. At the low end of the spectrum pupils are given insufficient time to reflect on the issues covered, or to express opinions. In the best lessons pupils show maturity and higher order skills of reasoning and empathy. The newly appointed co-ordinator for the subject has the potential to continue the strong leadership provided by her immediate predecessor. In both key stages assessment of the work done by individual pupils is, in most cases, too imprecise to be of any real use. The use of the digital camera makes a valuable contribution to record keeping especially where clothing or artefacts are in school for a short period only.

179. The school has an excellent range of books and artefacts to support the teaching of religious education. These are up to date, in good condition, easily accessible, and in wide circulation. The school makes good use of the resources, human and otherwise provided by those within the school community and neighbourhood.