

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **THORNTON COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Thornton, Leicestershire

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 119907

Head teacher: Mr Russell Williams

Reporting inspector: Mrs Barbara E Doughty  
22261

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> June 2001

Inspection number: 195138

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 - 10

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Main Street  
Thornton  
Leicestershire  
Postcode: LE67 1AH

Telephone number: 01530 230250

Fax number: 01530 231663

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Dianne Esmond

Date of previous inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> March 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs Barbara E Doughty 22261 Registered inspector	English Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Music The Foundation Stage curriculum Equal opportunities Special educational needs	What sort of school it is and what it should do to improve further The school's results and achievements How well pupils are taught How well the school is led and managed
Mr Ernest Marshall 14141 Lay inspector		How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents
Mrs Heather Toynbee 11976 Team inspector	Mathematics Science Geography History Physical education Religious education	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How good the curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils are

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Schoolhaus Ltd  
 Suite 17  
 BPS Business Centre  
 Brake Lane  
 Walesby  
 Nottinghamshire  
 NG22 9HQ

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is a small village primary school for boys and girls age four to ten. It has 83 pupils on roll, 15 per cent of whom are known to be eligible for free school meals. This is broadly similar to most other schools. The pupils are taught in four classes; three mixed-age classes, and the reception class. All of the pupils are from white English speaking families. There is an average percentage of pupils with special needs, 18 per cent; one or these pupils has a statement of special need. Pupils come from broadly average backgrounds and their attainment on entry is generally typical of that found in most other schools. The new head teacher was appointed less than a year ago and teaches two afternoons a week, withdrawing Year 4 pupils for science, history and geography.

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

This is an effective and improving school. Teaching is satisfactory overall and, because of this, standards are broadly as expected in English and mathematics by the time the pupils leave at the age of ten. Effective leadership and management by the head teacher have brought about improvements to teaching and pupils' learning. Staff work together extremely well, and the excellent relationships that permeate the school mean that staff and governors share a commitment to bring about further improvement. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Pupils have good speaking and listening skills.
- Teaching in the oldest junior class is good.
- Staff know the pupils well; relationships between them and the pupils are excellent and because of this, pupils are very interested in the activities and their behaviour is exemplary.
- There is a good range of after-school sporting clubs and events, which improve pupils' physical skills and personal and social development.
- There is good direction for the future from the new head teacher, with good support from governors and staff.
- Finances are managed well to support further developments.

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

- Standards are below expected levels in science in Year 5 and in information and communications technology (ICT) throughout the school.
- Handwriting is not taught systematically and pupils are not always encouraged to take care with their spelling and presentation.
- The work is not always suitably adapted for pupils with special educational needs and those children in the reception class still in the early learning stages of writing and mathematics.

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

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

The school has made satisfactory improvement overall since its last inspection in 1997 and is better than it was. Standards are higher than they were because pupils now make sound progress as they move through the school and more of them attain the expected

level or above by the end of the infants and juniors. Since the appointment of the new head teacher, teaching has improved significantly because the staff share their ideas and know what works well or not so well. They give each other good support and are committed to improve. Curriculum planning takes good account of the national guidance for all subjects and teachers are much better at making accurate judgements about pupils' achievements. However, although many improvements have taken place since the appointment of the new head teacher, some of the issues in the last report have still to be dealt with, such as poor handwriting and careless spelling, and weaknesses in science and ICT.

## STANDARDS

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

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

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

The above table shows that the school usually does well in the infant tests in comparison with other schools nationally. As few as twelve pupils sometimes take the tests, which means that one pupil can alter the results by eight or nine percent. Therefore, because of the low numbers involved, comparisons with other schools are interpreted along with other information available, such as from the work seen in lessons and pupils' books, teachers' assessments, and discussions with pupils. These show that most pupils reach standards broadly expected for their age at the end of the infants and by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 5. Pupils make sound progress as they move through the school and achieve standards that are consistent with their attainment on entry in English and mathematics by the ages of seven and ten. Most children attain the early learning goals in all areas of learning by the end of the reception class and their learning is satisfactory overall. Although the youngest children in school and those with special needs make satisfactory progress overall, they do not always make the rapid progress in lessons that they could because the work they are given does not always build on their previously acquired skills, knowledge and understanding. In the infants and juniors, speaking and listening skills are good and standards in reading and writing are satisfactory, but untidy writing and careless spelling mistakes often spoil pupils' work. Pupils do not do well enough in science in Year 5 and ICT by the end of the infants and juniors. Although they use the Internet successfully to find things out and the e-mail facilities to communicate with others, their word-processing skills are under-developed and their understanding of the use of technology in the wider world is poor. In science, Year 5 pupils do not confidently formulate hypotheses, plan experiments or record their findings. Target setting, which is not a statutory requirement in the infants, has recently been introduced in Years 2 and 5. It is becoming more accurate as the school's procedures for tracking pupils' progress improve. By the end of the infants and by the time the pupils leave the school, achievements are satisfactory in art and design, geography, history, music, physical education and religious education and standards are broadly as expected for pupils of their age. No judgement is made about standards in design and technology because of lack of evidence.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES



<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are very interested and involved in their work and concentrate well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	This is excellent. Pupils have a high regard for each other and respect the feelings of their schoolmates.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils get on well together and understand how their own actions can affect others. They take on responsibilities willingly.
Attendance	Good. There is no lateness and lessons start on time.

This is a strength of the school and is much better than it was at the time of the last inspection. Pupils' attitudes, and their behaviour in particular, contribute to the excellent relationships and feeling of togetherness that permeate the school. However, poor presentation, untidy handwriting and careless spelling spoil their work unnecessarily.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>		<b>aged up to 5 years</b>	<b>aged 5-7 years</b>	<b>aged 7-11 years</b>
Lessons overall	seen	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

Teaching and learning were satisfactory in 57 per cent of the lessons seen, good in 36 per cent and very good in seven per cent. There were no unsatisfactory lessons seen. This shows good improvement since the last inspection when 28 per cent of the lessons seen were unsatisfactory. Teaching is particularly good in the oldest class in the school, where it inspires pupils to concentrate well by making learning fun. In all classes, particular strengths lie in the teachers' management of pupils and their organisation of lessons. Learning resources are used well to capture pupils' interest and bring learning alive. Support staff are involved in lesson planning and so help pupils effectively with their work, particularly the less able and those with special needs. At these times, these pupils make good progress. However, at other times teachers sometimes give them the same work as their classmates, which they cannot always do successfully. Except in Year 4 science and Year 5, teachers' marking does not tell pupils what they need to do better or how to do it. Not enough use is made of the early learning stages in the national guidance for children in the reception class and this means that those few children who are still in the early stages of development, particularly in writing, do not always make the rapid progress that they could. English and mathematics are taught satisfactorily in the infants and juniors, but handwriting and spelling are not taught effectively and so pupils' work is often untidy, with careless spelling mistakes. Unsatisfactory teaching of science in Year 5 and ICT throughout the school is reflected in the unsatisfactory learning in both of these subjects. This is due in the main to teachers' weak subject expertise. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is satisfactory overall; phonic skills are particularly well

taught. The teaching of all other subjects is sound overall. Specialist physical education teaching in the juniors is particularly effective and results in better learning in lessons and over time.

#### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. However, there is insufficient time allocated to the teaching of science and ICT and this impacts detrimentally on standards in these subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall; good when these pupils are supported by classroom assistants in literacy and numeracy. There are times, however, when they are set the same work as their classmates and do not always complete their work successfully.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are no pupils with English as an additional language.
Provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good overall. There is very good provision for pupils' moral and social development, which contributes significantly to the excellent relationships and exemplary behaviour. The provision for raising pupils' multicultural awareness is under-developed.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has a high level of pastoral care, enhanced by teachers' good knowledge of each pupil as an individual. Overall, teachers assess pupils' learning effectively and record their achievements satisfactorily.

This is a very caring school. Staff and parents work together well and in the best interests of the pupils. There is good provision for after-school sporting clubs and events, which impacts well on pupils' physical development.

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

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The head teacher gives good direction for the work of the school so that governors and staff work towards the same goal. Good leadership and management of English, mathematics and physical education; satisfactory for all other subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory, and improving. Governors are well aware of what is happening in school because they ask well-focused and appropriate questions. Their newly formed committees are increasing their effectiveness, holding the school accountable for what it does, and bringing about improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. There is clarity about what the school does well and what needs improving. Effective lesson observations by the head teacher and the literacy and numeracy co-ordinators

	evaluate the performance of teachers and pupils and are bringing about improvements to teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Financial planning supports priorities well and the governing body secures value for money through effective tendering procedures.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory. There is a good number of teachers to keep class sizes small and this has led to some improvements in teaching and learning. However, with the exception of literacy and numeracy, subject leaders have a limited impact on bringing about improvements to their subjects because they do not observe lessons or evaluate pupils' learning.

#### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school's open-door policy and the approachability of staff.</li> <li>• Their children like school and are making progress in their learning.</li> <li>• The good behaviour and the way the school expects children to work hard and do their best, and helps them to be mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The teaching and the way they are informed about how well their children are doing.</li> <li>• The way the school is led and managed.</li> <li>• The range of clubs and activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range and quantity of homework and the fact that it is the same for all children regardless of their assessed abilities.</li> <li>• The way parent teacher consultation meetings are not held in private and that they do not always get to see their children's work before they talk to the teachers.</li> </ul>

Parents are clearly very happy with the work of the school. The inspection team agrees with all of their comments. Although inspectors found homework to be generally acceptable, it is variable from class to class and inconsistently set from week to week. The school is to review its homework policy in the light of the parents' concerns and intends to improve the provision. Parents should feel free to discuss how well their children are doing in school and the current arrangements are unsatisfactory. The school is to change the structure of these meetings, bearing in mind how parents feel.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Pupils do well in the infant tests in comparison with other schools. However, there are as few as 12 pupils taking these tests each year, which means that one pupil can alter the results by eight or nine percent and so comparisons with other schools are interpreted along with other information available. Teacher assessments and evidence from the inspection, show most pupils achieve broadly as expected in English and mathematics for pupils aged seven and ten, with most pupils attaining the expected level or above for their age in both subjects. This is an improvement since the last inspection when Year 2 pupils did not do as well as could be expected in English.
2. At the time of the last inspection, the small percentage of pupils that did not attain the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of the infants were all boys. Test results over time show that the difference between the performance of boys and girls fluctuates year on year but, taking the last three years together, boys have done better than girls. However, these are very small year groups, and differences from year to year can reasonably be expected. There is no evidence from the inspection to suggest that boys and girls are treated differently, although the two sometimes opt to work separately in lessons. Some teachers address this more successfully than others by making sure that work groups contain pupils of both genders. However, there is nothing to suggest that anything happening in lessons directly affects the overall performance of either group.
3. Children in the Foundation Stage make sound progress and they achieve satisfactorily during their first year in school. Most of them attain the early learning goals for children of their age by the time they leave the reception class. These children are confident youngsters, who enjoy school because of the way they are listened to and supported in their learning. By the end of the reception class, most of them read confidently, using letter sounds to attempt unknown words. The greatest majority write their own names and short sentences, although their letter formation is not as good as it could be. However, children in the early stages of learning to write and count do not always achieve as well as they could because the early learning stages of mathematics and writing in particular are not taught as effectively as they could be. This is seen in the work of the less able children in lessons and the work done by the more able earlier at the beginning of the year and is because not enough use is made of activities from the early stages in the national guidance for teaching children in the Foundation Stage. Most children have a secure understanding of the world in which they live and their physical and creative development is satisfactory for their age.
4. Seven year olds have done increasingly well in the infant tests in reading, writing and mathematics and these have risen over time since 1996. Pupils leave Thornton Primary at the age of ten, one year before taking the junior national tests; evidence from the inspection shows that most of them attain the expected level for their age in English and mathematics by the end of Year 5. Their speaking and listening skills exceed expected levels, reading standards are broadly as expected, but achievements in writing, although satisfactory overall with most of the pupils on course to improve their standards by the expected two levels by the end of the juniors, are marred by careless spelling, poor handwriting and weak presentation skills. These were identified as areas for improvement in the last report and have not been effectively dealt with.
5. Improvements have been made, however, to pupils' achievements in speaking, listening and reading. Pupils of all ages are confident speakers and attentive listeners. Those in Year 2 talk excitedly about the work they are doing, explaining carefully, for example, why they need to put a contact address or telephone number on their posters advertising for the

return of Dogger the dog. By the time they leave the school, most pupils share their thoughts articulately and talk confidently in front of their schoolmates. They have favourite authors and styles of writing, and talk confidently about the hidden meanings in the text of, for example, 'Stig of the Dump'. They enjoy non-fiction books as much as fiction ones and read for pleasure as well as to find out about, for example, famous people in history. This shows a significant improvement since the last inspection. In writing, their ideas are developed in interesting ways and their work is organised appropriately. Sentences are extended to secure meaning, and punctuation is used effectively, such as exclamation marks. However, because handwriting is not taught systematically throughout the school, pupils' joining of letters is clumsy and the untidy and casual presentation of their work does not reflect the quality of their efforts. Spelling mistakes are careless and avoidable, and too little thought goes into choosing the best words for atmosphere and effect because they are not encouraged to use the work of other authors to influence their own writing. This weakens the strength and quality of their writing in general.

6. Satisfactory standards in mathematics have been maintained since the last inspection. By the end of the infants and juniors, most of the pupils achieve what can reasonably be expected, given their attainment on entry and at the end of the infants. Year 2 pupils work confidently with numbers up to 100. Their understanding of fractions is secure and they have a satisfactory recall of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. By the end of Year 5, they understand the value of digits in four-digit numbers and confidently add and subtract beyond 1000, exchanging groups of tens and hundreds to aid their calculations. They interpret line graphs accurately, for example of sunrise and sunset times, and calculate areas of shapes in square centimetres. They use brackets in algebraic sums and tell the time accurately. Their work is untidily presented, however, and this spoils its quality.
7. Achievement in science is satisfactory in the infants and standards are as expected by the end of Year 2. This is an improvement since the last inspection when attainment was below expected levels in the work seen. Most pupils, by the age of seven, have a secure understanding of all aspects of science. They predict test results accurately, for example, of which materials will reflect light in darkness. They understand that living things, such as cress grown from seeds, need particular conditions in which to grow. They understand the effect of friction on moving objects and that animals live in different habitats. These standards are maintained in Years 3 and 4, but by the end of Year 5 attainment is below the expected level because pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory in this year. By the end of the year, pupils have under-developed scientific enquiry skills for their age such as hypothesising, planning experiments, predicting the outcomes and testing their predictions. Pupils' recording of their findings is at a lower level that could reasonably be expected. Their presentation of work is poor, with key scientific words often misspelled.
8. Pupils' achievements in ICT are not good enough; standards are below expected levels and pupils' learning is unsatisfactory over time. Most pupils understand the advantages of using the Internet to find out about, for example, historical events. They understand e-mail and use it to communicate with their schoolmates in other classes. The older pupils know how to use some of the computers' editing features, such as 'spell check' and 'delete', but their word-processing skills are limited and not used effectively to support their work in English. Although a small minority of pupils have extensive use of computers at home and have well-developed skills because of this, in school the Year 5 pupils are only just learning how to import pictures into a text document and have limited understanding of how to present information in a variety of ways combining, for example, graphics and text. They have limited understanding of the use of ICT in the wider world.
9. Standards in religious education, art and design, geography, history, music and physical education are in line with national expectations by the end of the infants and by the time the pupils leave the school at the end of Year 5. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in all of these subjects as they move through the school. Pupils taking part in the wide range of sporting

events outside lessons achieve particularly well in physical education. Insufficient evidence of design and technology work means that no judgement can be made about overall standards and achievement in this subject. However, in all subjects, the quality of the pupils' handwriting and their careless presentation of work do little to enhance the overall satisfactory quality of their work or reflect the efforts of their learning.

10. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily overall. They do well in literacy and numeracy lessons, when they are usually supported by the teaching assistants. However, at other times, these pupils do not always do as well as they could because too often teachers give them the same things to do as the less able pupils in the class, which they sometimes struggle to complete and this slows their progress.
11. Target setting is not compulsory in the infants. The school has started, however, to collect information on pupils' achievements from entering school and at the end of each year. This enables them to track individual pupils' progress over time and they are now starting to set target levels for the end of Year 2 and Year 5 in particular. These procedures are in their infancy, however, and their impact cannot yet be measured.

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

12. Throughout the school pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, have good attitudes, which have a positive impact on their learning. The children in the reception class happily leave their parents or carers at the start of each day and enjoy the work and routines in the school. They are very enthusiastic about everything they do and are beginning to develop some independence and initiative, for example, when making cardboard models of aeroplanes and getting changed for physical education.
13. Infant and junior pupils enjoy school and show much interest and involvement in all of their activities. There are good levels of attendance and many pupils are keen to stay behind at the end of the school day to take part in after-school clubs. All of the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire stated that their children like coming to school. Inspectors agree wholeheartedly with this view. Pupils with special educational needs have a positive self-image and a confident approach to their work, due to the fact that they are fully integrated into the life of the school. Teachers' good management skills and the introduction of interesting learning activities contribute to the pupils' very positive attitudes. A good example was observed in one infant lesson, in which pupils showed great care and perseverance in their use of quantities of sand and rice to estimate the capacity of different containers. In the oldest junior class, the pupils' enthusiasm about tape-recording the teacher's answers to their questions was tempered by their understanding that they all needed to keep very quiet during this procedure. Pupils are keen to talk to visitors about aspects of school life. However, there is a lack of pride in the way they record their work. Poor presentation and handwriting, and careless spelling, do not do justice to either the teaching or learning seen in many lessons.
14. Pupils' behaviour, both in and out of class, is excellent. This confirms the view of all of the parents who answered the pre-inspection questionnaire. Pupils respond readily to the requests and instructions of teachers, support assistants and mid-day supervisors. The pupils are invariably courteous to each other, teachers, other staff, and visitors. They are trustworthy and show respect for property, treating resources with great care. The school places a great emphasis on rewarding good behaviour and does not use sanctions, such as withdrawal of privileges, lightly. No oppressive behaviour, such as bullying or name-calling, was observed during the inspection. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, when there was some teasing and name-calling seen.
15. Overall, the personal development of pupils is very good. Pupils are treated in a very positive and mature manner by the staff and respond in a similar vein. The vast majority of

pupils have excellent relationships with their schoolmates and adults, built on very good tolerance and respect for the work, ideas and values of others. For example, in one lower junior games lesson, not one pupil made fun of those who found it difficult to catch or throw a ball. The pupils work well individually and co-operatively in pairs or small groups and are highly aware what impact their actions can have on others. From the reception year onwards, they learn to take turns, be kind, and help one another. Pupils support charities through fund-raising activities and take an active part in school and village events. For the older children, a residential trip is the first time that many of these pupils have been away from home. They make the most of this opportunity and cope well with the extra personal demands this puts upon them. There are good opportunities for pupils, particularly the older ones, to take responsibility as monitors and helpers in the classrooms and around the school, but fewer for them to use their own initiative in their work.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

16. The teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory in 57 per cent of lessons, good in 36 per cent and very good in seven per cent. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. This shows a significant improvement in teaching since the last inspection when 28 per cent of the lessons seen were either unsatisfactory or poor.
17. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with a balance of things that work well and things that are less effective. Teaching is sound overall in the reception, infant and junior classes. The children in the Foundation Stage have a wide range of learning experiences appropriate for children of their age, and which involve them learning through observation and exploration. A very experienced nursery nurse supports these children very effectively in their learning every afternoon. However, there is convincing evidence in children's earlier work, in particular, that not all of the early stages of learning are taught as systematically as they should be. For example, some of the less able children are asked to write before they can draw recognisable pictures and to add sets of objects before they can count accurately. This is because teaching does not make sufficient use of the activities from the 'stepping stones' in the Foundation Stage curriculum.
18. Teaching and learning are good overall in Year 5, where all of the very good teaching was seen. Often the teaching in this year is lively and inspirational and holds the attention of the pupils well. Teachers' subject knowledge, except in science where it is insecure, is generally good and because of this, explanations are clear and so pupils know what to do. Consequently, all pupils usually work productively and with good effort because they are interested in their work and are eager to learn new things. For example, in a history lesson in Year 5, the teacher imaginatively used innovative ways to interest pupils who had to think of questions to ask the teacher, who acted as a memory bank of 'events of the decades' from 1950 to 1990. The excellent relationships in this year group, in particular between teacher and pupils, means that pupils work hard to please the teacher in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Teaching makes learning fun, for example, through the use of word games and unusual resources, such as asking one pupil to wear a straw hat with dandelions in its rim as she read a poem about a person wearing such a hat. This stirred the pupils' imagination, held their interest, and helped them appreciate the joy of poetry more.
19. These strong relationships between teachers and pupils, and pupils and pupils, feature throughout the school. Teachers manage pupils well and because of this, there is little need for reprimand, unlike at the time of the last inspection when teaching sometimes failed to hold the interest of the boys in particular and pupils became restless. Pupils concentrate well because of the teachers' insistence that all of them take part. Teachers involve pupils well in discussions, taking care to ask individuals questions if they do not volunteer answers readily.
20. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught satisfactorily, mainly because of the successful implementation of the national strategies for these subjects. Lessons are usually well

organised. This particular feature of the literacy and numeracy lessons is proving successful in other subjects too. This means that there is a good balance of teacher explanation, class discussion, group and individual work, and pupils working either independently or under the direction of the teacher. Sessions at the end of lessons, where all pupils come together to talk about what they have done and learnt, help to consolidate learning, and pupils' enthusiasm is fired when teachers talk about what they will do tomorrow. This generates excitement and heightens the pupils' anticipation of what is to come. Mental arithmetic sessions at the beginning of numeracy lessons effectively develop pupils' mental agility. Word skills are taught well. Consequently, pupils have a good understanding of letter sounds and this helps them with their reading. Research skills are developed well through the use of the Internet and information books, the use of both of which were weak at the time of the last inspection. Writing is taught satisfactorily overall, and pupils are inspired to write for different purposes, such as stories and reports of historical events, writing in imaginary character such as a war evacuee, and compiling lists of ingredients for making sandwiches. However, handwriting is not taught well enough and, as a result, pupils' work in all subjects is usually untidily presented. Careless spelling mistakes add to the poor quality of presentation and teaching does little to improve this because the expectations on pupils to write neatly and spell correctly are too low. Handwriting is practised, but pupils do not transfer what they learn about letter formation to their writing at other times and teachers do not always model good handwriting for pupils to imitate.

21. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. These pupils are usually supported very effectively in lessons by teaching assistants, who ensure that their learning is secure by making sure that they understand what they are doing and how to do it. At these times, these pupils make good progress. However, there are some occasions when pupils with special needs are asked to do the same work as the lower attaining pupils in the class, and sometimes the same as all of the pupils. At these times, they are often unable to complete the work successfully and this slows their learning; low-level work is accepted from these pupils and excused in the light of their learning difficulties when more appropriately adapted work could have enabled them to succeed.
22. Teaching is unsatisfactory in science in Year 5 and in ICT throughout the school. This has led to unsatisfactory learning in ICT by the end of the infants and in science and ICT by the time the pupils leave the school. This is due, in both subjects, to weak teacher subject knowledge and insufficient teaching time allocated to these subjects. In science, investigation skills are not taught well enough and this weakens pupils' ability to formulate hypotheses, plan and carry out tests and investigations and record their findings. In ICT, pupils are not given sufficient or equal access to the computers and other ICT equipment. Teaching tends to focus on those aspects of the ICT curriculum that teachers are secure teaching, such as the use of the Internet and e-mail, but not enough on word processing, data handling and control technology.
23. Teaching and learning in art and design, geography, history, music and physical education are satisfactory. Specialist teaching in physical education in the juniors is particularly effective. This is because the teacher's own interest in sport enthuses the pupils and her good subject knowledge means that teaching is effective in improving pupils' physical skills. This is particularly so in the after-school sporting clubs and events, which impact well on improving pupils' personal and social development as well as promoting their physical development. Similarly in music, the good teaching seen during the inspection was by a specialist music teacher. However, this teacher was working on a supply basis and evidence shows convincingly that the quality of teaching is usually satisfactory. For example, weak subject knowledge in one of the Year 4 lessons seen meant that musical vocabulary was not taught appropriately and some over-direction by the teacher stifled pupils' creative talents. There were no lessons seen in design and technology and insufficient evidence of pupils' work to make a judgement about the quality of teaching and learning in this subject.



24. With the exception of in Year 4 science and the oldest junior class, where it is very good, teachers' marking of pupils' work is unsatisfactory. This is because teachers' comments often praise work of a low standard, particularly in Years 3 and 4. This gives pupils the wrong impression of what is acceptable in terms of quality and quantity, and does little to encourage them to take a pride in their work. Teachers do not make it clear to the pupils what they are doing wrong and how they can improve their work. The marking is of little use in informing assessment as the work is often not dated nor is it annotated with comments about how easy or hard the pupils found the work or how much support they were given.

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

25. The curriculum for children in the reception class is appropriately based on the Foundation Stage curriculum for children of this age. Tasks and activities are purposeful and relevant to the age of the children and interest them well. For pupils in the infants and juniors, the school provides a sound, broad range of activities. This covers all subjects and is relevant to the age and interest of pupils. National teaching guidelines are now in place, and are being reviewed and developed, for all subjects. This is an improvement since the last inspection. There is an appropriately strong emphasis on teaching literacy and numeracy. Effective strategies for both of these subjects have been satisfactorily implemented throughout the school, including the reception class. Statutory requirements with regard to a daily act of worship and the National Curriculum are being met satisfactorily. However, there is evidence that some aspects of ICT are not being taught to a satisfactory level or being used effectively to support and promote learning in other subjects. This is due to insufficient teacher expertise, the unequal access for all pupils to the computers, the lack of access to a suitable range of other equipment and resources, and insufficient time allocated to the teaching of the subject.
26. The curriculum is balanced in the infants, but in the juniors, the overall balance of teaching time spent on different subjects is having a detrimental effect on learning in science and ICT. This is because the time allocated for these subjects does not provide enough time for pupils to carry out investigations, set up their own experiments, and record their findings appropriately. In ICT, the less able pupils, in particular, spend too little time working on computers.
27. The provision of a very good range of extra-curricular activities to support the school's curriculum is a strength of the school. It is helpful in extending pupils' knowledge and skills and in promoting their social development. Activities of a sporting nature lead to the prowess of pupils in local sports activities and team games. After-school clubs are arranged for the infants as well as the juniors and these include one for music and another for story telling. Reception children go on a 'teddy bears' outing'. Other areas of the curriculum are enhanced by visits to places in the locality, for instance the reservoir, and to places of special interest further afield, such as a local zoo and a theatre visit in Derby.
28. The school ensures that all pupils access the curriculum and take part in all lessons, whatever their gender, ability, or background. For example, no pupils are precluded from going on a visit because of an inability to pay. The provision made for pupils with special educational needs is sound overall. It is good in literacy and numeracy lessons when teaching assistants help pupils with the work and good regard is given to setting appropriate work to meet their needs. However, at other times, rather than basing the work for these pupils on what they can already do and need to learn next, teachers sometimes set them the same work as the other pupils and then accept unsatisfactory results, with excuses and explanations about what these pupils cannot be expected to do.
29. There is good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, including raising their awareness of drug misuse. Throughout the school, aspects of sex education are suitably taught within science and, in Year 5, more explicitly with the help of the school

nurse. There is no written policy for this aspect of the curriculum, but teachers promote pupils' personal and social education through the study and discussion of issues such as friendship, keeping safe and fairness. The warm and constructive relationships that prevail in all classes make an extremely strong contribution to this aspect of the pupils' education.

30. The school has established very good links with members of the local community, including the warden of the local reservoir and its surrounding area. Pupils help at the local senior citizens' Christmas party, and take part in village events, with the school organising the village May Fair. There are visits to the local church, reciprocated by the canon, who comes to talk to pupils at the school. Drama productions at the school are much enjoyed and appreciated by parents and friends. A local quarry generously provides sponsorship for school activities. This has provided the school team with a new football kit and has also paid for transport to the theatre in Derby. A local garden nursery kindly gives the school plants for gardening projects.
31. The school has good constructive links with the local comprehensive school to which most of the pupils transfer at the end of Year 5 and these procedures are helpful in smoothing the transition. Arrangements include teachers from this school visiting on a regular basis, discussion and transfer of details about pupils with special educational needs, an induction day and meetings between head teachers and subject co-ordinators. Helpful discussion takes place, and agreement is reached with staff from other primary schools and teachers in the next phase, about coverage of areas of the curriculum. This ensures, for example, that all of the pupils in Years 3 to 5 in the different primary schools study the same periods in history, leaving them all to study the same ones when they come together in Year 6 in the comprehensive school. Collaborative work with other local schools has started, including one initiative that involved sending e-mail. The school has no links with any teacher training institutions, mainly due to its remote rural situation. There is useful liaison with the local playgroup, however, and coffee mornings are held for mothers and toddlers. Both of these initiatives are effective in smoothing children's entry to school.
32. Overall, the provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Suitable opportunities are provided in assemblies, religious education lessons and visits to the church, for pupils to reflect on their own beliefs and those of others. Opportunities for pupils to develop a spiritual awareness in other areas of the curriculum are less frequent.
33. The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral and social development. Relevant issues are raised and discussed sensitively in assemblies, personal and social education sessions, as well as with individual children. All of the staff provide very good role models and show consistent care, kindness and courtesy to the pupils and each other. The pupils' responses, and their exemplary behaviour around the school, show that all have an extremely clear sense of right and wrong. The strong sense of teamwork that prevails among adults, and the very high quality of relationships in the school, make a powerful contribution to this aspect of provision. Pupils relate well to each other when required to work in pairs or small groups. Most pupils are able to work responsibly and without direct supervision in lessons, such as literacy and numeracy, when the teacher is working with another group. There are some opportunities for pupils to show initiative both within classrooms and around the school, but this aspect is currently under-developed. A residential visit for the older juniors provides a valuable additional opportunity for social development, as do the links that have been established with a local special school.
34. The provision for cultural development is sound. The school satisfactorily promotes pupils' awareness of their own rich heritage and cultural traditions through areas of the curriculum, visits and interest in local events. Examples of this are the involvement of pupils in local May Day, harvest and Christmas festivities and their study of famous people and events in British history. In addition, they gain a knowledge and understanding of ancient civilisations such as the Romans and Greeks. Pupils in the younger junior class learn about the ancient

Egyptians and the work of the craftsmen, builders and artists of that time. In one good lesson seen in the older junior class, the pupils produced pictures in the style of well-known surrealists. Although some of the contemporary traditions of other cultures and countries are celebrated, this is an under-developed aspect. The school has recognised the need to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of faiths and beliefs other than Christianity and is in the process of arranging visits to see other religions in practice.

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

35. The school has satisfactory arrangements in place to safeguard the health and safety of its pupils. The staff and governing body work closely together to ensure the school premises provide a safe environment. There are effective procedures in place for child protection.
36. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now satisfactory. The levels pupils attain in all subjects are recorded at the end of each year, so that subject co-ordinators can keep a check on the rate of pupils' learning and how well they progress from one year-end to the next. Although these procedures are in their infancy, a good start has been made in English in particular. An assessment of what children can do when they start school is carried out so that staff have a clear idea of children's attainment on entry and a basis for tracking their performance as they move through the school. After that, the school uses a range of commercial tests at the end of each year to assess pupils' attainment in English and mathematics. Pupils' attainment in other subjects is assessed using materials from the national teaching guidelines.
37. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is monitored by the special needs co-ordinator and parents are involved in setting individual learning targets for their children. Although the achievements of these pupils are recorded in their individual learning programmes, the use teachers make of this information to decide what work to give them is not always as effective as it could be. This means that sometimes these pupils are set the same work as their classmates, which they are unable to do successfully unless supported by an adult. When they are supported in literacy and numeracy lessons, they make good progress.
38. Educational and personal support for pupils is good. Every pupil is well known and cared for by teaching and support staff. This enables pupils' individual needs to be identified and responded to. The school provides a friendly and caring environment where pupils are made welcome and can quickly build up trust and confidence. Mid-morning and lunchtime play sessions are well supervised. Teachers are particularly careful to ensure each pupil is collected by a recognised adult at the end of the school day. Induction through an early visit followed by part-time attendance helps reception class children through the difficulties of being away from parents during the school day. Year 5 pupils about to transfer are provided with the opportunity to visit the receiving school to meet and work with the staff and pupils.
39. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory. Pupils throughout the school have good attendance rates and, as a result, the school has no significant attendance problems. This is an improvement since the last inspection when some lateness was noted.
40. The school's procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour and thus encouraging good behaviour successfully promote very high standards. Parents are made aware of the school's policy and expectations through the information given in the prospectus and the home/school agreement. Pupils are effectively taught the principles of good behaviour through appropriate themes in lessons and assemblies. Teachers and support staff have high expectations of good behaviour and promote them by showing sincere consideration and respect for each pupil. Good behaviour and effort are rewarded and held up as examples for other pupils to follow. The excellent behaviour seen during the inspection illustrates the effectiveness of the school's approach and justifies the perception of good behaviour held by parents.

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

41. Parents are very happy with the work of the school. They are particularly appreciative of the care and attention given to their children by the staff and for the quality of learning their children receive. There is wide satisfaction with the content of lessons and the range of after-school activities provided. However, some parents are concerned about the range and quantity of homework and the fact that it is the same for all pupils. The school has recently implemented changes to the homework policy, which is now satisfactory.
42. Overall, the quality of information the school provides for parents with is satisfactory. The school prospectus is comprehensive; it and the annual report to parents meet statutory requirements. Pupils' annual reports meet statutory requirements but have limited space for detailed comment in some sections, lessening the information parents are given. Newsletters are issued regularly and are informative. The head teacher holds weekly coffee mornings in school and parents have an open invitation to attend and discuss any items of interest or concern. Staff are available at the beginning and end of the school day and individual appointments with the head teacher to discuss confidential issues can be easily arranged.
43. Parents have effective links with the school and make a positive contribution to its work. From the small village community, the school is able to rely on the regular attendance of a significant number of parents and grandparents to help in the classrooms. Most of these helpers were themselves pupils at the school. There is a small but very active and enthusiastic 'Friends of the school' association that works with staff to raise additional school funds through organising a programme of social events that are well supported by parents, staff and the local community. The association has been successful in securing financial support from a national bank. Funds raised have been used for the purchase of equipment and furnishings the school would otherwise not have had the means to provide. Volunteers to help in after-school clubs and events are in good supply. Parent governors are also enthusiastic in the promotion of the school's policies and in the development of standards achieved by the school.

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

44. The leadership and management of the school are good overall. This is because the new head teacher has brought about many significant improvements. Standards are better than they were, teaching is much improved, and pupils' behaviour is now excellent. This is because the head teacher has a very clear idea about what does and does not work. Since his appointment less than a year ago, he has empowered governors and staff to become more involved in decision making through keeping them fully informed about what is going on, in particular what is working well and why, and what improvements need to be made and how. He has succeeded in sharing his vision for the school so that staff and governors now have a clear direction for the future and the capacity to bring about further improvement.
45. One of the more recent and most important developments has been to the quality of teaching, which was unsatisfactory in 28 per cent of the lessons seen at the time of the last inspection. Whilst weaknesses remain in the teaching of science and ICT, there is convincing evidence to show that teaching is now sound overall. This has been achieved through effective lesson observations followed by open, frank and honest staff discussions about what has been seen happening in teaching and its impact on pupils' learning. This has led to improved staff relationships and openness in expressing and sharing successes and concerns. It has brought about improved pupil management and lesson planning. Subject planning has improved significantly through the effective implementation of the national subject teaching guidance, and assessment procedures are more effective in tracking pupils' progress as they move through the school. Whilst many of these procedures are in their infancy and in need of further improvement to make them even more effective than they are, the excellent relationships and trust between management and staff means that the school has the capacity to do this and to deal successfully with the issues remaining

from the last inspection report. These include the weaknesses in the teaching of science and ICT and the poor handwriting, spelling and work presentation.

46. Involving the English and mathematics co-ordinators in the monitoring of teaching in literacy and numeracy has meant that these staff have a better understanding of what is happening, and their influence on bringing about improvements is increasing. The devolvement of funds to subject co-ordinators has given them the power to make decisions about what to buy to either renew or enhance learning resources for their subjects. However, subject leaders do not evaluate the quality of pupils' learning through looking at the work or talking formally to the pupils to find out the depth of their knowledge and understanding. Lesson monitoring is currently limited to literacy and numeracy and this means that the leaders of the other subjects have limited impact on bringing about improvement to teaching and learning in their subjects.
47. The governing body understand fully what their responsibilities are, and carry them out in a professional and effective manner. They ask questions and make decisions, mainly through their very effective committees. The literacy and numeracy governors are very involved in the leadership and management of these two subjects, and the other governors are enthusiastic about their varied involvement in school; they all work hard to fulfil their duties. They talk knowledgeably about their role in school, what is happening, and what needs doing next. They manage the school's finances well. Spending is linked appropriately to agreed priorities for development in the effective school development plan, and the governing body applies the principles of best value for money through effective tendering procedures and an awareness of the impact of their spending decisions on improving standards, teaching and learning. For example, they regularly review their decision to spend money on keeping class sizes low by evaluating the cost effectiveness of their decision through test results and the findings of the monitoring of teaching. Grants are used effectively and the governors are always looking for ways to access additional funding, for example, for improving the library facilities.
48. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory overall. The number of staff to meet the demands of the curriculum is good, due to the governors' decision to keep class sizes below average. The staff, including non-teaching staff, work together extremely well to create an atmosphere of togetherness, a positive ethos, and a quality learning environment. Displays in most of the classrooms celebrate pupils' achievements well. Resources are generally adequate. The accommodation is small but used well.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

49. The school should now:

(1) Raise standards in science by the end of Year 5 and in ICT throughout the school by improving teaching and learning in both subjects through:

- i) improving the subject knowledge of staff in Year 5 in science and throughout the school in ICT so that all aspects of both subjects are taught in sufficient depth;
- ii) ensuring that the computers are used equally by all of the pupils regardless of their ability;
- iii) allowing pupils to use the other ICT equipment in school such as the digital camera and programmable robots;
- iv) using computers to support teaching and learning in other subjects such as English and science;
- v) ensuring that there is an appropriate time allocated to the teaching of both subjects.

Paragraphs 7, 8, 22, 25, 26, 66, 76, 80, 102-106

(2) Improve pupils' handwriting, spelling and work presentation by:

- i) ensuring that handwriting and spelling are taught systematically throughout the school;
- ii) encouraging pupils to present their work neatly and carefully and making high demands on them to take a pride in their work;
- iii) making sure that teachers write neatly so that pupils can copy them.

Paragraphs 4, 5, 9, 13, 20, 61, 71, 81, 98, 119

(3) Ensure that children in the reception class and those with special educational needs make at least satisfactory progress all of the time by using the information about their previous learning in order to:

- i) make full and effective use of the 'stepping stones' in the Foundation Stage curriculum guidance;
- ii) set pupils with special needs work relating to their individual learning targets.

Paragraphs 3, 10, 17, 21, 28, 37, 50, 52, 53, 58

In addition to the issues above, the following minor weaknesses are identified in the report and governors should have regard to these in their action plan:

1. Except in Year 5 and Year 4 science, teachers' marking does not show pupils what they are doing wrong or tell them how to improve their work. (Paragraphs 24, 65, 74)
2. The provision for raising pupils' awareness of the multicultural society in which they live is under-developed. (Paragraph 34)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	28
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	7	36	57	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y5
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	83
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	12

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y5
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	15

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

### 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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	7	5	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	11	11	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (100)	92 (100)	100 (100)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	11	11	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (100)	92 (100)	92 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

\* The numbers of boys and girls gaining level 2 in the tests are not given, as fewer than ten pupils in either group took these tests in 2000.

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	83
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

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

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

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

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

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y5**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.3
Average class size	20.8

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y5**

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	47

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	195328
Total expenditure	189204
Expenditure per pupil	2336
Balance brought forward from previous year	8130
Balance carried forward to next year	14254

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	83
Number of questionnaires returned	22

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	77	23	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	45	55	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	64	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	9	59	18	9	5
The teaching is good.	45	50	0	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	55	14	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	82	18	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	36	59	0	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	23	68	5	0	5
The school is well led and managed.	73	27	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	45	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	36	9	0	9

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

50. By the end of the reception year, children have achieved at a satisfactory rate, and most of them attain the early learning goals for children of this age in all of the areas of learning. This is because the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The teacher's planning has improved since the last inspection and now takes better account of the six areas of learning. As a result, most of the activities planned provide the children with relevant experiences and enable them to make satisfactory progress. However, there are occasions when insufficient regard is given to the small steps that are necessary to build the most basic skills in writing or mathematics and the children are asked to do work that is too difficult or beyond their stage of development.

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

51. The children in the reception class are confident and secure and their personal, social and emotional development is satisfactory because teaching is effective. The adults in the reception classroom work extremely well together and this gives children a good role model on which to base their own relationships with others. There are a number of adults usually helping in the classroom, and this means that, for most of the time, children have someone talking with them and supervising their work. Children behave well. They take turns and share fairly, for example when building models with plastic bricks or pushing and pulling each other on the wheeled toys. They are generally enthusiastic about their work, such as when writing postcards and making models of aeroplanes.

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

52. Teaching and learning are sound overall in this area of learning and most children attain the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. They talk confidently in a class group, for example about what they have done the previous week or when on holiday. Most children speak with developing fluency and clarity, patiently taking turns in conversation and listening carefully to their classmates. Reading develops successfully over time and most children enjoy looking at books and learning new words. Children's knowledge of letter sounds is good and they use it well to read unknown words. They write sentences in sequence to tell a story or report on something they have done. However, their handwriting and letter formation are not developed as successfully as they could be. A small minority of children do not make rapid enough progress because insufficient account is taken of how the early stages of writing are developed over time. A few of the children, who are ready to learn how to form letters correctly, are not appropriately supported to do so. Often the adult working with them will write what these children tell them they want to say, but they do not then expect the children to copy this writing or attempt to write some words on their own. The joined script the adults sometimes use is inappropriate and their writing is not as neat as it could be. In the work of the more able children, incorrect letter formation often goes uncorrected and these children are unaware that they need to improve their work, or of what to do to write more neatly.

#### **Mathematical development**

53. In contrast to what is happening in writing, in the lessons seen, teaching made good use of children's previous learning and built well on their skills, knowledge and understanding over time. This is because, whilst one child struggled to understand numbers up to 10 and was given suitably adapted work to do, most of the children are now beyond the early stages of development in this area and the teaching more confidently extends learning at this higher

level. The greatest majority of children have a secure grasp of numbers up to 10 and are beginning to understand addition and subtraction. However, earlier work shows that some children have been asked in the past to, for example, add and subtract before they could draw sets of objects up to 10. Nevertheless, by the end of the reception class, most children attain the early learning goals in this area of learning. As in their letter writing, however, they do not write their numbers using the correct sequence of strokes and there is convincing evidence to show that this skill is not taught well enough.

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

54. Children have a secure general knowledge, and their attainment in this area of learning is sound. Most children attain the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. They talk confidently and knowledgeably about the village in which they live with their families and pets. They know their addresses and draw simple maps of Thornton, indicating where their houses are in relation to the shop, church and school. Their observation of things over time successfully secures their understanding of how things change. For example, they plant seeds and watch them grow and compare the differences from week to week. They talk about how objects are different in texture, such as a 'prickly' pinecone compared with a 'smooth' leaf. They listen to and accurately identify sounds in the environment, such as aeroplanes and noises made by a builder at work. Children use the computer with confidence because they have constant access to it and use it to support their work in, for example, mathematics and literacy.

### **Physical development**

55. Teaching and learning are sound and most children attain the early learning goals in this area of learning by the end of their reception year. The good provision for outdoor play, including running and climbing, plays a major part in this. Most of the children have a good awareness of space and move around the classroom and outdoor area with good co-ordination. They climb with confidence and use small apparatus such as pencils and glue spreaders with developing control. They show good co-ordination and control when they throw beanbags into rings, dribble a ball around a cone, and catch a ball thrown by the teacher. Demands made on them by the teaching are high. Outside, children steer the wheeled toys with skill and accuracy, pushing and pulling each other along in them, developing their physical skills well.

### **Creative development**

56. Most children attain the early learning goals in this area of learning because the teaching is satisfactory and the range of experiences the children are given successfully develops their creative skills. For example, children are expected to work independently to create individual models of vehicles. The more able children know how to make cones from triangles and keep on trying until they cut one large enough to fit over the nose of their model aeroplane! Children sing songs from memory. Their singing lesson with the Year 1 and 2 pupils was particularly good because the teachers' own enthusiasm made the children want to sing and join in the actions. Children enjoy working in the role-play area equally as much, mainly because of the way adults support them by joining in the make-believe. Boys and girls use the small models of the pirate island to make up imaginative stories and work together well building a beach house with plastic building bricks.

## **ENGLISH**

57. Standards in English are broadly in line with expected levels overall by the end of the infants and by the time the pupils leave the school at the age of ten. The number of pupils taking the infant tests each year is too small to be able to make reliable comparisons with those of

other schools. Nevertheless, most pupils usually attain the expected level or above in speaking and listening, reading, and writing by the age of seven. This shows improvement since the last inspection. The optional test data for 2001 shows that nearly all of the current Year 5 pupils are on course to improve by the expected two levels in reading from the end of Year 2 to the end of Year 6, and the greatest majority, around 70 per cent, are on course to do so in writing, with all of those attaining the higher level at the end of Year 2 on course to attain the higher level by the end of Year 6. This shows that most pupils, including the more able, make sound progress. This is because they are suitably challenged in lessons and usually achieve at a satisfactory rate.

58. Those pupils with special educational needs make sound progress towards their learning targets overall, and good progress when supported by teaching assistants. However, on occasion, they are asked to do the same work as the other pupils, without it being suitably adapted to meet their needs. They struggle to do it successfully and their progress is slowed. Their inability to complete the work successfully is excused in the light of their difficulties, but they could have been more successful and achieved more if the work had been matched to their needs and within their capabilities.
59. By the age of seven and by the time the pupils leave the school, their attainment in writing is broadly in line with what is expected for their age. By the end of Year 2, most pupils communicate successfully through writing because of effective teaching and interesting activities. They make sense of their writing by putting capital letters and full stops in the correct places. They know how to attract the attention of the reader by, for example, making some words large on posters and adding illustrations. They write stories in sequence and brief descriptions of books to attract the reader to them. They complete simple crosswords correctly and put missing words into sentences.
60. By the end of Year 5, pupils' writing is usually clear and organised, and ideas are developed logically. Pupils answer questions, about set texts, in sentences and take care to frame their replies to answer the questions precisely and succinctly. Their word work helps them to think about tense, how to connect sentences effectively, and what verbs to use. They know that before starting to write a story, they need to think about the setting, characters and plot. They consider how much speaking there is to be and whether they are telling the story in the first person. Their writing shows appropriate use of paragraphs to separate different events and times and their ideas are developed systematically and organised well. In lessons, the teacher encourages pupils to think of other words to use, such as 'resembles' instead of 'looks like' to make their writing more interesting. However, in the work seen, pupils do not always use imaginative words in their stories. This is because not enough is done when reading together in lessons to draw pupils' attention to particular words and phrases in the text, which they could then use in their own writing.
61. Pupils of all ages and abilities do not do as well in writing as they do in reading because poor presentation and careless spelling spoils their work. Although the quality of what they write is satisfactory, pupils have not acquired a comfortable and fluent style of writing by the end of the school; their joining of letters within words is clumsy. This is because handwriting is not taught systematically throughout the school. Low demands are made on pupils to present their work neatly and work is sometimes praised when it is not of a sufficiently high standard or suitable quantity, particularly in Year 3/4. Spelling mistakes are usually careless and although the teachers point them out and write the correct spelling in the margin, too often the same mistakes recur. These weaknesses, which are also reflected in writing in other subjects such as science and history, remain from the last inspection and have not been successfully dealt with.
62. Standards in speaking and listening are above expected levels by the age of seven and ten because teachers set the pupils good examples of the spoken word. They speak clearly and expressively to them, choosing their words carefully and with good effect. As a result, pupils

are confident talkers and explain clearly what they are doing and have done. For example, those in Year 5 talk articulately about their work in art and music, explaining how they compose music and look at the work of other artists. Year 2 pupils explain why they have selected particular books to share with their classmates. Pupils of all ages listen sensibly to each other and their teacher, in Year 3/4, for example, when listening to poetry and in Year 4/5 when discussing authors and their different styles.

63. By the end of the infants and by the time the pupils leave the school, standards in reading are broadly as expected for pupils aged seven and ten. Most pupils read fluently and expressively, improving their skills satisfactorily as they become older. By the time they leave the school, they confidently read aloud, either in small groups or as a class. Whilst one pupil is reading, the others follow the text with interest. This shows in their appropriate responses to teachers' questions, such as their reply of "Desperately" to the question, "What's the word that shows how the roots are clinging?" They read independently and have favourite authors such as JK Rowling and Jacqueline Wilson. They read aloud with good expression and understand how to use punctuation to show them, for example, where pauses should come. Pupils' phonic skills are particularly well developed. Pupils learn from a very early age the sounds letters make and use this knowledge successfully to read unknown words. Pupils' research skills are much better than they were at the time of the last inspection and their knowledge of authors and different styles of writing has improved significantly. They read information books for pleasure, such as to find out scientific facts and about wildlife, such as where koalas sleep and what they eat. The older pupils in particular know how to use the library classification system to locate books, although this is not in place at the moment due to planned alterations to the library.
64. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with a balance of things that work well and not so well. At the time of the last inspection, there was some unsatisfactory and poor teaching seen. There were no unsatisfactory lessons during this inspection, showing significant improvements to the quality of teaching. Planning is much better than it was because teachers are more confident about what they are teaching, why, and how. This results in both teachers and pupils working more productively and meaningfully. Teachers ask well-focused questions and, because they have excellent relationships with the pupils, pupils feel secure enough to answer them, even if they are not sure that they are correct. Basic reading and writing skills are taught satisfactorily through the effective implementation of the literacy hour. Lessons are well structured with an appropriate balance of teacher explanation and pupil activity. Unlike at the time of the last inspection, lessons generally move at a brisk pace, with teachers reminding pupils of how much time they have left to complete their tasks, adding a sense of urgency to the work. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and, because of this, pupils are exceptionally well behaved, concentrate fully on their work, and work productively. Resources are used effectively, such as poetry books in Year 3/4 and a straw boater and dandelions in a Year 4/5 lesson, adding interest to the lesson.
65. Marking is variable. The best marking is in Year 4/5, where the teacher's comments point out what pupils can do better and encourage them to improve their work the next time. For example, comments like "Be proud of ..." and "Be annoyed with yourself about ..." tell pupils what they are doing well and what to better. Pupils are asked to rewrite work when it is not of a good enough standard and most importantly, the teacher writes, often humorous, comments that show that she has read the work with interest and understanding. This values pupils' work and gives them an added incentive to do well. In contrast, comments from other teachers make no reference to how easy or difficult the pupils found the work or how long they took to complete it, or whether they did it with or without help. They do not tell the pupils what they have done particularly well or how to make their work better.
66. Computers are not used effectively to support teaching and learning in English. With the exception of one special needs group, computers were not used in any of the English lessons seen in the infants or juniors during the inspection. Pupils say that they sometimes

type their stories onto the computer once they have been corrected. This serves little purpose as the work has already been edited. Pupils do not, therefore, need to use the editing functions, such as spell and grammar check, and do not reap the benefits of computer technology for bringing about more speed and greater accuracy.

67. The leadership and management of the subject are now good. The co-ordinator has recently been able to monitor what is happening in teaching and learning and bring about changes to the subject. Through these observations, she recognises what needs doing and is aware of how to do it. The monitoring of pupils' progress is developing and, although these procedures are still in their infancy, they are improving the school's ability to set more accurate targets for individual pupils.

## **MATHEMATICS**

68. Evidence from the inspection indicates that satisfactory standards have been maintained since the last inspection and that, by the end of the infants and by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 5, standards are in line with those expected nationally for pupils aged seven and ten. The small number of pupils taking the tests at the end of the infants each year makes comparisons with other schools unreliable. However, overall, the progress pupils make throughout the school is sound. Pupils with special needs make good progress when they are supported by a teaching assistant; at these times, the work they are given is usually relevant and enables them to learn well. There are times, however, when these pupils are given similar work to the rest of the class, with insufficient adult support; they have difficulty in coping with what is expected and their learning is slowed.
69. By the end of Year 2, most pupils add and subtract two-digit numbers accurately, multiply numbers by 10, and divide numbers up to 10 by a single-digit number, such as 6 divided by 2. They name two-dimensional shapes correctly and add simple fractions such as halves. They tell the time accurately and produce information on graphs to make the interpretation of it easier, such as how many bottles of orange juice are drunk by the class every day. In a good Year 2 lesson seen, pupils estimated and then accurately measured how much liquid would fit into different sized containers, developing their vocabulary well, such as 'nearly', 'roughly', 'least' and 'most'. When they checked their answers, they talked about how they could make the testing fair, supporting their current work in science well. A period of mental arithmetic at the start of each lesson, gives pupils a chance to speed up their recall of number facts such as in a Year 2 lesson when quick-fire questions developed pupils' ability to add, subtract and multiply by 10 in their heads.
70. Pupils' achievements in the infants are built on successfully in the juniors, where pupils in Years 3 and 4 carry out addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division sums up to three digits. Their past work on simple fractions is extended to quarters and they add new subject words to their vocabulary, such as 'doubling' and halving'. They know a greater range of mathematical symbols, including ones meaning 'more than' and 'less than'. They have an appropriate understanding of angles, know the properties of regular and irregular polygons, and measure the areas of shapes in square centimetres. By the end of the juniors, most pupils can use compasses and protractors and understand algebraic conventions, including the use of brackets. For example, they use compasses to draw triangles and they know the names of different shapes such as isosceles triangles. They accurately multiply two-digit numbers by other two-digit numbers, and add fractions. They record data, such as sunrise and sunset times, on line graphs and interpret charts showing, for example, temperatures in different cities of the world.
71. Throughout the school, the presentation of work is often poor, especially that of the older pupils. Their number writing and setting out of work are frequently untidy and lead to unnecessary mistakes in calculation. Key words such as 'perimeter' are spelt incorrectly and some lines are drawn without rulers and teachers do not pick this up with sufficient rigour in their marking.



72. Overall, the teaching of mathematics is sound. The numeracy strategy has been introduced satisfactorily throughout the school and this gives good structure to lessons and leads to a brisk pace of learning. There was some very good teaching seen in Year 5, where lively and enthusiastic teaching makes learning fun. Relationships are excellent and pupils behave very well and concentrate fully on their work. The teacher tells the pupils what they are going to learn during the lesson and involves them well in their own learning. For example, in one lesson seen, pupils' interest was captured when the teacher's well-focused questions checked on what pupils had learnt before about telling the time, before talking about what they were going to learn this lesson. This heightened their enthusiasm and curiosity and they could not wait to start work.
73. In the best lessons seen throughout the rest of the school, pupils were asked to explain their mathematical thinking to the rest of the class, such as how they had arrived at a particular answer when adding on in tens. This helps those who do not get the correct answer to see how others do. Teachers throughout the school use resources well. In one Year 2 lesson, for example, a very good range of containers was used to develop pupils' understanding of capacity, and in Year 5, cut-up calendars were an innovative way of getting pupils to look for patterns in numbers and work out the number of days in different months. The sessions at the end of lessons are used well in all classes to draw the pupils together, go over what has been learnt, point out links with what pupils already know, and indicate what pupils are going to learn next.
74. There are some weaknesses. Teachers plan their lessons carefully, but do not always think carefully about what pupils have learnt during the lesson and over time to plan their future work or adapt the activities for pupils of different attainment. In all classes, ICT is not used enough to support pupils in their collection, display and interrogation of information. The marking of work generally indicates correct and incorrect answers, but provides pupils with too few indications of what to do next time to get the correct answer. It is best in the older junior class where, as well as giving comments that build the pupils' confidence, the teacher makes suggestions about where pupils have gone wrong and how they can do better.
75. Leadership and management are good. The subject leader has a clear idea of what is happening in school through observing lessons and analysing test results. New systems for tracking pupils' progress, improved since the last inspection, mean that the school is now in a much stronger position to set Year 2 and Year 5 targets for both individuals and groups of pupils, and to accurately gauge whether pupils are making appropriate progress as they move through the school. The subject leader scrutinises teachers' planning carefully to ensure that all aspects of mathematics are taught.

## **SCIENCE**

76. Due to the way the subject is timetabled, it was only possible to see science being taught in Year 4. However, from teachers' planning and pupils' past work there are clear indications that the standards achieved by the current Year 2 pupils, and those in 2000, are in line with nationally expected levels for pupils of this age. However, standards at the end of Year 5 are below what could reasonably be expected for pupils of their age, and the previous satisfactory level has not been maintained. This is partly because the time allocated to science is low compared to the national average, but mainly because the teaching in the upper end of the juniors shows insecurity in subject knowledge and understanding. Since September 2000, however, there has been a great improvement in the latter because the teacher has worked hard to implement the requirements of the new national teaching guidelines for science.
77. By the end of the infants, pupils can name parts of their bodies and identify different light sources, such as the sun, candles, and electric lights. They have a growing understanding of

life cycles, and understand forces and friction through testing toy cars on a ramp to see which travels the fastest. They have searched the playground for mini-breasts and, by doing this, have learnt about their different habitats. Pupils learn how to set up a scientific experiment; for example, in their work on whether shiny materials give off light in the dark, they first make predictions before testing their hypotheses. Practical work on growing cress seeds in different mediums such as sand, soil and paper, focuses pupils' understanding successfully on the need for fair testing to ensure a reliable result. There are appropriate links with mathematics, for example a block graph to display the incidence of hair colour in the class. All pupils in Years 1 and 2, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in gaining a suitable range of scientific knowledge and the appropriate skills and techniques they need to carry out experiments and investigations. This is because the quality of teaching in the infants is satisfactory and all areas of science are taught appropriately. Although most pupils usually do the same activity, the ways pupils are expected to record the work is different according to their ability. An appropriate subject vocabulary is introduced but pupils are often careless in spelling key words when writing or labelling drawings.

78. Pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are built on satisfactorily in Years 3 and 4 because teaching is sound in Year 3, and good overall in Year 4. Pupils in Year 3 experiment to see, for example, if light travels in a straight line and they explore what materials different things, such as kitchen utensils, are made from and why. They know from their investigations that plants need water and light to grow from seeds and learn, through putting food colouring in the water, that water travels up the stem to the leaves. They test how fast water flows through different soils and look at different rocks and how they are formed.
79. Teaching is good in Year 4 because it shows a good understanding of the subject's requirements and an enjoyment for teaching science, which in turn enthuses the pupils. Work on electrical circuits, including the use of insulators and conductors, is recorded well by the pupils, and shows a good understanding of this aspect of the curriculum. The pupils' recent work on solids and liquids shows a good use of practical work and that pupils have the ability to set up a fair experiment. Good marking leads to pupils thinking about their answers and improving upon these. In the one lesson seen, the pupils made good progress in their learning. The teacher introduced the notion of habitats in an interesting open-ended way, which made pupils think for themselves. Pupils volunteered good suggestions as to how a wide range of animals and plants could be categorised. Their interesting ideas were sensitively received and considered by the teacher and because of this, pupils of all abilities confidently participated in the class discussion. The teacher introduced appropriate subject-specific words such as 'habitat' and 'environment'. Practical work ensued which maximised the use of the school grounds. Boys and girls worked well in mixed groups, filling in worksheets sensibly together. Their attitudes and behaviour in this lesson were very good.
80. By the end of the juniors, however, standards are not as good as they should be because pupils do not have secure enough scientific skills, knowledge and understanding for their age. This is because the teaching in the oldest junior class does not successfully build pupils' learning in investigative science, such as setting up practical experiments. Predictions are not encouraged, for example when pupils carried out an experiment to show that air has weight and contains moisture. Whilst teaching covers many aspects of the science curriculum, these are not taught in sufficient depth and pupils' learning is insecure. However, more recent work indicates that things are improving because teaching has made more effective use of the national guidance for the subject to plan work, and to know what pupils need to learn by the end of year.
81. Throughout the school, the pupils' work is poorly presented. As stated in the last report, this limits the accuracy, understanding and explanation of their writing and results. Key words are spelt incorrectly, for instance seed 'disposal' instead of 'dispersal' and 'habitat' for

“habitat”. This lack of care was raised in the last report and, as yet, has not been satisfactorily addressed.

82. There has been insufficient improvement since the last inspection because the school has concentrated on introducing the literacy and numeracy strategies and has not yet fully addressed the issues raised previously with regard to the science curriculum. The science co-ordinator’s main priority has been to strengthen teaching in this subject by separating year groups in the juniors so that classes are smaller and pupils are given more teacher time and attention. The national teaching guidance for science has been implemented and in most classes this is proving successful in supporting teachers in their planning. However, it has not yet been possible for anyone to monitor and evaluate what is going on in lessons, due to the focus on literacy and numeracy and the co-ordinator teaching science at the same time as all the other junior teachers. Pupils’ work is assessed at the end of Year 2 and published tests are used to gauge pupils’ understanding at the end of each unit of work at other times. This is an improvement since the time of the last report, when formal procedures for assessment had not been established. Recently, members of the local group of primary schools have devised a Year 5 assessment paper. In the future, it is intended that this will usefully help the assessment of pupils’ attainment at the end of that year and allow the school to compare its results with those of others in the same area.
83. Visits in the locality and further afield successfully enhance the science curriculum. These include participation in an ecological convention in the local park and a trip to a nearby zoo. The rich local environments of the village and school are used well in appropriate studies. Throughout the school, the use of ICT is under-developed both to carry out research and to record and display the results of data collection.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

84. Only two art lessons were seen. However, from looking at teachers’ planning, talking with pupils and looking at the work on display around the school, the attainment of seven and ten year olds is in line with that expected for their age. This is because teaching is satisfactory overall. The teaching seen has some particularly good aspects. For instance, examples of the work of other artists were used well in the Year 4/5 lesson to influence pupils’ own style of artwork. The teacher asked good questions, which made pupils think about what they were looking at and what the painter was trying to do. Resources were used well in both lessons, such as papers of different sizes and textures in Year 5 and natural objects collected from a walk around the school grounds, which Year 2 pupils had to draw. The teachers moved around the room in both lessons, encouraging pupils to look again at their work and see if they could improve it. This led to improvements being made to the overall quality of work.
85. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils use a suitable range of media, including paint, pastels, and pencils, in their artwork. Pupils of all ages use computer art programs to create pictures and patterns on screen. They make three-dimensional models using, for example, salt-dough to create medallions in Year 4/5. These are very well sculptured and contain a lot of minuscule detail, such as a mouse reading ‘The Mouse Olympics’ newspaper. Pupils of all ages look at the work of artists such as Kandinsky, Seurat and Picasso and discuss the different styles in which they worked. In one particularly good lesson seen in Year 4/5, for example, the teacher used paintings of a number of different artists to show the pupils the style in which surrealist painters worked. These generated great enthusiasm and fired the pupils’ imaginations well. However, although the pupils use other artwork to influence their own during lessons, discussions with the Year 5 pupils show that their recollection of different artists and their styles is limited and their knowledge is short lasting. They are very much aware, however, of the artistic talents of a local artist, the school’s caretaker, whose work is displayed around the school and who often works with the pupils, guiding them in their work.

86. Pupils' artwork around the school is of a satisfactory standard and it improves through the school. For example, Year 1/2 drawings of each other show developing proportion, although the heads are a little on the large side, whilst, by the time they get to Year 4/5, the pupils draw people in action, such as running away from something or floating in the sea. Pupils of all ages use artwork to illustrate work in other subjects, particularly English when they illustrate their stories. They create different effects through smudging and shading and drawing things from different angles. Pupils in Year 3/4, for example, have produced some particularly effective observational drawings of plants and flowers using smudged pastels with extremely good effect.
87. Although no one monitors the teaching and learning in the subject, there have been some improvements brought about since the last inspection. The planning for the subject has improved because effective use is now being made of the National Curriculum guidance for the subject. Assessment procedures have been put in place and teachers are clearer about what pupils should be able to do by the end of each year.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

88. No design and technology lessons were seen during the inspection and there was insufficient work around the school to make secure judgements about the standard of pupils' work, their attitudes towards design and technology, and the quality of teaching and learning.
89. Pupils in Year 5 talk enthusiastically about things they have done in the past. They have experienced food technology and made, for example, spicy biscuits. Satisfactory links to mathematics were made when they weighed out the ingredients, and to English when they wrote out a shopping list and followed recipe instructions. They have made pop-up cards and puppets and talk about the different mechanisms they employed. They recall testing and evaluating the success of their work and understand, for example, the need to use particular materials for greater strength. They have joined materials using a range of fasteners such as split pins, staples, sewing and glue, but do not recall working with wood. Pupils in Year 1/2 have made paper plate animal masks and bookmarks. They have experienced weaving and making models from plastic building bricks. However, only a limited amount of written work was available and is based on a list of what pupils will need and what the end product will look like, without any indication of how they will go about making it.
90. Some improvements have been made over time. Subject planning and assessment are better than they were because teachers now take satisfactory account of the national teaching guidelines for the subject. However, the school's attention has been focused mainly on improvements in English and mathematics and, because this is a small school with many responsibilities shared amongst a few staff, there is insufficient monitoring of what is happening in design and technology.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

91. No geography lessons were seen, but there is sufficient evidence in past work to make the judgement that by the time the pupils are seven and ten years old, they reach standards that are expected for pupils of their age. These standards are similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection. All of the pupils make satisfactory progress in the development of geographical skills as well as in their knowledge and understanding about the world in which they live.
92. In the infants, the teacher makes good use of the local environment and this raises the interest of pupils in their work. They survey the different facilities available in Thornton and

question whether they sufficiently meet the people's needs. Pupils know that main buildings, such as a Post Office and church, are found in most villages. They draw block graphs to show how pupils travel to school. Their current work on the imaginary island of Struay is wide ranging. Initially sparked off by the book 'The two grandmothers' by Katie Morag, their knowledge and understanding about the similarities and differences in two contrasting places are appropriately developed. With the help of Barnaby, an imaginary teddy bear who travels the world, pupils learn about different countries and places at times throughout the year when geography does not feature on the timetable.

93. Pupils' work is suitably extended in the juniors. In Year 3, the teacher introduces subject-related words such as 'land use' and 'the environment' and the pupils use these well in their correct context. In connection with their visit to the reservoir, pupils formulated questionnaires so that people they met could be asked why, and how often, they came to the area and what they liked about it. Each pupil designed a poster advertising the reservoir and its associated country park and inviting people to come and see it. In Year 4, the emphasis has been on learning about the earth's water supply and environmental issues in connection with this such as water shortage and wastage. The teacher devised some interesting mathematical calculations and these resulted in pupils finding out the amount of water used in a normal week in an average household and how much this would cost the family concerned. The pupils' work on contrasting localities is further broadened in Year 5. Good resources are prepared by the teacher to supply pupils with extensive information about Whitby, famous for its connections with fishing. Good use is made of a range of maps of different scales to show the location of this town, including one on tourism in the region of the North Yorkshire Moors and adjacent coastline. Information and pictures about the town's most famous seaman, James Cook, have been downloaded using the Internet and through this, there are good cross-curricular links with history.
94. No actual teaching was seen during the inspection and there is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement about its quality. There is evidence, however, from pupils' past work that teachers have at least a sound knowledge and understanding of the elements of this subject, provide appropriate resources, arrange suitable visits to promote pupils' learning and are satisfactorily assessing attainment at the end of each topic. However, there is very limited evidence of any individualised lines of enquiry taking place, and much of what was seen appeared to be teacher-directed, limiting the achievements of the more able pupils in particular. Poor handwriting, spelling and presentation often spoil the quality of the work.
95. Pupils are divided into year groups for geography. This means that class sizes are kept small and teachers are able to interact with pupils to a much greater degree than is usually the case. The new national teaching guidance has been adopted and implemented by the school. This ensures pupils' geographical knowledge and understanding is built on and extended as they move through the school, at least to the expected level. This is an improvement since the last inspection. At present the use of ICT to promote and develop geographical skills and ideas is under-developed

## **HISTORY**

96. No history lessons were observed in the infant class, but there is evidence in past Year 2 work that standards are in line with the nationally expected levels for pupils of this age. All pupils in the infants make sound progress in their knowledge and understanding of different times, famous people, and well-known events. For example, in their topic books there are satisfactory pieces of work about Florence Nightingale, George Stephenson and Mary Seacole. A very good display of toys, both old and new, provides a good starting point for discussion and comparison about how materials and children's interests have stayed the same, or changed, over the years. The reason for Remembrance Day is well understood.

97. Planning documents and pupils' previous work indicates that pupils make satisfactory progress over the three junior years and this is an improvement since the last report when progress was judged unsatisfactory. By the end of Year 5, standards are in line with the national expectations, and the work on ancient Greece is appropriate for pupils of this age. A fairly substantial project on the Victorians is studied, with good links to aspects in other subjects. For example, an awareness of the life and times of Charles Dickens is developed. Although a very small amount of written work is produced in Year 3, pupils appear to have a sound factual knowledge about ancient civilisations, such as the Romans and Vikings, and understand how these invaders affected life in Britain. A great deal more written work is produced in Year 4, with interesting and detailed accounts of life between 1939 and 1945. An imaginary letter from a forlorn evacuee successfully conjures up the pathos of the situation. Using contemporary portraits, the pupils describe what Henry VIII looked like and are obviously intrigued by the fate of some of his six wives. The pupils understand that archaeologists work as detectives and that it was when the Sutton Hoo burial site was uncovered that they learned more about the Anglo-Saxons.
98. There is evidence in pupils' history folders of too much teacher-direction, with all pupils covering the same ground and filling in the same worksheets. As a result, not all pupils make the rapid progress that they could. In Year 4 there is some evidence of pupils carrying out independent work, but generally children are not sufficiently encouraged to use their own research skills either through library books or the Internet. Teachers often accept poor presentation and spelling without comment, even though this often spoils the general quality of the pupils' work.
99. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. In the two lessons seen in the juniors, it was at least good. In the Year 3 lesson, an extensive range of artefacts from Egypt stimulated the interest of the pupils. There was great excitement about wearing the clothes and beaded headgear. The small number of pupils in this year group meant that all could have hands-on experience and they did not have to wait their turn to hold or see any of the items. The teacher used a good video and pictures about the ancient buildings along the Nile, to bring information to life. She had sensibly looked at the video before the lesson and knew when to stop and explain words and ideas in an authoritative and knowledgeable way.
100. In the Year 5 lesson seen, the quality of teaching and learning was very good. Good use had been made of homework sheets to find out important events that had occurred in the decades between 1940 and 1980. The teacher had chosen this time span for pupils to study as it was identical to the period during which John Lennon lived and the links between the two were relevant to the pupils. In the lesson, the pupils used the teacher's own recollections as a memory bank. Their sensible questions and her very capable answers were recorded on tape. Not only did pupils gain information from the experience, but also learnt how to clarify what they wanted to know and decide how to phrase their questions accordingly. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour during this part of the lesson were particularly high. Those asking the questions did so articulately and confidently. The rest of the class remained very quiet so as not to spoil the quality of the recording.
101. Pupils in the juniors are divided into year groups for history. This means that class sizes are kept small and teachers are able to interact with pupils to a much greater degree than is usually the case. The school has adopted the new teaching guidance for history and its effective implementation is evident throughout the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Appropriate assessment of pupils' knowledge and understanding takes place at the end of each topic. The quality of teachers' marking is variable. In the Year 4 work, there are some good comments about how work can be approved and further lines of enquiry taken. There are some good links with other areas of the curriculum, including literacy, music, art and geography. The pupils learn about chronology through the use of timelines that help them to understand the passing of time and where events fit in with each other. The use of ICT is limited.

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

102. Standards are below expected levels by the end of the infants and by the time the children leave the school at the age of ten. This is because teaching and learning are unsatisfactory and pupils' achievements over time are insufficient. Too few opportunities are taken by teachers to involve pupils in ICT activities because of their own insecure knowledge in teaching the different aspects of the subject. Those elements of ICT that teachers are confident about teaching, such as using the Internet for research and e-mailing messages to pupils in other schools, are taught effectively, but the teaching of other aspects, such as word processing and control technology, are weak. Pupils do not have sufficient and regular access to other technology equipment in school such as the digital camera and programmable toys and robots, and they have a weak understanding of the use of technology outside school. There is insufficient time allocated to the teaching of ICT and this is impacting negatively on standards. Infant pupils cannot open programs or print their work. They do not know how to move to a new line in word processing or how to undo the work they have done. They lack confidence in using the computer and are very unsure about it.
103. Not enough progress has been made since the last inspection because not enough has been done to raise standards and improve teaching and learning. Many of the weaknesses identified four years ago still remain. Pupils still make inconsistent progress over time and across different aspects of ICT because they have unequal access to the equipment. Some pupils, for example, regularly work on the computers because they know what to do and need little adult support, whilst others, particularly those who are not confident users, do not use them enough. Word processing is not used effectively to support English work because pupils do not write straight onto the computer screen, but type already corrected and redrafted handwritten work. This does not teach pupils the advantages of using the computer for speed and accuracy, ease of editing, or saving work for completing or changing at a later date. Pupils' control technology skills are still too weak and they do not, for example, use what they know to make devices, such as switches, in their model making. Resources are not used effectively and, in some lessons, computers are not used, or are switched off.
104. Improvements are being brought about, however. The co-ordinator has produced an action plan, which recognises the need for in-service training for staff. However, it is not precise enough about what the weaknesses are and how they are to be dealt with in order to raise standards. Unlike at the time of the last inspection, ICT now features on the timetable as a discrete subject and so, this time, there were some lessons seen. The teaching was generally satisfactory because the aspects seen being taught were mainly those that the teachers are confident teaching, such as data handling, e-mailing and artwork. Sufficient regard is now being taken of the national teaching guidelines for the subject. However, pupils' skills are not as good as they should be for pupils of their age and so they are accessing the learning programme at a lower level than other pupils of the same age in other schools. This means that these pupils' achievements are not as good as those found in most other schools. For example, in the Year 4/5 lesson seen, the pupils were taught how to turn on the computer because up until now the teacher has always done it, how to use a publishing program to make a label, and how to import pictures into a document. This is very low-level work for pupils of this age.
105. ICT does not support work in most other subjects effectively enough. Work in art is supported satisfactorily through the use of some art programs, but there is no musical composing. Research in history is satisfactory. Some communication of information and data handling is effectively taught, such as in a Year 1/2 lesson when pupils examined bar charts they had completed earlier with adult support, of who in the class liked which fruits, and who was aged five, six or seven. They framed questions to ask about the graphs, such as "How many people like plums?" and "How many boys are aged six?" However, there is little use of teletext or other information sources and pupils do not fully appreciate that information can be communicated in a number of different ways.

106. Pupils understand the advantages of using the Internet to find out about, for example, the Eiffel Tower in Year 2 and historical events in Year 4/5. They use e-mail confidently in Year 3/4 to send messages to pupils in the other junior class and their interest was increased when their teacher told them that next week they are going to be writing to pupils in another school. Nevertheless, pupils' learning is restricted to what teachers feel confident about teaching and this is not good enough. There is a lot of work to be done to ensure pupils use and have equal access to the school's technology equipment in order to raise standards through improved teaching and learning.

## **MUSIC**

107. Pupils throughout the school attain standards expected for their age because teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Pupils enjoy their music lessons. The 20-minute weekly group sessions in the juniors are particularly popular as pupils rotate doing different things each half term, such as composing, recorder playing, listening to music, and singing. This holds their interest well. The group seen during the inspection was successfully composing a piece of instrumental music, based on an African theme, to play to their schoolmates during assembly. The lesson was well prepared and so a sufficient amount of work was achieved in the time. The pupils showed a good sense of beat and rhythm and came in at the right place and on the right beat. There was some over-direction, however, which limited the pupils' independent skills in composing.

108. A temporary teacher, who is a music specialist, led the one lesson seen in the infants. The pupils' learning was good. They sang tunefully and concentrated well because of the teacher's expertise and her own enthusiasm for the subject. Their singing skills were developed well and their sense of rhythm developed further through 'follow-my-leader' exercises.

109. Pupils throughout the school sing well. They understand that they need to think about pitch and timing and take care with their breathing. This is because pupils are encouraged, at the start of the lessons, to prepare their voices through a series of breathing and warm-up exercises. Junior pupils know that different elements of music can be combined to create different effects when singing, for example, Kumbya, using different dynamics and textures.

110. The pupils experience a range of musical activities including listening to and appraising music. Year 5 pupils paint pictures in response to music and talk about the moods that can be created using different instrumental sounds. They make up their own music using symbols to record their compositions and play them confidently to their schoolmates. They do not use computers to support their work, however, nor do they operate the tape recorders when putting their music on tape to listen to and adapt later.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

111. Only three physical education lessons were seen during the inspection, two in the infants and one in the juniors. Examination of teachers' planning shows, however, that good provision overall is made for this subject throughout the school. The physical education curriculum is varied, interesting and broad and, over the year, all of the elements are taught. There is a very good range of after-school sporting activities and this is well extended by pupils' participation in inter-school team competitions. Teachers and pupils support these activities enthusiastically and in many of them, pupils achieve high standards. Their prowess in competitive events is a strength of the school.

112. On the basis of the lessons seen, pupils' attainment is as expected for pupils of their age by the time they are seven and ten years old. In the Year 2 lesson, lively teaching led to good learning taking place. Pupils understood the importance of warming up and cooling down and



were aware of the effect that exercise had on the rate of their heartbeats. They made good use of the available space in the hall. They listened carefully to and carried out the teacher's instructions. Most could control their movements as commanded, by stopping and starting, balancing and miming. The pupils thoughtfully avoided bumping into each other and were mindful that their actions did not spoil the work of others. They were enthusiastic about the ideas presented on the commercially produced tape and were keen to interpret these in their own way. When working with a large parachute, they worked well as a team, lifting and lowering their arms in unison and following the teacher's instructions successfully. Their behaviour was very good throughout the session.

113. The Year 5 lesson took place on a football pitch shared with the local community. The pupils were similarly aware of the need for warming up and cooling down exercises. Working in small groups, the pupils practised the throwing, catching, and running skills needed for a successful game of rounders and made good progress in learning these. Good ongoing encouragement by the teacher, together with pauses for the demonstration of good practice, ensured that all pupils made improvements to their own work. Attainment was very varied, but overall average by national standards.
114. The quality of teaching and learning were good in the three lessons seen because the pupils responded so purposefully to the tasks, enjoyed trying hard, and made good progress through self-evaluation. In the lesson involving a large parachute, pupils found the experience fun, enjoyed their work and realised the importance of making individual contributions to team work. In addition to physical skills, they also were learning important social skills. Older pupils who find the co-ordination of hand and eye difficult have made good progress over time, although their achievements in throwing and catching balls are still below average. Staff and children changed appropriately, the lessons had clear structure with an emphasis on improvement, instructions were clear and careful attention was given to health and safety issues. The lessons were well-resourced and very good behaviour and attitudes maintained at all times. Both teachers monitored the pupils' progress carefully, encouraging them and praising achievement where it was good.
115. The school rightly values the contribution made by physical education to pupils' personal and social development. This was particularly noticeable during the rounders lesson. In this, no pupils made fun of others who found throwing and catching difficult, but were supportive in helping them to overcome their difficulties. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in lessons and reach satisfactory standards. In lessons and clubs, boys and girls are given equal opportunities to participate fully in the activities.
116. The subject is well managed by a keen co-ordinator who enthusiastically and knowledgeably undertakes specialist teaching in all the junior classes. The new national teaching guidance for the subject is now being implemented. This is proving effective in promoting consistent coverage and providing guidance on the order in which different skills and activities are to be taught. There is good improvement both in the consistency of teaching and in the development of planning since the last inspection. The school has good physical education facilities for its size, including a level netball court and a hall with wall apparatus. However, the football pitch it shares is some way from the school and, in the event of an accident, this could pose some problems.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

117. Due to the way that religious education is timetabled, it was not possible to see any lessons during the inspection, but careful consideration was given to pupils' previous work. From this, it has been possible to make a secure judgement that, at the end of both Year 2 and Year 5, the pupils reach a level of attainment in line with the national expectation for their ages. All pupils make satisfactory progress in this subject as they move through the school. Although there is an emphasis on Christianity, all are making some gains in their knowledge and

understanding of different religions and faiths. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the school did not achieve its aim of all pupils developing an understanding of Christianity.

118. Much of the work in the infants is incorporated into topic work. Pupils are introduced to New Testament stories such as the one about Bartholomew, the friend of Jesus. They know about Christian festivals, for example Christmas, and how the church welcomes children into its family at a baptismal ceremony. They have visited the local church and drawn pictures of the local canon wearing his special vestments. They have suitable knowledge of the aspects of other religions, such as the importance of the Torah in Judaism. In the juniors, pupils have satisfactory knowledge of Old and New Testament stories, including the one about Joshua bringing down the walls of Jericho and another telling the facts of the betrayal of Jesus by Judas. They know about different religious symbols, language, and stories and the Hindu beliefs that underlie these. Poor presentation and spelling in past work, even that carried out by the more able pupils, do not do justice to the ideas and knowledge expressed in written work.
119. The subject contributes well to promoting pupils' personal and social development through discussions, for example, in the infants about the value of family life and answering such questions as "What is a friend?" During the inspection, in one act of collective worship the point was dramatically made that deeds cannot be undone and things put back as before. This was a direct reference to the anguish of Peter at having denied his friendship with Jesus and the fact that he could not undo the consequences of his actions. This subject adds to the overall good spiritual, moral and social dimension of school life, but insufficient emphasis is placed on developing an understanding of other faiths. This is due, in part, to the low amount of time, compared to the national average, devoted to teaching this subject.
120. There is not enough evidence to make a judgement on teaching. However, resources are used effectively to stimulate pupils' interest in the subject, some belonging to the school, some borrowed. For example, a christening robe had been brought to school for the infant pupils to draw. The new national teaching guidance for this subject has been adopted and is used in planning. There are good links with the local church, which the pupils often visit, and the local canon comes into the school on a regular basis. Overtures to different groups asking for practical support, and the opportunity to visit their various religious buildings, are already planned.